A conversation, not an interview to finish

For a conversation with a willing adult relative or someone you regard as family. Pick one or two prompts. Listen in the language they prefer, leave room for silence, and stop whenever either of you wants to.

Agree before you begin

Explain why you are asking and who, if anyone, might see the notes. Ask before writing or recording. Skipping a question, keeping something private, or changing the subject are all welcome. Choosing to talk is not permission to publish.

1. A place

Which place from your life would you like me to picture? What was an ordinary day there like?

2. A person

Who taught you something you still carry? What did they do, rather than just say?

3. A practice

Was there a meal, song, saying or family habit you would like remembered?

4. A choice

Is there a decision you are comfortable talking about? What mattered to you at the time?

5. A lesson

What has experience changed your mind about? It is fine if the answer is still unfinished.

6. A possibility

What would you like the next generation to feel free to discover for themselves?

These are new editorial prompts, not additions to Matt's original numbered insights. There is no right answer and no requirement to share a difficult experience.

Keep their words and your thoughts apart

Use a name or private label you both agree on. Mark remembered wording as approximate rather than making it look like a verbatim quotation.

Speaker / listener / date / place (only what you both want recorded)

The prompt we chose

Their words - note whether exact or approximate

My later reflection - my interpretation, not their statement

Details to check - uncertain dates, names or differing memories

Leave uncertainty visible. Do not fill a gap with a guess or an AI-generated detail.

Decide together what happens next

Read the notes back if they would like that. Ask what needs correcting, removing or leaving private. Do not include private information about other people just because it arose in conversation.

Corrections or things to leave out

Who may see these notes, and for what purpose?

Where will we keep them, and who will hold the copy?

What we need to ask again before sharing anything

Private notes, family circulation, public publication, recordings and use in an AI service are different choices. Discuss each separately; this worksheet does not authorise any of them. Do not upload another person's story to the Compass.

This is an informal reflection aid, not a legal consent form or a professionally reviewed oral-history protocol. It does not promise confidentiality after material has been shared.