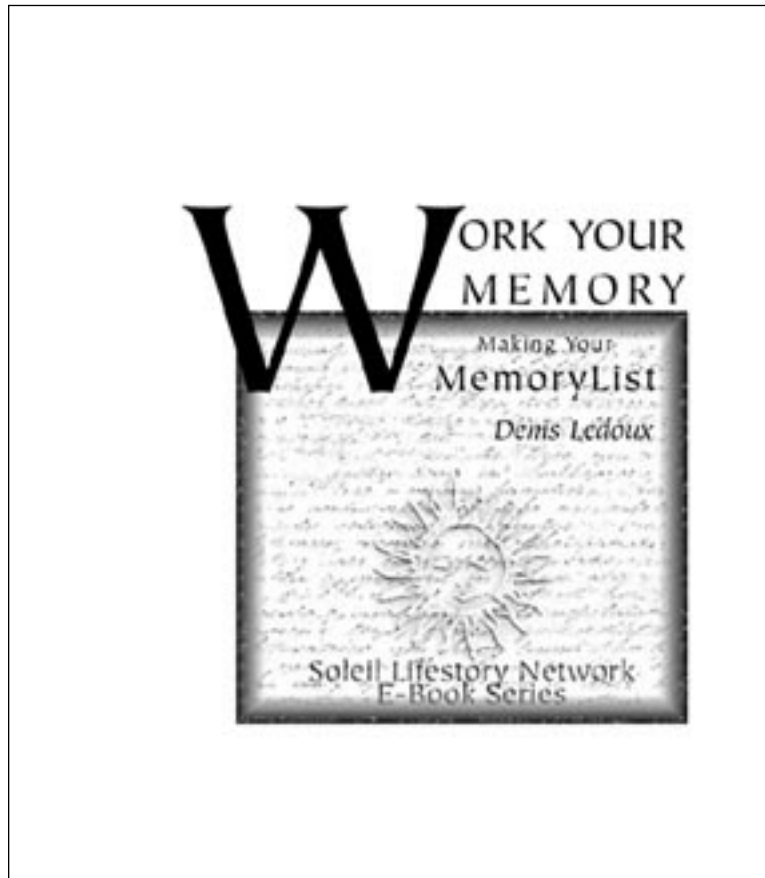


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## **Chapter 1**

# ***Your MemoryList— An Essential Writing Tool***

Writing about the whole of your life can be daunting—even when you're still relatively young, let alone when you're 60 or 80. What you need (besides the advice to write one story at a time!) is a writing guide to see you through the ups and downs of your project.

When you are traveling, your chances of getting where you want to go are greatly increased by a clear, detailed map. It is the same in lifewriting.

There is such a map for your lifewriting journey: it's called the **MemoryList**.

Once done, your MemoryList will serve as the road map you need to be successful in your lifewriting

**L**ike everything else in lifewriting, compiling a MemoryList is something the writer does one step at a time.

journey. Lifewriting without a MemoryList is like setting out on a journey without directions.

**A MemoryList is an unedited list of everything and anything you have ever done, said, thought, or felt in your life, and of everyone and everything you have ever known.**

### ***Your MemoryList Can Easily Include Hundreds of Items***

A useful one contains anything and everything you can remember about your life. You can create a MemoryList for the whole of your life or for distinct periods—one at a time.

A secret to creating your MemoryList with ease is to be absolutely uncritical about the items you include in it.

No *ifs*, *ands* or *buts*. Uncritical.

A MemoryList will hold much information about:

- ◆ people and places you have known,
- ◆ your feelings about the past,
- ◆ the color of the wallpaper of your room when you were a child.

A MemoryList can really be quite easy to compile. Start by letting your mind wander through the past—**uncritically**. A wonderful thing happens when you don't stop yourself to ask if this memory is important

**S**ome things you write on your MemoryList may be intended for a wide audience while others may be just for you. Because a memory is on your MemoryList does not mean you have to share it with anyone!

Excerpt from  
**Work Your Memory**  
The MemoryList E-Book

or not or if you feel good about that incident or time of your life or not: you find yourself remembering more and more.

Later, you find that *all* the memories you have come up with are important in some way and *all* of them can be used eventually to write successful and interesting lifestories.

In the Turning Memories® Workshops, people come in telling me that they can't remember much.

"It's a waste of time to ask me to remember," they say. "I just don't remember. That's just me."

"Ok," I answer, "then why don't you simply write down the names of your mother and father and a few memories you have of them. If these lead to additional memories, jot those down, too. Don't worry about it."

I know what will happen: I have never met a workshopper who has not gone from not remembering to adding just one memory to a second and then to another and to another until a sizeable MemoryList has developed. By the second or third workshop session, these people who were adamant that they couldn't remember a thing are reporting that the floodgates of their past have been opened and memories are rushing in.

"I can't believe how much I'm remembering," they say.

Well, it's par for the course.



## **Exercise 1**

### **Write Your Extended MemoryList**

- Write a MemoryList of the people, events, and relationships in your life. You are to write from three to five words for each memory—enough to fix the memory so that you still understand it in a week. (But, this is not the time to write in sentences.) Change line with each memory. (One memory per line!)

Do not stop until you have at least 50 items on your list. Eventually you should have three, four, or five times more than that. The more you do now, the easier your story writing will be later.

Remember: your MemoryList is a map. The more details it contains, the easier it will be to get to your destination (your lifestory).



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