

As we enter into February - when everyone's focus seems to be on love and Cupid and all that Valentine's stuff - I'm thinking about love. Not just romantic love, but all different kinds of love. This past weekend, my father-in-law passed away and that also got me thinking about love, how we express it, and making sure we leave a record of those we have loved. Thankfully, I made a small scrapbook for my inlaws' 50th wedding anniversary, so I already have lots of pictures from his life and have a record of sorts to share at the funeral. He had been diagnosed with dementia several years ago and by the time we knew, most of his stories were lost. What he could remember was sketchy, so we had missed the opportunity to record his story. Now there's so much we don't know. I find that just tragic - that someone who was loved has left us without passing on his story. I know think about it & I wish I had more foresight when I had the chance.

So here's what I'm hoping to inspire in you this month. Who in your life has an important story that you need to get? Your grandmother? Your father? A godparent, teacher, child or close friend? Whose story would you regret not having if they died? This month, pretend that person has only a month to live. Sit down, write out questions to which you'd like answers and then make an appointment to interview him/her. Ask the questions, but more importantly, listen. Let the stories flow out organically - something amazing or important might slide out without prompting. Bring a tape recorder along and record the session - don't worry about taking notes. Then, not only do you have the story, but you've also got a forever record of this person's voice. Yes, it's a little bit of work, but you'll be so thankful you to! ok the t ime when the stories pass on with the special person.

If you're looking for someplace to start in forming questions, here are few links that might help:

<http://www.storyarts.org/classroom/roots/family.html#questions>

[http://www.birley.org/a\\_family\\_history\\_questionnaire.htm](http://www.birley.org/a_family_history_questionnaire.htm)

<http://www.storypreservation.com/easyways.html>

And remember, if any of this sparks a layout, please go ahead and post it in our gallery! I would REALLY love to see your work & read your stories!

<http://www.butternugsquash.com/PhotoPost/index.php>