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## *Introduction*

“Can I do it?” you ask, perhaps unsure of yourself. “Can I write a book of lifestories that portray my life’s experience to family and friends—and perhaps even to people I don’t know?”

Sure you can!

Every year, people—perhaps just like you who have never written a book—decide to write one of their lifestories and begin to create their memoir.

You, too, can write your lifestories and know the tantalizing success of achieving something you had never thought you would.

One woman from my Turning Memories Into Memoirs® Workshop, a woman with no prior writing experience, produced a book that was reviewed in *Library Journal*, a major American venue for pre-publication reviews. Hers was a sweet writing success that lead to speaking engagements, newspaper



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**Get Started, Keep Going**  
Strategies for Lifestory Writers

interviews, and, best of all, sharing her stories with an appreciative audience that was larger than she could find merely among her own friends and acquaintances.

But, her real success—as yours will be—was that she achieved her goal of preserving her story for posterity.

Success—whether you define it as private or public—can be yours, too, but it will call for commitment and effort on your part. You will have to put your “nose to the grindstone”—or more precisely, your fingers to the computer keyboard—and work on a regular and frequent basis. You will have to search for meaning in levels well beyond “who did what when” and you will have to pay attention to the mechanics of your writing.

“But, I’ve never done this before,” you insist, sure that your situation is different from my workshops’ and different from that of the hundreds of thousands of people who have already succeeded in writing their personal and family stories.

No problem! Neither had my writing student. She faced a greater difficulty than most writers: not only had she, like you perhaps, never written before, but she had not spoken English until she was well into her thirties!



## **Exercise 1**

### **Write Your Extended MemoryList**

- Make a list of all (things and people) that will get in the way of writing your memoirs. Include your experience with writing and your talents, your education, your current level of income, and any other sorry thing you want to dredge up from your ledger of difficulties.

- Go back to the list of items that will block your success. Find at least one way that you will be able to compensate.

- Study your list of supports and include at least one way that you will enhance each of them. Doing this, you will derive even more support from each of these.

- Place the writing from this exercise in a three-ring binder.<sup>1</sup>

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1. *The Lifewriter's MemoryBinder, A Companion to Turning Memories Into Memoirs* by Denis Ledoux. Soleil Press \$21.95