

A Snapshot of My Life Through the Years

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This is an exercise to write down a snapshot of your life. This will give you a unique perspective of all the different communities and experiences you have navigated in life. Download the worksheet or create your own.

In four lines, write down what was going on in your life during the first ten years of your life. Then, do this for the next ten years of your life, and so forth.

For those decades you are currently in, or are in your future, include your dreams and/or vision for those years of your life.

Find a quiet place to write.

Here is the challenge - just write what first comes to your mind.

Try not to analysis what you just wrote, you can do that later. Just keep writing.

Each line will be about one aspect of your life at that time. Or it may take two or more lines to write about one aspect of your life.

If you need more lines, add them, or make the line length longer. Feel free to modify this to any way you want. It is all up to you.

Reflection:

Take time to reflect on what you wrote. Journal about your reflections. For more insight, review your snapshot of your life through the years and your reflections with a person (or in a small group) you trust.

- 1) What is your overall feeling of your life as you reflect on what you read? If you share this with others, what feelings and insights do they have about your life so far?
- 2) What was one sentence, one aspect of your life, that you wrote about that caught your attention. Why? Share more of what happened then and how it has affected your life.
- 3) Through writing this and your (and others) reflections how will you live your life a little differently going forward?
- 4) Write and/or share a one-year, five-year, and twenty-year vision statement that will include what you learned and added to your life after writing “A Snapshot of My Life Through the Years.”

Write your one-, five-, and twenty-year visions as if they are happening now, present tense (i.e. 20-year vision statement: “Joe and I are enjoying our time with our family, welcoming this year the birth of our granddaughter Anna and grandson Joe. We get together with family and friends for the holidays, birthdays, parties, and sporting events. We exercise and eat well, are healthy, and grateful for all we have. We are active in church and our community. We enjoy traveling, especially to state and national parks. We both enjoy our work, saving for our retirement in eight years. I feel blessed...)

Suggestions to write in vision statements about 1) family, 2) relationships, 3) work, school, caring for others, 4) health, fitness, diet, self-care, 5) community involvement, 6) spirituality and religion, 7) recreation, 8) Creativity, 9) money and finance.

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Options after writing “A Snapshot of My Life Through the Years”:

- 1) After writing “A Snapshot of My Life Through the Years,” write a new snapshot about one or more of the following: (do these over the next days, weeks, months, or years, no hurry)
 - a. What feelings were going on then? (or for each sentence your originally wrote and/or whatever comes to your mind as you write)
 - i. This can give you a sense of some of your feelings throughout your life so far.
 - b. What major events and/or transitions were going on in your life at that time?
 - i. This will give you a snapshot of major things you navigated in your life so far.
 - ii. i.e., school, awards, vacations, births, illnesses, deaths, relationships, marriage(s), breakups/divorces, trauma, abuse, accidents, work, retirement, etc.
 - c. What did you learn and/or experience in each decade?
 - i. i.e. learned to walk, read, write, ride bike, be part of a family, individual sport, draw, create, be part of a class at school, speak in front of a group, work, working with classmates and co-workers, spiritual/religious insights/activities, managing money/saving, develop and maintain friendships, dating, marriage, navigating relationships, parenting, grandparenting, dealing with breakups, divorce, teaching, volunteering, caregiving for a loved one, illness, accident, addiction behavior and recovery, political and social involvement, eldering, self-care, specific subjects and skills, etc.
 - d. Why do you do what you do?
 - i. As best you can trace through the decades of your life who or what influenced you to do what you are currently doing (or did) in your life?
 1. Relating to your work, family, activities, hobby, sport, art/creativity, writing, community involvement, spiritual/religious involvement, politics, travel, advocating for, etc.
 - e. Who in your life influenced you the most in each decade of your life and why?
 - i. i.e., mother, father, sibling, grandparent, cousin, friend, teacher, spiritual leader, book, author, group, spouse/partner, child, neighbor, co-worker, coach, professional care provider, etc.
 - f. What are you most grateful for in each decade of your life so far?
 - g. Recap of the Snapshot(s) of your life through the years
 - i. Write one final snapshot with input from all the other snapshots you have written
 - ii. How this looks is up to you. It can be written, art drawings or paintings, pictures cut out from magazines, etc. Be creative.