

Ask about one ordinary memory

FREE STORY CONVERSATION KIT • Robert W. Linn, PM • Brotherhood of Purpose. Prepare an invitation and a few questions. No purchase or special equipment is needed. Practice with made-up stories and no recording.

Words for an invitation

“Would you like to talk about a lodge memory sometime? You may say no or skip a question. We would first agree how the conversation would work. Would you like time to think?”

If declined: “Thank you for considering it.”

Choose one opener. Ask one part and wait.

“Where did you grow up, and what did your folks do?”

“What brought you to this town, or kept you here?”

“When did you first feel you belonged?”

“Where did you sit? Who sat next to you?”

“What did you eat? Who cooked?”

Follow his words

If he says, “I sat near the kitchen,” ask, “What do you remember about that spot?” Avoid “So you felt left out?” That supplies your own meaning.

Ask one thing at a time. A memory is his account, not proof of every fact.

For a real talk, ask separately before keeping story notes. Recording, file access, storage, and later use need clear agreements. This practice kit grants none. Leave private ritual and other people’s private matters out.

A filled story-conversation plan

Made-up plan for page 3. Alex practices with the name Ben. These are proposals, not a booked conversation or granted permission.

Topic and purpose: one ordinary supper. Alex wants to understand the small jobs that made the evening possible.

Proposed setting: fifteen minutes at a quiet lodge table. Ben may suggest another place, length or time.

Invitation: “Would you like to talk about a lodge supper sometime? You may say no. Would you like time to think?”

If declined: “Thank you for considering it.” No further request is assumed.

Opening: “What did you eat?”

Optional follow-up: “Who cooked?”

Optional follow-up: “What do you remember about the kitchen?”

Ask one part, then wait. Follow Ben’s answer instead of reading every prompt.

Pause: “Would you like to pause, stop or change the subject?”

Close: “Thank you. Shall we stop here?”

Alex accepts the answer without asking for a reason.

Still to agree: willingness, purpose, time, place and length. No recording, saved story notes or sharing is agreed.

If recording is wanted later, check rules and agree listeners, storage, services, limits, changes and retention first. New uses need separate review.

Next preparation: Alex will rehearse the invitation and accepting no on October 5, 2026. He will check what follow-through he can offer before inviting Ben.

This plan is complete as preparation. Ben owes no story. Practice without recording; keep private ritual and other people’s private details out. Use page 4 to rehearse.

Write your conversation plan

Use the filled plan first. Practice with made-up names. Write your plan, not someone's story or private contact details. All arrangements are proposals until agreed.

Keep answers short. Before printing, check all words show. Use a separate sheet for more, labeled with this page, question and any record IDs.

Practice name. Ordinary topic. Why ask about it?

Proposed length and place. Words for the invitation.

One opening question. Two optional follow-ups.

Words to accept no, pause, and close.

What still needs agreement? My next preparation step and date.

Check that you have one opener, a way to accept no and one next action. This sheet is not permission to record, keep notes or share.

Rehearse and check your plan

On your own — five minutes

Read your invitation aloud. Imagine “No, thank you” and practice accepting it.

Then invent one harmless answer to your opening question. Ask one follow-up using the answer’s words. Adjust your plan.

With a brother — eight minutes

Use invented names and stories; do not record or take story notes. Take three minutes each to invite, ask one question and accept a pause. Spend the final two minutes checking both plans. Either person may watch or pass.

Leading a class — ten minutes

0–2: read, “We will practice with invented stories. You may pass. Nothing is recorded.”

2–4: read the example.

4–8: invite pairs to rehearse for two minutes each; solo writing is welcome.

8–10: ask for one helpful phrase. If quiet, read, “Thank you for considering it.”

Stop private details with “Let us use an invented example.”

Before calling the plan ready

Can you point to the topic, proposed time/place, three prompts, refusal/pause words and next task? Are unanswered permission questions still marked unanswered? If something is missing, add it before using the plan.

The full Let Him Talk booklet adds recording agreements, equipment help, forty question groups, file care, and separate use decisions. This free kit works on its own. Start with one willing person, not a plan to collect praise.

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