

Autobituary

(edited and embellished by Julie Liukkonen and excerpted from a number of sources (I apologize for not citing much).

“May you, every day, connect with the brilliancy of your own spirit. And may you always remember that obstacles in the path are not obstacles, they ARE the path.”

—Jane Catherine Lotter (1952-2013)

From Samhain 2016

Brief writing for autobituary:

A helpful way to do this is to write about how you would like to be remembered at the end of it. What would you would want people to say about you after you die. In my work, I find that reflecting on how one wants to be remembered helps us focus on what matters in our lives. This task offers the opportunity to reflect, challenge and change the restrictive or negative aspects of our characters and lives. It can clarify and function as a valuable road map, helping us consciously choose the paths leading to, supporting and reinforcing, the best of ourselves.

Imagine yourself at your own funeral listening someone talking about you.

- * What did you accomplish that you are proud of? This can be minor, major and everything in-between. We are all made up of ordinary extraordinary.
- * What did you not accomplish? Does this matter?
- * How did you make a difference in the lives of others? Not sure? Then ask yourself, how do you hope that you made a difference in the lives of others?
- * What did you enjoy? What did you find beautiful? What made you smile? What made you happy?
- * How did I face challenges with integrity and courage?
- * What hope sustained me?
- * What fears held me back? What fears did I overcome?

More Formal Practice of Writing Autobituary

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1. Preparation

Grab a pen and some paper (or the notebook you have set aside for this project), your tablet, crayons, laptop or whatever recording device you would like to use. If you can, find a quiet space and set aside a chunk of time to spend on this. It's not everyday you write your autobituary, it is best if you can give this occasion the honor it deserves. Light a candle, say a prayer, put on some music, make an offering, eat a sandwich, do whatever you feel like to start the process. Alternately you can also do it in fits and starts, the important thing is: to do it.

You might want to begin with a little research. Obituary.com has a very comprehensive how-to section, including a template of the usual factual details included in an obituary. The template is a great starting point for assembling the facts of your life. A little time with the internet will also yield lots of results.

In addition assembling the factual details, here are some other questions to ponder (and yes, this list is a bit long but some of these questions might resonate with you, some might not). Ponder as many or as few as you like, come up with some of your own, whatever suits you. Here goes:

- From those facts about your life you've assembled, what facts about your life are important?
- What people are important? Who did you love? Who will you miss and why? Who changed your life? Who do you want to thank and why? What about pets?
- What did you accomplish that you are proud of? This can be minor, major and everything in between. We are all made up of ordinary extraordinary.
- What did you give to others, what did others give to you?
- What did you not accomplish? Does this matter?
- What do you regret? Why? Do you want people to know this?
- How did you make a difference in the lives of others? Not sure? Then ask yourself, how do you hope that you made a difference in the lives of others?
- What were your values? How did you embody or live those values? Is there a saying or phrase that you often used?
- What did you enjoy? What did you find beautiful? What made you smile? What made you happy? What made you sad? Share your joy, share your sorrow.
- What should people pay attention to?
- What were your hopes and fears? How did you cope with them? What hope sustained you? What fears held you back? What fears did you overcome? What can you tell others about this?
- What would you like people to say about you? What would you like people to think of you?
- How do you want to be remembered?
- What would you like people not to say about you? How would you like to not be remembered?
- What did you discover?
- What did others teach you? What did you teach others? What did you learn along the way?
- How did your life change over the years? Why?
- What did you do for the world? What did it do for you?
- What else?

2. Write. Record. Doodle. Whatever. Repeat

Now, get comfy, set a timer, put on some music if you are so inclined and write, record, draw, doodle, scrawl, whatever. Write wantonly for at least twenty minutes. Longer if you can, shorter if you can't. Now is not the time to judge, edit or censor. Just produce. No one needs to see this stuff but you. That said, if you disclose deep dark secrets or things you don't want to share with the world, once you are done scrawling, make sure to put those scrawls in a safe place.

3. Write Your Draft

Now that you have extracted the dust motes from beneath the sofa of your existence, bring them into the light of day and assemble them into some sort of draft form. Not everything needs to be included. It doesn't need to be perfect. It just needs to be a draft.

4. Edit, Revise and Finalize (just this version)

You can write it by hand in crayon or in ink, you can write it on your tablet or computer, you can write in a song, make an audio recording or do a video or a create a slide deck. It is yours.

5. Consider Next Steps

It's done. It may or may not eventually be used in the future, it may change in the intervening years, but thinking about how we would like to be remembered is a great starting point in figuring out how we want to live. We will be using your autobiography for many of the future exercises during the rest of the year. Now you have completed an autobiography, is this something you would like to share? Is this something you would like to share with your family, friends, loved ones? Would you like to have it printed or published when you do pass on?

Another version:

There are several ways to go about writing an obituary, but the best way starts with you recollecting events from your life that were meaningful or important to making you the person that you are today. Here are some tips for writing your own obituary.

- Think through and list out your accomplishments
 - Write out anecdotes of events and happenings in your life
 - Create a timeline of your life in chronological order so you don't miss anything out
 - Ask others for their input, it's hard to see all your accomplishments objectively
 - Read other obituaries for inspiration
 - Find a recent photo that you'd like to use
 - Live every day to its fullest so you have lots to write about
- See more at: http://obituarieshelp.org/articles/writing_your_own_obituaries.html#sthash.9969AECw.dpuf

**That which once came from the earth
Has returned again to the earth.**

**That which once belonged to the spirit
Has returned again to the Ancient Ones.**

The wheel has turned.

**That which belongs to fellowship and love —
That which belongs to the circle —
Remains with us.**

Nothing is final.

**No farewell is the last farewell.
The wheel turns onwards
And we who remain behind
Know that one day we will once again
Share of bread and wine with our sister.**