

Difficult Memories, Loss & Resilience

For material involving bereavement, estrangement, illness, war, trauma or other subjects that require control and care.

This is preparation, not homework. You do not need complete dates, perfect memory, or a box of scanned records. Circle what helps. Leave the rest. Uncertainty is part of an honest history.

Before we speak

- Decide what may be explored, what should be handled gently, and what is off limits.
- Separate facts you know from interpretations you hold.
- Identify people whose privacy must be protected.
- Choose whether the aim is witness, understanding, reconciliation, legacy, or simply an honest record.

Gather only if it is easy

- Only documents you are comfortable sharing
- A short chronology if events are complicated
- Names and relationships needed to avoid confusion
- Nothing at all, if documents would make the first conversation harder

Prompts worth thinking about

- What can be said safely?
- What must not be minimized?
- What do people misunderstand about what happened?
- What helped you continue?
- What should future readers know without being forced to relive every detail?

Set your boundaries first

Before the interview, decide what may be explored, what should be handled carefully, and what is off limits. You can change those boundaries later. A useful history does not require surrendering privacy.

After the first conversation

No quotation is given before the first conversation. If the project is a fit, use the Story Mixer to show the balance you want - emotional depth, humour, intimacy, historical context, voice and boundaries. I then assess the actual scope and normally send a written quotation within 24 hours.