

This is Stacy Julian with episode 2 of, Exactly Enough Time. You might think this podcast is about productivity. I definitely love to rock a day and get stuff done, but exactly enough time is much more about being present. It's about recognizing the time you have before it's gone. It's about owning what you love. I love asking questions and inviting more of whatever that is into your life. In this podcast I tell stories and invite you to celebrate people, places and things that make you and your life amazing!

I published my first episode and then I danced around my kitchen because I'm so excited that I'm finally doing this. It's the very next day, like morning after, of course, this when the voice in my head starts saying things like "you're going to run out of stuff to talk about", you know. or "you're such a starter but you have always had trouble seeing things through. You know this, right?" or "you don't even know what to talk about in episode 2, do you? I'm guessing that you have a similar voice in your head. Seth Godin calls this our "lizard brain". In his book The War of Art Steven Pressfield calls this resistance. Well, I'm back and I've decided to give my voice a name. I'm going to resist my lizard brain by speaking directly to her. From now on and forever her name will be Persephone, the formidable venerable majestic queen of the underworld, in Greek mythology. Have you ever considered naming your voice? If you did, what would you name it? My hope is that now, because I know her name, I can quickly identify her, speak to her directly, with a great deal of kindness, of course, but decisively tell her I am not interested. Like this, "Persephone, on some level I believe that you believe that you have my best interest at heart, but it turns out I'm not interested in what you think. So I need you to please sit down and shut up." Persephone clearly does not know what Addie knows. Which is, that I can talk and talk and talk, switching gears multiple times a minute. What Addie knows, trumps what Persephone does. So, go Addie, I am all over this podcast in my own very unique and distractible way.

So, episode 2, I don't really know what to call it yet, but I will know by the time I publish it. But I'm going to respond to a question that I received from one of my blog readers, Leslie. She emailed me and asked, or said, "I have a dilemma, I have two brothers both of whom in the last two months have been diagnosed with terminal illnesses. I know I want to give them each a book that tells them what I love about them, but I also want to get your take on how to best preserve their stories going forward. I also recognize that without sounding callous there might be a product here that meets the needs of people in my exact situation. Those who have a known window of time where they get to tell the story for those whose time is limited. Your advice and insight would be greatly appreciated. Gratefully, Leslie."

Wow, right? So I thought about this question from Leslie for many days and then I responded. As I'm now sharing this with you, there are in my mind-my opinion, from my experience, really two things that you want to facilitate in a situation like this. #1. you want to help yourself and others remember and share stories about this person. In Leslie's case, her brothers. Okay and #2 you want to help this person, in Leslie's case, her brothers, share their own stories. So you want to share your memories, stories, thoughts, feelings and you want to help this person do the same. So I emailed Leslie back and I said, "my first thought after reading your email has remained my first recommendation and that is for you to create or orchestrate the creation of a "Stories I Love" album for each brother. The concept here is that you gather 10 photos from

each brother's life and then record and by that I mean-write out-detailed memories that each photo causes you to recall. So it's basically a photo on one page and then a short detailed recollection on the opposite page. The emphasis with this project, this album, is not how the pages look, but the emphasis is on the stories and the memories that can span many years even a lifetime. I personally love that one person can create a "Stories I Love" album or that one person, Leslie, or you listening, can organize a group effort so you can gather the 10 photos all on your own or you can reach out to sisters-in-law or other family members and ask them to help you and they can each contribute one or more photos along with their recollections or stories.

This is a powerful concept, especially during the time of grieving. Because when we grieve, memories will surface and stories will flow. This gives you a place to capture them. You truly can document a lifetime of memories in just a few pages when you simplify the process, the approach. I generally include only 10-12 photos in each "Stories I Love album" but you can for sure do more depending on the format or the album size that you choose. I've partnered with Close to My Heart, a scrapbooking company, to design story based products that you can purchase, that will guide you through. In this case, the "Stories I Love" process. You can learn more about these product kits by visiting [closetomyheart.com](http://closetomyheart.com). Then you click on "shop" and then you scroll down and you click on "Story by Stacy". I am the Stacy, in "Story by Stacy". So, for Leslie and everyone listening, the first thing you want to do when you have limited time with a loved one is to remember and record your own memories, thoughts, feelings, etc and the second thing is to help this person, in Leslie's case, her two brothers, document their own stories. I just want to reiterate that. I am still working on being the kind of person that can facilitate stories from others but I will share what I currently know and what I'm currently doing that is super easy.

Basically, you just ask questions, but not just any kind of question. There are certain questions that are very useful in helping people share. So you want to start by asking a question that allows the person to vividly remember and retell. So, a first question might go something like this:

I would like you to walk me through your childhood home. By asking that, what happens in a person's brain or memory is, they go back to a place that they are very familiar with. A place that they have walked through countless times and because of that physical relationship, as they go back in their mind's eye and walk YOU through that place. They will recall all kinds of memories. All kinds of detail, sensory memories. You will be helping them to access their earliest memories and then begin to share those in an unencumbered way.

Okay, but first- this is the most important thing, before you ask any question- first, turn on your microphone. and you're like my microphone? Yes, the one that you carry around with you that is with you always, that is on your smartphone and if you didn't know you had a microphone on your smartphone, find a teenager and they will show you where it's at. Okay, but before you ask any questions always turn on a microphone and then you really just sit back and listen.

As someone begins to walk you through a place that they're very familiar with. They will talk for probably a good while, several minutes, and then if the memories start to slow down a little you can just prompt them by asking:

What else do you remember about....whatever they just shared with you. So maybe they've been talking about how they would gather around their fireplace in their childhood home and you could then say, "what else do you remember about the fireplace in your home growing up?" So you're just giving them another chance to tell you more.

After this initial interview, you've primed their memory pump okay and you can now begin asking additional questions. But what I like to do is ask questions that not only then recall but also help them observe themselves. You kind of help them put themselves in a third person scenario so they're going to be talking about themselves or thinking about themselves. Okay and they then will generally share what they most want to share. So, for example, let's just cut to the chase here's a great question:

What are three words that you would use to describe yourself?

What this kind of question does is it helps them prioritize their memories and stories, because they might say something like- "hard worker" or "teacher"

Then you can ask:

Tell me about being a.....teacher or

Tell me about a time when you've worked very hard in your life.

So they've already prioritised for you that I want to be \_\_\_\_\_

These are words that I would use to describe myself. So that's those are at the top of the memories they want to share. Then it gives you the opportunity to explore that with them.

Here's another question similar:

What do you consider your life's work to be? A great question.

Tell me about something you never thought you would be able to do and another.

How do you want loved ones to remember you?

Really there is no wrong way to ask questions.

Here's what Leslie shared when she emailed me back. She said "I'm headed out to Colorado for 2 weeks to aid my brother in this exact thing. He wants to tell his story to me and have me document it. He saw an album at Thanksgiving that I had the chance to do for my dad before he died. It was an album about his time in Korea, a part of his story that he never spoke of. But that I was able to tell after finding some memorabilia from this time there and then-here's the key part- just asking questions. It enhanced my understanding of why, as an adult, my father never liked to travel much. He had already traveled to the other side of the world and experienced so much loneliness that home had a deep and abiding appeal to him." Leslie goes on. That's an involved explanation that illustrates profoundly to me what you are trying to help people understand. That at our most fundamental, we are our stories. "In a bizarre way," she says "I feel so blessed. I have a unique opportunity with both my brothers to tell them in a tangible way how their time has made a difference in my life and in my children's lives. How they impacted me." I love that Leslie, I love that. We all have opportunities to tell those we love in tangible ways how their time is making a difference for us. Okay?

Just so you know, I will put these questions in the show notes for this episode. Show notes can be found at [stacyjulian.com](http://stacyjulian.com) when you click on "podcast". I will also challenge you there to name your inner and most critical voice so that you can do more of the work and more of the sharing that you are meant to be doing. Remember, if you find yourself in a situation like Leslie, where you have limited time to document, focus on getting the stories first and by all means do some real time sharing, maybe by social media during this process. This is a fantastic way to easily involve others who care and want to be involved. If you want to give this person you love something, make it very simple, don't overcomplicate it. Keep it simple and keep it very story focused. You can do this. You have exactly enough time to document memories of those you love and you have exactly enough time to help them document their own stories. Thank you so much for listening!