

Self Publishing Agency

FREE PRINTABLE

The Memoir Planner

An 8-page workbook to help you organize your memories, shape your story, and start writing with clarity.



Find your focus



Memory prompts



Life timeline



Chapter outline



Scene planner



People checklist



Writing tracker

*Stories
that
matter*

MOVE YOUR MEMORIES FORWARD

STEP 1

What is your memoir really about?

A memoir covers one part of your life, not all of it. Finish the sentence below. Try a few versions, then circle the one that feels truest.

“This is a book about how I...”

Who am I writing this for?

- ☐ My family and future generations
- ☐ Readers who share my experience (for example caregivers, veterans, immigrants, entrepreneurs)
- ☐ My clients and professional audience
- ☐ Someone else: _____

Why do I want to write it?

When a reader closes my book, I want them to feel or know...

STEP 2

Gather your memories

Quick lists unlock memories a blank page doesn't. Write a word or two for each; you'll come back to them later.

Homes I've lived in

People who changed me

Turning points

Jobs, roles and callings

The hardest day I remember

The happiest day I remember

Objects, photos or songs that bring it back

Things I've never told anyone (keep or cut later)

People I could talk to who were there

STEP 3

Your life timeline

Note the key events for each period, even roughly. Star (★) the ones that belong to the story you chose on page 2.

Years / age	What happened	Where I was · who was there
Childhood		
Teens		
20s		
30s		
40s		
50s		
60s and beyond		
Today		

Tip: check dates against letters, calendars, photos and records. Write “check” next to anything you’re unsure of.

STEP 4

Choose a structure

- ☐ **Chronological:** events in the order they happened. The easiest place to start.
- ☐ **Thematic:** each chapter explores one theme, such as home, work or faith.
- ☐ **Frame:** open with a key moment, then go back to show how you got there.
- ☐ **Braided:** two timelines alternate, such as past and present.

Chapter outline

#	Working title	What happens · what it means
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

STEP 5

Plan a scene

Scenes let readers live the moment with you. Copy this page for each important moment in your book.

Where are we?

When is it?

Who is there?

What can I see, hear or smell?

What was said (as best I remember)?

What's the tension or question in this moment?

What did it mean then, and what do I understand now?

Where are we?

When is it?

Who is there, and what happens?

What did it mean then, and what do I understand now?

STEP 6

People in your story

List everyone who appears in your book, so you can treat each person fairly and decide where to change names or details.

Name	Who they are to me	Change name?	Facts checked?	Sensitive details to review

Before you publish

- ☐ Facts about living people are accurate, or marked as “how I remember it”
- ☐ Private details are there to tell my story, not to settle a score
- ☐ Names and identifying details changed where a person isn’t central
- ☐ Sensitive chapters reviewed by a publishing attorney

General information, not legal advice.

STEP 7

Keep a steady routine

A little every day beats a lot once a month. Tick each day you write, and note your word count each week.

Week of	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Words

When your draft is done

- ☐ Rest it for a few weeks, then read it straight through
- ☐ Revise the big picture first, then scenes, then sentences
- ☐ Ask two or three trusted readers for honest feedback
- ☐ Work with a professional editor
- ☐ Choose how to publish: self-publishing, a publisher or a family edition

Want help along the way? Our team helps authors write, edit, design and publish memoirs, or write the whole book with you in your voice. Book a free consultation at **selfpublishing.agency** or call **(213) 982-1080**.