

Tell Me Your Stories

Interview Techniques Summary

1. Equipment and supplies you will need:
 - a. Tape-recorder (Before you go, check to make sure your tape recorder is working!!
If it runs on batteries, have extras.)
 - b. Tapes (90 minutes)
 - c. A pad of paper and pen
2. Make sure to pick a quiet place to do the interview, where there will be no interruptions.
3. Make sure you and your subject and are seated comfortably.
4. Before you begin the interview, tell your subject that if there is anything you ask that he or she would rather not discuss, to let you know.
5. At the beginning of your interview, state the name of the subject, the date and the name of the interviewer (you!) for the tape.
6. LISTEN carefully while the person answers your questions. BE INTERESTED AND CURIOUS!!!
7. Write down new questions that answers may bring up. When they finish their answer, ask your follow-up question.
8. If you notice that the answers are one word, try to make your questions more open-ended. For example, instead of asking "Did you like school?" Ask, "Tell me about school and your feelings about it."
9. If your subject starts to cry, just wait patiently. It's very normal for people to feel strongly about parents who are dead, or difficult times. You haven't done anything wrong if they cry! It's ok and won't hurt them at all. In fact, it's a gift to let them feel their feelings.
10. If they cannot recall information, reassure them that it's fine.
11. Relax! Take your time! Enjoy listening to them. Be patient if they take time answering. It's ok if you don't do every question. The important thing is letting them recall their life and tell it to someone who is interested in listening!
12. When you are finished, thank them for their time.