

# MEMORY DETECTIVES" INTERVIEW GUIDE

## HOW TO INTERVIEW A RELATIVE (Without it feeling like an interrogation)

Dates are found in papers, but stories are found in people. Use these "icebreaker" questions to trigger the memories of your parents or grandparents.

### LEVEL 1: WARMING UP (Sensory and Easy)

- What is the first toy you remember having?
- What did your grandparents' house smell like? Was there a special meal they used to prepare?
- Who was your best friend in school and what did you play during recess?
- What was your first pet?

### LEVEL 2: DAILY LIFE (Context)

- How were holidays (Christmas, New Year) celebrated when you were a child?
- What was your first job and what did you do with your first paycheck?
- How did you meet your partner? What was your first date like?
- Was there a fashion or hairstyle from your youth that you laugh at today?

### LEVEL 3: DEPTH (Values and Challenges)

- Was there a difficult moment (economic, health-related) that the family had to overcome together?
- What makes you proudest of our family?
- Is there a relative who is rarely spoken of but who makes you curious?
- If you could give just one piece of advice to future generations, what would it be?

### GOLD TIPS FOR RECORDING:

1. Use your cell phone, but put it in "Airplane Mode" so it doesn't ring.
2. Ask a question and wait. Sometimes, silence helps the person remember more things. Don't interrupt.
3. Bring old photos. Nothing sparks memory better than saying: "Who is this gentleman with the mustache?"

## EMAIL TEMPLATES (Copy and Paste)

### CONTACT MODELS FOR RELATIVES

Instructions: Copy these texts, fill in the spaces in brackets [...], and send them by email or WhatsApp.

#### **OPTION A: Contacting a distant cousin (Formal but warm)**

Subject: [Common Surname] Family Research - Greetings from [Your City]

Hello [Cousin's Name],

I hope you are doing well. My name is [Your Name] and I am the grandson/daughter of [Grandparent's Name].

I am spending some time organizing the photos and history of the [Surname] family and I saw that we share great-grandparents. I am writing because I found some data and old photos that I think you might like, and I would love to share them with you.

I am not asking for anything complicated; I would simply like to make sure this information reaches all descendants. If you have any data or anecdotes about [Ancestor's Name], it would be great to add them, but if not, don't worry!

Let me know if you would like to receive what I have.

Warm regards.

#### **OPTION B: Asking for help with a "Mystery Photo" (For WhatsApp/Social Media)**

##### ***Ideal for the family group***

Hello family!

I need your detective help. I found this photo in Grandma's box (attach photo). We think it's from a wedding around 1950.

Does anyone recognize the gentleman on the right with the striped tie? Any clue, however small (a name, a nickname, or if the house in the background looks familiar), helps us a lot to complete the story.

Thanks to everyone!