

SILVERSCREEN

SHINE THE SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR SILVER SCREEN STAR!

Thank you for joining us for the web event, ***Capturing the Stories of our Elders -- From Hollywood to our Own Families***. We wanted to follow up and share our DIY Toolkit to assist you with making your own videos. Whether you're on a shoestring budget or interested in a professionally produced film, we want to help you interview your older loved ones and share their stories with the world.

If you are reading this, you probably know someone who is living their silver years in an inspiring way. What's their secret? How can you get them to impart wisdom, lessons and stories?

Our goal is simple but important -- To capture stories from older generations that will educate us, help shape our lives now and prepare us for our later years.

This Silver Screen Studios toolkit will guide you to create a short video, an experience the whole family can enjoy together!

If we have learned anything over this past year, this is the first and most important step:

Don't wait. Capture the stories now!

Let's Get Started!

Equipment – Keep it simple.

During the pandemic, we are using the digital devices and applications most available to all of us to interview loved ones. The most common platforms are Zoom and Facetime. Both have recording options and are easy to use, though you might want to help your older loved ones better navigate the platforms before the interview.

You can get started on your interviews using:

- Smartphone
- Laptop or computer
- Lighting: Extra lights if your setting is dim.

Pro Tips – Know before you shoot.

- Whatever smartphone device you use, shoot horizontal and never vertical.
- Position your subject so that they are looking into the camera. You, the interviewer, should be off camera.
- Record in a quiet space.
- Pick a well-lit area.

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Tips for a Successful Interview.

- Prepare your questions. Drawing a blank? See our list of Silver Screen Studio questions below.
- Say what? Have your subject repeat your question before they answer, to give context to the recorded interview. For example, you ask, “Where were you born?” Your subject responds, “I was born in Boston”, as an example.
- Shhhh. Zip it when the other person is talking. Watch out for the “hmmm,” “uh huh” and “right.” But feel free to nod, smile, frown...quietly. In other words, put yourself on mute when your subject is talking!
- Avoid asking “yes” or “no” questions.
- Don’t stop recording when the interview is “over.” Sometimes the best interviews start when the official interview winds down. Conversations often continue at a more relaxed pace, especially if your subject was nervous at the beginning.
- Sharable & sweet. Using your smartphone or computer editing features, pick the best pieces of wisdom to share. This is a great opportunity to get your kids involved, Teenagers and young adults are master editors these days!

Editing - Turning Your Interview Into a Finished Product

Now that you’ve completed your interview, you’re ready to share it with others. But first, you want to make sure it looks as good as possible. That’s where video editing comes in. While this can feel overwhelming, it’s actually pretty straightforward. There are a number of commercially available tools you can use that are perfect for beginners.

YouTube and Vimeo, the two most popular video sharing sites, provide basic video editing tools once you upload your videos to their site. You can sign up for a free account on either platform and follow the prompts to upload, edit and share your video.

If you are a bit more comfortable with editing software, you might want to use the built in editing software iMovie on a Mac or via the Photos app on a PC. Both of these software applications are very intuitive but if you’re stuck there are plenty of YouTube tutorials you can find that will walk you through the process.

If you’re an editing wiz, you might want to use professional editing software like Adobe Premiere or Final Cut Pro.

And if you’re still stuck, just reach out to us. We’re happy to work with you to professionally edit your video that can be cherished by friends and family for years to come.

Some additional thoughts.

- 1 is the loneliest number. You don’t have to just interview one family member at a time. Multiple family members - a married couple, siblings, etc. - can be interviewed together.
- We recognize that your older family member may be suffering from Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia. While this may present certain challenges as you interview them, here are some tips to guide you in the process:

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- Pick a time of day where your older loved one is at their best. One of the symptoms of dementia is sundowning, a condition that can cause confusion, anxiety or depression later in the day. If this is the case, you may want to conduct your interview earlier in the day.
- Try to record your interview in a place that is free of distractions or things that may confuse your loved one. If you're not recording the interview in person, ask the caregiver or nurse who assists your relative to help you.
- Use familiar objects or sounds to prompt a response. Sometimes a piece of music, home movie or a photograph might stimulate a memory that your interview subject is having a hard time articulating. Ask them if they remember when they first heard a certain song, or who the other people are in a particular photograph.
- Pace yourself. If your interview subject seems like they're getting fatigued, it's probably best to wrap up the interview and try again on another day. This process is a marathon, not a sprint. You may need to interview your older family member multiple times.

Questions & Prompts

Pick a few questions from each section that you will enjoy asking and your subject will enjoy answering. You know them best. Before you start asking the questions, film a five to 10 second introduction, describing who you are and who you are interviewing and **WHY YOUR OLDER LOVED ONE IS A SILVER SCREEN STAR!**

Getting started.

- Ask your subject to please look at the camera and not at you.
- Ask them to repeat the question after you've asked, to create a complete sentence. For example, "What did you have for breakfast?" "For breakfast, I had..."

The Basics and Background: (You can talk all day here, and we hope you do!)

- What is your full name?
- How old are you?
- Where did you grow up?
- Tell us about religious/spiritual rituals while growing up
- Tell us about your childhood
- Tell us about meeting your partner
- Tell us about raising a family
- Tell us about your work and creative pursuits

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What gets you up in the morning?

- How do you start your day (breakfast, exercise, newspaper)?
- What gives you the most pleasure? What are your favorite things to do during the day?
- What inspires you at this age in your life that you didn't expect?

How old do you feel?

- What has surprised you the most about getting older?
- How do people treat you as you get older?
- What are some of the challenges you bump up against? How do you overcome them?

What's your secret?

- How do you stay active, curious, and engaged?
- How do you stay healthy? What is your routine with diet and exercise?
- What is the secret to fulfilling and lasting relationships with family and friends?

How did you handle isolation during the pandemic: advice for younger generations

- How did you navigate the challenges that arose during the pandemic?
- What can you teach other generations about resilience during challenging times?
- What has been the hardest part of the pandemic for you?
- What are you looking forward to as the pandemic gets under control and people are vaccinated?

What do you love about life?

- What are you grateful for?
- What brings you joy right now?
- How would you like people to remember you?
- What would you tell your 20-year-old self?

Shine the Spotlight on your Silver Screen Star!

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