





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

 something you have **STRONG FEELINGS** about.

 Something you **KNOW A LOT** about.

 Something you can **DESCRIBE IN GREAT DETAIL**.

 Something your **AUDIENCE** will be **INTERESTED** in.

 Something your **AUDIENCE** will feel

*from the past*

- ✓ *Written in the first person; told from one person's point of view*
- ✓ *Based on the truth*
- ✓ *Reveals the feelings of the writer*
- ✓ *Has meaning; shows what the author learned from the experience*
- ✓ *Focused on one event; about one point in the author's life*

✓ *At the end of the experience, the*

5. Defining Moments

6. Great achievements or creations

7. Pain/conflict stories

8. School stories

9. Stories about wishes/dreams that came true

10. Stories about disappointment or losses

11. Place stories

12. Rites of passage/Realizing you are growing up stories

13. Nature stories

14. Physical Hurt stories

15. Overcoming obstacle stories

16. First time I...stories

17. "Caught ya'!" Stories

Remember a birthday or a holiday you would like (or not like) to live over again:

- Remember a time when you got lost or separated from your family or friends? Remember a time when you got locked out of where you needed to be?
- Remember a time when your first impression of someone turned out to be completely wrong?
- Remember a time when you learned something from a child?
- Remember a problem with a haircut?...make-up?...an article of clothing?
- Remember a time when you almost won, but not quite?
- Remember a time when you were tricked or lied to?
- Remember your most embarrassing moment?
- Remember a time when you tried to cook something and it didn't turn out?

### **More ideas...**

#### **Take us with you:**

- When you had to move from one home to another
- To a movie when you were a child
- On a shopping trip with a parent, another family member, or a friend
- On a visit to the doctor's office
- To summer camp
- Back home for a family holiday meal
- To your childhood hiding place or special thinking place

#### **Can you:**

- Introduce us to the oldest person you can remember knowing?
- Tell us about a childhood friend whom you have continued to know all of your life?

...realizations have you experienced?

Using your map(s) to guide you, generate ideas from different events/experiences in your life that may help you choose a topic for your memoir.

Event/Experience from your life	Your response to the event/experience	New understanding or realization?



**Part 1. Choosing a Seed**

- ✓ Needs to be a small moment (not a trip to Cedar Point, but the first time you rode on a roller coaster)
- ✓ Needs to be meaningful
- ✓ Need to be able to answer "What did you learn from this experience?" "What lessons do you want to communicate by writing about this topic?"

Take one of your Events/Experiences from your What Will I Write About? tool. Create a cluster, brainstorm web or list on your chosen seed identifying the people, places or things you associate with your topic. Identify the SMALL MOMENT.

author's learning at the end.

- ✓ The memoir needs to show the BEFORE in several parts, not just once.
- ✓ The memoir needs to show the AFTER. How did the learning change the author's life? Why was it significant?
- ✓ Every event needs to build toward, show or explain the significance of the author's learnings. If it isn't doing those things it shouldn't be included.

### *Example*

Memorable Moment: The first time I got up on a surf board.

#### Event

#### Purpose

1. (before)

Getting thrashed by the waves

Shows how miserable I was

2. (before)

Watching others make it look so easy

Shows I felt like a failure

3. (before)

Getting cold, deciding to go in after one more  
try

Shows I was ready to give up

4. (memorable moment)

Successfully riding first wave to the beach

Shows my excitement and disbelief at success.

5. (after)



Fill in the chart and answer the questions regarding your chosen event/experience for your memoir.

Event	Purpose
1. (Before)	
2. (Before)	
3. (Before)	
4. (Memorable Moment)	
5. (After)	

What is your memorable moment?

**DIALOGUE**

**A THOUGHT, A QUESTION, OR FEELING**  
*(What might you be thinking or feeling?)*

**A SOUND EFFECT** *(What sounds might you hear?)*

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Original Verbs:*  
\_\_\_\_\_



*Synonyms:*  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Original Verbs:*

*Synonyms:*  
1. \_\_\_\_\_