BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Recording Family Stories

Story services, voice memos, video interviews, good questions and keeping the recordings safe — one step at a time

A plain-English guide to saving the voices and stories of the people you love

Take your time — pressing record can't hurt a thing

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For iPhone, Android, Storyworth, Remento & Zoom · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to recording a loved one's stories: choosing a story service or using your own phone, recording voices, calls and video, asking good questions, and keeping every recording safe for the generations to come. Read it in any order and at your own pace; there's no test, and you can't fall behind. Prices and steps were checked against the companies' own pages in November 2026. If a screen looks a little different on yours, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting Started

Why the stories are worth saving now, the handful of words you'll meet, and the four simple ways to capture them, from a weekly email service to the phone already in your pocket.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Every family has a storyteller, or a quiet person whose stories nobody has thought to ask for yet. How your parents met. What the farm, the mill or the old neighborhood was like. What you were doing the day the news came over the radio. Those stories live in one place only, and that's in somebody's memory.

I'm Bill. For more than 30 years I've helped people with their technology, and saving a loved one's voice and stories is some of the most meaningful work there is. The good news is that you don't need special equipment. A phone you already own, a quiet room and a list of good questions will do the job. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it at your kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, one step at a time.

It's written for two kinds of readers: the **storyteller** (a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle who'd like to leave their stories behind) and the **family member** who wants to collect them. Either way, you're in the right place.

What this guide covers

- **Story services** like Storyworth, which email a question a week and turn the answers into a hardcover book, and similar services such as Remento.
- **Recording a voice** with Voice Memos on an iPhone, or the Recorder and Voice Recorder apps on Android phones, including the free written transcripts they can make.
- **Recording a phone call** with a faraway grandparent, the honest way, with their say-so.
- **Video interviews** on a phone: light, sound and a steady phone, plus recording a Zoom call.
- **Good questions to ask**, and how to handle the tender ones.
- **Consent and privacy**, so everyone stays comfortable.
- **Keeping the recordings safe**: names, formats, backups and sharing with family.
- **Making something** from the stories: a printed book or a slideshow.
- **AI voice cloning**: why a loved one's voice deserves a little care online.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this guide does for you

By the end you'll be able to record a loved one's stories clearly, keep those recordings safe for the grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and turn them into something the whole family can hold, read and listen to. And you'll know how to do it without anyone feeling put on the spot.

The honest "can't break it" promise

Pressing record, stopping, playing back and trying again can't hurt a thing. A bad recording costs nothing but a few minutes. There are only two moments in this whole guide that deserve a real pause, and I'll flag both: **deleting** a recording (always make sure there's a copy first), and **posting** a loved one's voice or video where strangers can see it. I'll show you how to do both safely.

GOOD TO KNOW

Facts current as of November 2026

Prices, plans and menu steps in this guide were checked against the companies' own pages in November 2026. Services change their prices often, so if a price on your screen differs, trust the screen.

And you're never stuck alone. If you'd like a hand setting up a recording or saving one you're afraid of losing, call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll do it together.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Why Record Family Stories Now

Most families mean to do this "one of these days." Here's the gentle case for starting this month instead.

What a recording saves that a photo can't

- **The voice itself.** The laugh, the accent, the way Grandpa always said a certain word. Great-grandchildren who never met someone can still hear them.
- **The why behind the photos.** A box of old pictures with no names on the back is a puzzle. Ten minutes of "who's that?" with the right person solves it forever.
- **Family history no record office has.** Census pages and certificates give dates. Only people can tell you what it was like.
- **A gift for the storyteller too.** Being asked about your life, and really listened to, is a pleasure at any age.

Start small

You don't need a project plan. One question and one ten-minute recording is a real start. Many families find that once the first story is saved, the next ones come easily.

TIP

A good first step this week

Pick one photo from an old album, sit down with the person in it, press record on your phone and ask: "Tell me about this picture." That's it. You'll find the steps for your phone in Part 3.

FROM BILL

If there's a voice you can't bear to lose

If a treasured voice is sitting only in an old voicemail or on a cassette, saving a copy is more urgent than anything else in this guide. My Digitizing Old Photos & Movies guide covers voicemails and tapes, and I'm glad to help: (330) 200-8042.

CHAPTER 3

Words Worth Knowing

A few words come up again and again. Here they are in plain English.

Word	What it means
Storyteller	The person whose stories are being saved. Storyworth and Remento use this word too.
Prompt	A question that gets someone talking, such as "What was your first job?"
Recording	A sound file (voice only) or a video file saved on your phone or computer.
Transcript	The words of a recording written out as text, so you can read, search, print or copy them. Many phones now make one for free.
Voice Memos	Apple's free recording app on iPhone, iPad and Mac.
Recorder / Voice Recorder	The recording apps on Android phones: **Recorder** on Google Pixel phones and **Voice Recorder** on Samsung Galaxy phones.
Cloud	Storage on a company's computers that you reach over the internet, such as iCloud, Google Drive or Amazon Photos. A copy there survives a lost or broken phone.
Backup	A separate, extra copy kept somewhere else, so one accident can't wipe out the only copy.
File format	The kind of file, shown by the letters at the end of its name, such as .m4a (sound) or .mp4 (video).
Consent	Plain permission. Everyone being recorded knows it and is happy about it.
Voice clone	A fake copy of someone's voice made by AI software from a sample of their real voice. Chapter 28 explains why that matters.

CHAPTER 4

Four Ways to Capture the Stories

There's no single right way. The best method is the one your storyteller is comfortable with. Here are the four main choices side by side.

Way	Good for	Cost	Where in this guide
A story service (Storyworth, Remento)	A storyteller who likes a weekly routine and a finished book at the end	About $69 to $199 for a year	Part 2
Voice recording on a phone	Easy, natural conversation; saving the voice itself	Free with your phone	Part 3
Video interview	Faces, expressions and showing old objects or photos	Free; a small tripod helps	Part 4
Writing it down	A storyteller who enjoys writing, or is shy of a microphone	Free	Chapters 5 and 26

How to choose

- **Loves email and a routine?** A story service gives a question every week and does the book for you.
- **Talks better than writes?** A phone recording, or a service that records by phone call.
- **Lives far away?** A recorded phone call (Chapter 14) or a recorded Zoom call (Chapter 17).
- **Has a box of photos and keepsakes?** A video interview lets them hold things up and point.

TIP

You can mix and match

Plenty of families do two at once: a weekly service for the written stories, and a phone recording at holidays when everyone is together. Nothing in this guide locks you into one choice.

GOOD TO KNOW

Ask the storyteller first

Before you buy anything, ask the person how they'd like to do it. A gift that feels like homework tends to sit unopened. A gift that fits the way they already like to talk gets used.

PART 2

Story Services: Storyworth and Others

How the popular question-a-week services work, what they cost in November 2026, recording by phone call, and what happens to the book and the stories when the year is up.

CHAPTER 5

How Storyworth Works

Storyworth is a paid service, often given as a gift to a parent or grandparent. For a year, it sends the storyteller one question a week. They answer in their own time, and at the end of the year the answers are printed as a hardcover book.

The weekly rhythm

1. Someone (often a grown child) buys Storyworth and enters the storyteller's name and email address.
2. Each week, the storyteller receives a question by **email or text**. Storyworth draws on a library of more than 500 questions.
3. The storyteller answers by **replying to the email**, by **writing on the Storyworth website**, or by **phone** (Chapter 7).
4. Family members the storyteller chooses receive the stories by email as they're written.
5. At the end of the year, the stories become a book.

The questions can be changed

The questions aren't set in stone. Storyworth says the questions can be **swapped**, **skipped**, or replaced with your own. If Mom would rather not talk about a certain subject, take it off the list. If the family has a question they've always wanted answered, add it. A missed week isn't lost either: questions stay open and can be answered later.

TIP

Make the first few questions easy

Put a light, happy question first, such as "What was your favorite meal growing up?" An easy win in week one makes week two much more likely. Chapters 18 and 19 have lists you can borrow from.

GOOD TO KNOW

It doesn't need to be long

A story can be a single paragraph. Some weeks it'll be a page, some weeks two lines. Both are worth keeping. Tell the storyteller there's no wrong length.

CHAPTER 6

Storyworth Plans and Prices

Storyworth's main product is called **Memoirs**. In November 2026 its pricing page lists three plans. Each covers a year of weekly questions and one printed book.

Plan	Price	What's different
Basic	$69.00	One year of questions and a hardcover book with a color cover and black-and-white pages. Includes Story Calls (Chapter 7).
Color	$99.00	Like Basic, with full-color pages (photos print in color) and more voice options.
Unlimited	$199.00 the first year, then $99.00 a year	Two full-color books, as many storytellers as you like, and every voice feature. The only plan that renews automatically.

Every plan also includes a free **e-book** and **audiobook** version. **Extra printed copies** for the rest of the family cost extra: Storyworth's help center lists $39 for an extra black-and-white book, and $79 for a color book of up to 300 pages (or $99.00 for 300 to 480 pages).

HEADS UP

Prices move, and older pages disagree

While checking, I found older Storyworth pages showing different prices, such as a $59 Basic plan. Sales are common around holidays too. Always look at the price on the checkout screen before you pay, and trust that over anything printed here.

HEADS UP

Unlimited renews by itself

If you choose **Unlimited**, it renews automatically each year unless you turn auto-renewal off in your account. Put a note on your calendar a few weeks before the year is up so you can decide.

Storyworth Celebrations

Storyworth also offers **Celebrations**, a different product where many people contribute stories about one person, for a birthday, retirement or memorial. Storyworth says it's free to start, and you pay only for the books, which start at $79.

CHAPTER 7

Storyworth by Voice: Story Calls

Not everyone wants to type. Storyworth has phone-based ways to answer, and any phone works, **including a landline**. The spoken answer is turned into written text for the story.

Feature	How it works
Story Calls	The storyteller requests a call, answers it, and talks after the beep. When they hang up, the written version is added to the story, usually within seconds.
Magic Interviews	Storyworth asks follow-up questions during the call, then turns the conversation into a written story rather than a word-for-word transcript.
Family Calls	A friend or family member joins the call, and a cleaned-up transcript of the conversation is added to the story.

Which plan includes which

Plan	Voice features
Basic	Story Calls
Color	Story Calls, plus a monthly Family Call and voice options
Unlimited	Story Calls, plus weekly Magic Interviews and weekly Family Calls

HEADS UP

Check your plan first

Storyworth's own pages don't all agree on which voice features come with which plan, and plans change. Before you count on phone answers for a storyteller who won't type, check what the checkout page says for the plan you're buying.

TIP

A quiet room makes better text

Storyworth recommends a quiet room to cut down on transcription mistakes. Turn off the TV and the radio, and close the window if the mower is running next door. It's the same advice as for any recording (Chapter 10).

GOOD TO KNOW

Read it over afterward

Computer transcription is good but not perfect, especially with names of people and places. Encourage the storyteller (or a helper) to read each story over and fix any misheard words before the book is printed.

CHAPTER 8

Photos, the Book and After the Year

Adding photos

Photos bring the stories to life. With Storyworth you can attach photos by **replying to the question email** with the pictures attached, or by **uploading** them in your account. Standard picture files like JPEG and PNG work; don't send photos as a PDF. There's no photo limit apart from the 480-page limit for a book, and usually one or two photos fit on a page.

TIP

Scan the old ones first

For old prints, take a clear photo of each one with your phone, or scan it, and attach that. My Digitizing Old Photos & Movies guide has the simplest ways to do it.

When the year ends

- On **Basic** and **Color**, Storyworth emails an offer to renew for another year or print the book. Its FAQ asks you to order the book within three months, or renew if you want to keep writing.
- The storyteller **keeps access** to the account after the year: they can still edit stories, add photos, answer questions sent during the year, and print new copies.
- To renew, go to **Manage Account** and choose **Manage Subscription**. A renewal doesn't include a book credit, but you can add one.
- **Unlimited** renews on its own unless auto-renewal is turned off.

STAY SAFE

Save your own copy too

A book on the shelf is wonderful, but keep a digital copy of the stories as well. Download the e-book when it's offered, and copy any recordings into your own backups (Part 6). A company's website isn't a backup on its own.

GOOD TO KNOW

Giving it as a gift

When you buy it as a gift, you'll enter the storyteller's details. It's kind to tell them it's coming, and to sit with them for the first answer so the first email doesn't feel like a test.

CHAPTER 9

Remento and Other Services

Storyworth isn't the only choice. Here's one popular alternative, described from its own website, and what to look for in any service.

Remento

- **How it works:** the storyteller gets a weekly prompt by text or email and **records a spoken answer** on any phone, tablet or computer. Remento says no app or login is needed. Recordings can run up to 30 minutes.
- **Writing it up:** Remento turns each recording into a polished written story, or a cleaned-up transcript if you prefer.
- **The book:** a hardcover with a **QR code** on each chapter that plays the original recording when scanned with a phone camera. So the book keeps the voice, not just the words.
- **Price:** $99.00 for a year of recordings, one storyteller and one hardcover book credit. Renewal is optional and only needed to keep recording new stories: $99.00 a year or $12 a month. Extra copies of a book up to 200 pages are $69. Each extra storyteller is a one-time $99.00.
- **After the year:** Remento says you don't need an active subscription to read your stories or to play and download your recordings.

HEADS UP

Page counts differ between Remento's pages

One Remento page lists books up to 380 pages; newer pages list 200 pages included and up to 380 for an extra charge. Check the current terms before you order a long book.

What to look for in any story service

- **Voice or writing?** If the storyteller won't type, pick a service built around talking.
- **Does the voice survive?** Some keep the audio and let you download it; others keep only the text.
- **Can you download everything?** Look for a way to save the stories, photos and recordings yourself.
- **What renews?** Know which plans charge again automatically.
- **Who can see the stories?** Check that only people you invite can read them.

GOOD TO KNOW

Comparison pages are written by the companies

Many "Storyworth vs. ..." comparisons online are written by one of the companies being compared. They're useful for features and prices, but read them knowing who wrote them.

TIP

You can do it free, too

A service is a convenience, not a requirement. With the free apps in Part 3, the questions in Part 5 and a photo book from Chapter 26, you can make the same keepsake yourself.

PART 3

Recording a Voice on Your Phone

Getting the room ready, the free recording apps on iPhone and Android, the written transcripts they make, and recording a phone call with a faraway loved one, honestly and with their say-so.

CHAPTER 10

Before You Press Record

The phone in your pocket has a better microphone than the tape recorders families used for decades. What makes the biggest difference isn't the equipment. It's the room. Five minutes of setup is worth more than any gadget.

The room

- **Quiet beats everything.** Turn off the TV, the radio and any fans. Close the window if there's traffic or a mower outside. A ticking clock or a refrigerator hum sounds louder on a recording than in the room.
- **Soft rooms sound better.** A living room with a rug, curtains and a sofa sounds warmer than a kitchen full of hard counters, which makes voices echo.
- **Sit close and comfortable.** Side by side or around the corner of a table, in good chairs. Nobody tells good stories while their back aches.
- **Keep a glass of water handy** for the storyteller. Talking for half an hour is thirsty work.

The phone

1. **Charge it**, or plug it in for a long session.
2. **Check there's room.** Voice recordings are small, but video fills a phone quickly (Chapter 16).
3. **Silence interruptions.** Turn on Do Not Disturb so calls and text chimes don't break in.
4. **Place the phone on a soft cloth** on the table, about an arm's length or closer from the storyteller, with the bottom of the phone (where the microphone usually is) pointed toward them.
5. **Don't hold it.** Hands fidget, and every rub and tap ends up on the recording.
6. **Make a ten-second test.** Record a few words, play them back, and adjust before the real thing.

TIP

Keep the phone still and out of mind

Once it's recording, turn the phone face down or set a napkin over it. People relax when they stop looking at the screen, and the stories get better.

GOOD TO KNOW

A small microphone is optional

A clip-on microphone that plugs into a phone can make voices clearer, especially in a noisy house. It's a nice extra, not a must. Make sure any microphone you buy says it works with your phone's charging port, and check the current price.

CHAPTER 11

Voice Memos on iPhone

Voice Memos is Apple's free recording app. It's already on every iPhone; if you can't find it, swipe down on the Home Screen and type **Voice Memos** in the search box.

Make a recording

1. Open **Voice Memos**.
2. Tap the big red **Record** button at the bottom.
3. Talk. The wavy line on screen shows the sound being picked up.
4. To take a break without ending, swipe up on the recording panel and tap **Pause**; tap **Resume** to carry on.
5. When you're finished, tap the red **Stop** button. The recording is saved automatically.

Give it a real name right away

New recordings get a name like **New Recording**, or the name of your street if Location Services is on. Fix it while you remember: tap the recording, tap its name, and type a new one, such as **Mom - growing up on the farm - Nov 2026**. Chapter 22 has a simple naming habit.

Trim the start and end

1. Tap the recording, then tap the **More** button (three dots) and choose **Edit Recording**.
2. Tap the **Trim** button and drag the yellow handles to the part you want to keep.
3. Tap **Trim**, then **Save**, then **Done**.

> HEADS UP
> **Trimming changes the original**
> Trimming can't be undone once saved. For a precious recording, make a copy first (Share > Save to Files, Chapter 24) and trim the copy. Honestly, a few seconds of "Is it on?" at the start never hurt anyone; you can leave it.

Recording mode

In **Settings > Apps > Voice Memos** there's a **Recording Mode** choice. Recent iPhones record in Spatial Audio with the built-in microphone; older ones record in Mono unless you turn on Stereo. For one person telling stories, any of them is fine. You don't need to change

anything.

Deleted one by mistake?

Don't panic. Deleted recordings go to the **Recently Deleted** folder in Voice Memos and stay there for 30 days unless you've changed that in **Settings > Apps > Voice Memos > Clear Deleted**. Open **Recently Deleted**, tap the recording and tap **Recover**.

STAY SAFE

Deleting for good reaches every device

If Voice Memos syncs through iCloud, deleting a recording from Recently Deleted removes it from your iPhone, iPad and Mac at once. Make sure there's a copy somewhere else before you empty that folder.

CHAPTER 12

Reading the Transcript in Voice Memos

Newer iPhones write out the words of a recording for you, for free. That means you can read a story back, search for a name, or copy the words into a letter or a book.

Does my iPhone do it?

Apple says Voice Memos transcription works on **iPhone 12 or later**, in English and a number of other languages, including Spanish, French, German and Italian. It isn't offered in every country. Older recordings are transcribed automatically when you open them, if they include speech.

Read it while recording

While recording, swipe up from the top of the wavy line and tap the **Transcription** button (it looks like a speech bubble with lines). The words appear as they're spoken. Tap it again to go back.

Read, copy or search afterward

1. Tap the recording, then tap the **More** button (three dots).
2. Choose **View Transcript** to read it. You can select some words and tap **Copy**.
3. Or choose **Copy Transcript** to copy the whole thing, then paste it into Notes, an email or a document.
4. To find a story later, type a word in the **search** field above your recordings. Voice Memos finds recordings whose name *or spoken words* contain it. Tap a word in a transcript to jump to that moment in the audio.

TIP

Search is the hidden treasure

Once you have a few hours of stories, searching for "Cleveland" or "Uncle Joe" and landing right on that moment is wonderful. It's a good reason to keep everything in one app on one phone.

GOOD TO KNOW

Expect a few misheard words

Family names, old place names and accents trip up any computer. Treat the transcript as a first draft. Chapter 25 shows how to tidy one up.

CHAPTER 13

Android: Pixel Recorder and Samsung Voice Recorder

Android phones come with their own recording apps. Which one you have depends on who made the phone. Here are the two most common.

Google Pixel: the Recorder app

1. Open **Recorder** and tap the red **Record** button.
2. Tap **Transcript** to watch the words appear as they're spoken.
3. Tap **Pause** or **Stop**, then **Save**. Give it a clear title.

- **Search inside recordings.** Recorder can find words and phrases, and even sounds like music or applause, and jump to the moment they happened.
- **Speaker labels.** On Pixel 6 and later (U.S. English), Recorder can tell voices apart and label them Speaker 1, Speaker 2 and so on. Turn it on by tapping your account picture, then **Recorder settings > Speaker labels**.
- **Back up & sync.** Recordings stay only on the phone unless you turn this on: tap your account picture, then **Recorder settings > Back up & sync**. Backed-up recordings can be played at **recorder.google.com** from any computer.

STAY SAFE

Turn on Back up & sync

A phone in a drawer is the riskiest place for a one-of-a-kind recording. Back up & sync is the single most important setting in Recorder. Note that each recording stays tied to the Google Account it was made under.

Samsung Galaxy: the Voice Recorder app

Samsung's **Voice Recorder** app has a few recording modes. The one made for family stories is **Interview**: Samsung says it uses the microphones at the top and bottom of the phone to pick up two people, so you lay the phone flat on the table between you and the storyteller.

1. Open **Voice Recorder** (it may be in a **Samsung** folder on your apps screen).
2. Choose the mode at the top: **Standard** or **Interview**.
3. Tap the red **Record** button. Tap **Pause** to break, and **Stop** to save.

Transcripts on Samsung

On select Galaxy phones and tablets with Galaxy AI (One UI 6.1 or later), open a recording, tap **Transcript assist** and then **Transcribe**. The words can also be summarized or sent to **Samsung Notes**.

HEADS UP

Test Interview mode with transcripts first

Samsung users have reported that transcription works only on Standard-mode recordings, and I couldn't find Samsung saying otherwise. If you want a transcript, record a one-minute test in Interview mode and try it before the real interview, or simply use Standard.

GOOD TO KNOW

Other Android phones

Motorola, OnePlus and other phones have their own recorder apps with different names. Look for "Recorder" or "Sound recorder" in your apps. Or install Google's Recorder or another well-known app from the Play Store, checking the maker's name and the reviews first.

CHAPTER 14

Recording a Phone Call

If Grandma is three states away, a phone call can be the most natural interview there is. Newer iPhones and many Samsung phones can record a call right in the Phone app. Ask first, every time (Chapter 21).

On an iPhone

Starting with iOS 18.1, an iPhone can record a phone call or a FaceTime *audio* call.

1. Call your storyteller and tell them you'd like to record, and why.
2. During the call, tap the **More** button and choose **Call Recording**. (On some versions you tap a Record button at the top of the call screen.)
3. Both of you hear a short announcement that the call is being recorded, and it repeats during the call.
4. To stop, tap the stop button, or just hang up.
5. Open the **Notes** app and look in the **Call Recordings** folder. The recording is there, and in supported languages, a written transcript showing who said what.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not available everywhere

Apple doesn't offer call recording in every country. If you don't see a transcript, your iPhone or language isn't supported, but the recording itself still saves in Notes.

On a Samsung Galaxy

Samsung's Phone app has a **Record calls** setting on many models: open **Phone**, tap the **three dots**, then **Settings > Record calls**. Recordings appear under **Recorded calls** in the same menu. Samsung notes that calls can't be recorded over Wi-Fi Calling. Whether the option appears depends on your model, your carrier and where you live.

HEADS UP

Leave automatic recording off

Samsung also offers **Auto record calls**, which records every call (or every call from certain numbers). For family stories you only want the calls you plan, so leave it off. Recording people without telling them isn't kind, and in some states it isn't legal.

Other phones, or a landline

- Put the call on **speaker** and record it with a second device (a tablet or another phone) in a quiet room. It's simple and works with any phone, though the far voice will sound a little thin.
- Or let a story service do the calling: Storyworth's Story Calls work from any phone, including a landline (Chapter 7).
- Be careful with call-recording apps from app stores. Apple warns that apps from other companies may record without giving any warning to the other person.

STAY SAFE

The law, in plain English

Ohio allows a call to be recorded when one person on it agrees, which includes you. But some states require **everyone** on the call to agree, and when you're in different states it isn't always clear which rule applies. The simple, kind answer works everywhere: say "Is it OK if I record this?" and wait for a yes. This is general information, not legal advice.

PART 4

Video Interviews

Light, sound and a steady phone for a sit-down video interview, how to run the camera, and how to record a video call with someone far away, including what FaceTime can and can't do.

CHAPTER 15

Setting Up: Light, Sound and a Steady Phone

Video saves what a voice can't: a smile, a wink, hands that shape the size of the fish. You don't need a film crew. Three things matter, in this order: **sound**, **light**, and a **steady** phone.

1. Sound comes first

People forgive a slightly dark picture. They won't sit through a video where they can't hear the words. Use the quiet-room advice in Chapter 10, and put the phone closer than feels natural: about an arm's length from the storyteller is a good start. A clip-on microphone helps most here.

2. Light from the front

- **Face the storyteller toward a window**, with you and the phone between them and the window. Soft daylight on the face is the most flattering light there is.
- **Never seat them with a window behind them.** The phone exposes for the bright window, and the person turns into a dark shape.
- **Overcast days are perfect.** Bright direct sun causes squinting and hard shadows; pull a sheer curtain if it's too strong.
- **Evening?** Put a lamp in front of them and a little to one side, and turn off the overhead light if it casts shadows under the eyes.

3. A steady phone

A hand-held phone wobbles, and a long interview makes arms tired. A small **phone tripod** with a phone clamp is inexpensive at any electronics store. No tripod? Stand the phone against a stack of books with a rubber band around it, or use a phone stand.

- Set the phone at the storyteller's **eye level**, not looking up their nose or down on their head.
- Turn the phone **sideways** (landscape). Sideways video fills a TV screen and a slideshow properly.
- Frame them from about the middle of the chest up, with a little space above the head.
- Sit just beside the phone, so when they talk to you, they're nearly looking at the camera.

TIP

Tidy the background, but not too much

A plain wall is fine. A shelf of family photos or a favorite quilt behind them is even better: it tells a little of the story. Just move anything distracting, like a busy calendar or a laundry basket.

GOOD TO KNOW

Let them look their best

Tell the storyteller ahead of time so they can choose a shirt they like. Solid colors look better on video than tight stripes or small checks.

CHAPTER 16

Recording the Interview with Your Phone's Camera

The Camera app on any iPhone or Android phone records good video. Here's how to get through a long interview without surprises.

Before you start

1. **Plug the phone in** if you can. Video uses battery quickly.
2. **Check free space.** Video is large: an hour can take several gigabytes, more at the highest quality settings. On iPhone, look in **Settings > General > iPhone Storage**; on Android, look in **Settings** under **Storage** (or **Battery and device care** on Samsung).
3. **Turn on Do Not Disturb** or airplane mode so a call doesn't stop the recording.
4. **Do a short test**: record 20 seconds of the storyteller talking, play it back with the sound up, and adjust the light or the phone.

Recording

1. Open the **Camera** app and swipe to **Video**.
2. Tap the screen on the storyteller's face so the phone focuses and sets the brightness for them.
3. Tap the red **Record** button. A timer shows it's recording.
4. Interview away. Glance at the timer now and then to be sure it's still going.
5. Tap **Stop** when you're done. The video goes into your Photos or Gallery app.

> TIP
>
> **Break it into chapters**
>
> Instead of one two-hour video, stop and start a new recording every 20 or 30 minutes, at a natural pause ("Let's take a break and then talk about the war years"). Smaller files are easier to back up, share and name, and if one goes wrong you lose much less.

TIP

A second recorder is cheap insurance

Run Voice Memos or Recorder on a second phone on the table at the same time. If the video's sound disappoints, you still have clear audio, and the voice recording gives you a free transcript.

GOOD TO KNOW

No need to fiddle with settings

Phones offer higher video settings such as 4K. They look lovely but make much bigger files. The phone's normal setting is fine for family interviews; if storage is tight, the standard HD setting is plenty.

Showing old photos and keepsakes

Ask the storyteller to hold up a photo or object and talk about it. Afterward, take a separate, close, still photo of the same item flat on a table in good light. Later you can put that clear picture into a slideshow next to the moment they talked about it (Chapter 27).

CHAPTER 17

Recording Video Calls: Zoom, FaceTime and Others

When the storyteller lives far away, a video call is the next best thing to sitting together. Whether you can record it depends on the service you use.

Zoom: the easiest to record

Zoom lets the host record to their own computer on **free and paid accounts**. Zoom calls this **local** or **computer recording**.

1. Use the **Zoom desktop app on a Windows or Mac computer**. Zoom says computer recording isn't available in its phone and tablet apps.
2. Start the meeting as the host and invite the storyteller.
3. Tell them you'd like to record, then click **Record** in the meeting toolbar (it may be under **More**) and choose to record on this computer if asked.
4. Everyone in the meeting gets a notice that recording has started, and can choose to stay or leave.
5. When the meeting ends, Zoom converts the recording into a video file and saves it in a folder on your computer. Wait for that to finish before you shut the computer down.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Only the host can record**
>
> On a free account, only the host can start a local recording unless the host gives someone else permission during the meeting. So the family member doing the interview should be the one who sets up the meeting.

FaceTime

FaceTime **video** calls have no built-in record button. Starting with iOS 18.1, an iPhone can record a FaceTime **audio** call the same way it records a phone call, with an announcement to both people, and the recording lands in Notes (Chapter 14).

TIP

My suggestion for faraway video

If you want the face as well as the voice, use Zoom for the interview call. If FaceTime is the only thing your storyteller is comfortable with, record a FaceTime audio call for the voice, and plan a sit-down video for your next visit.

Other video-call apps

Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp and others each have their own rules, and recording is often limited to certain paid or work accounts. Check the app's own help pages before the interview, not during it. If the app can't record, Zoom is the simple fallback.

HEADS UP

Skip the workarounds

Phone screen-recording tricks and third-party "call recorder" apps can fail to capture sound, and some record without warning anyone. For a once-in-a-lifetime interview, use a method that's built in and that tells everyone it's recording.

TIP

Make the call easy on the storyteller

Set up the call for them ahead of time, or have a nearby relative help on their end. Ask them to sit facing a window, use earbuds or headphones if they have them, and prop the tablet or phone so it's steady. A test call the day before takes the worry out of the real one.

PART 5

Good Questions and Good Manners

Questions that get people talking, how to listen so the best stories come out, how to handle the tender subjects, and the simple courtesies of consent and privacy.

CHAPTER 18

Questions to Ask: Childhood, Family and Home

Good questions are open ones: they can't be answered with "yes" or "no." Pick five or six for a session, not twenty. These are starting points; change the wording to fit your family.

Early years

- Where and when were you born? What did your family tell you about that day?
- What's the very first thing you remember?
- Describe the house you grew up in. Walk me through it, room by room.
- What did your street or neighborhood look, sound and smell like?
- What chores did you have? What did you do for fun?
- What were the holidays like when you were small?

Parents, grandparents and relatives

- What were your parents like? What did they do for a living?
- What do you remember about your grandparents?
- Where did our family come from before that? How did they end up here?
- Who was the family character, the one everybody told stories about?
- What did your family eat for supper on a regular weeknight? On Sunday?
- Are there recipes, sayings or traditions that came down to you?

School and growing up

- What was your school like? How did you get there?
- Who was your favorite teacher, and why?
- Who were your best friends? What did you get up to?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- What was your first job, and what did you do with the money?

TIP

Photos are the best questions

Spread a few old photos on the table and ask, "Who's this? Where was this? What happened that day?" Pictures bring back details that a question alone can't. Write the answers on a sticky note on the back of each print, or in the file name if it's scanned.

GOOD TO KNOW

Ready-made lists

Story services such as Storyworth come with large libraries of questions, and you can also find free lists from libraries and family-history groups. My Ancestry & Family History Online guide is a good companion: the names and dates you find there make great questions.

CHAPTER 19

Questions to Ask: Work, Love, the Times and Life Lessons

Work and making a living

- What jobs have you had over the years? Which did you like best?
- What was a normal workday like? Who did you work with?
- What was the hardest thing you ever had to learn to do?
- Did you serve in the military? What would you like people to know about that time?

Love and family life

- How did you meet your husband or wife? What was your first impression?
- What was your wedding day like?
- What do you remember about the day each of your children was born?
- What was the hardest part of raising a family, and the best part?

The world around you

- What big news events do you remember? Where were you when you heard?
- How have prices, cars, phones or shopping changed since you were young?
- What music did you dance to? What did you watch or listen to?
- What was our town like back then?

Looking back

- What are you most proud of?
- What's something you learned the hard way?
- Who made the biggest difference in your life?
- What do you hope your grandchildren and great-grandchildren know about you?
- Is there a story you've never told anyone, that you'd like to tell now?

TIP

The best question isn't on any list

It's "Tell me more about that." When a story starts to come alive, follow it. The questions on these pages are only there for when the conversation needs a nudge.

CHAPTER 20

How to Run a Good Interview (and Handle Tender Topics)

Before the day

- Share the questions ahead of time. Many storytellers like a day or two to remember.
- Pick a time of day when they have the most energy. For many people that's mid-morning.
- Plan for 30 to 60 minutes. You can always come back for more.

During the interview

1. Start the recording by saying the date, where you are, and who's talking: "It's November 15, 2026, I'm at Mom's house in Kent, and I'm talking with Mom about growing up." Future listeners will thank you.
2. Begin with an easy, happy question.
3. Ask one question at a time, then **wait**. Silence is fine. The best details often come after a pause.
4. Nod and smile instead of saying "uh-huh"; it keeps the recording clean.
5. Ask for details: names, places, years, and what things looked or felt like.
6. Don't correct dates or argue about who was right. Make a note and ask gently later if it matters.
7. Stop while they're still enjoying it. End with thanks, and maybe ask what they'd like to talk about next time.

TIP

Let them be the expert

You're not testing their memory; you're learning from them. "I never knew that!" is the most encouraging thing you can say.

Tender topics

Every life has hard chapters: loss, war, illness, divorce, hard times. Some people want to talk about them; some never will. Either is fine.

- Ask permission first: "Would you be willing to talk about when Dad died? It's OK to say no."

- Let them set the pace, and be ready to switch topics.
- Offer to pause the recording. Some stories are told best off the record first.
- If they get upset, stop recording and just be with them. The recording can wait.
- Agree what's private. A storyteller may want something saved for the family only, or not saved at all.

GOOD TO KNOW

If memory is fading

For someone living with memory loss, short sessions, old photos, familiar music and very simple questions often work best. Long-ago memories are sometimes clearer than recent ones. Keep it pleasant, and stop if it's causing frustration. Talk with the person's doctor or care team if you're unsure what's helpful.

CHAPTER 21

Consent and Privacy

Recording someone's life story is an act of love, and it should feel like one. Consent simply means the storyteller knows what you're doing, why, and who will see or hear it, and is happy about it.

Four things to agree on

Agree on	In plain words
Recording	Ask before you press record, every time. Never record secretly.
Who hears it	Family only? Extended family? The local historical society? Agree before you share.
What's off limits	Topics they'd rather not record, or stories for later, after they're gone.
Changing their mind	They can ask to stop, skip a story or delete a recording, and you'll honor it.

TIP

Record the yes

At the start of the recording, ask, "Is it all right with you that I'm recording this for the family?" Their "Yes, of course" is saved right there with the story.

The law, briefly

In Ohio, a conversation can be recorded when one person in it agrees. Some states require everyone's agreement. iPhone call recording and Zoom both announce themselves, which helps. But the honest rule that works in every state is simply to ask everyone and record only with their yes. This is general information, not legal advice.

Privacy: what to keep off the recording

- Social Security, Medicare, bank and account numbers, and passwords.
- Mother's maiden name, first pet, first car and the street you grew up on, **if they're the answers to security questions** on bank or online accounts. They're lovely stories; just don't post them publicly.
- Other living people's private matters. A story about a cousin's divorce is theirs to tell.

STAY SAFE

Think twice before posting publicly

A recording shared with the family in a private folder is safe and wonderful. A long clip of a loved one's voice posted publicly on social media is something strangers can copy, and the FTC warns that scammers can clone a voice from audio posted online. Chapter 28 explains, and Chapter 24 shows private ways to share.

GOOD TO KNOW

Children and grandchildren

If grandchildren interview a grandparent, it's a wonderful project. Just keep their names, school and faces out of anything posted publicly, and let parents decide what's shared.

PART 6

Keeping the Recordings Safe

Naming files so they make sense in fifty years, the 3-2-1 backup rule, getting recordings off the phone and sharing them with the family, and turning the spoken words into text.

CHAPTER 22

Naming and Labeling Your Files

A file called **New Recording 47** means nothing to a great-grandchild. A good name tells who, what and when, without anyone having to press play.

A simple naming habit

Use the same pattern every time: **year-month-day, who, what**. For example:

Name	What it is
2026-11-15 Mom - growing up on the farm	A voice recording
2026-11-15 Mom - growing up on the farm - video 1	The first part of a video interview
2026-12-25 Grandpa Joe - Army years	A holiday recording

- Putting the date first, year first, makes files sort in order on any computer.
- Use plain words, not codes only you understand.
- Avoid slashes and odd symbols like / \ : ? *, which some computers won't allow in file names.

Keep a little "read me" note

In each folder of recordings, keep a short typed note listing each file and a sentence about it: who's talking, the main stories, and any names mentioned. It's the modern version of writing on the back of a photo, and it will make the collection usable long after you've forgotten what's in it.

The file types you'll see

Ending	What it is
.m4a	Voice recordings from iPhone Voice Memos. Plays on nearly any phone or computer.
.mp3 / .m4a / .wav	Common sound files from Android recorders and other apps.
.mp4 / .mov	Video files from phones and Zoom.
.txt / .docx	Transcripts and notes.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep the original

However you edit or convert a recording later, keep the untouched original too. Edits can be redone; a lost original can't.

TIP

Same habit for photos

My Digitizing Old Photos & Movies guide uses the same date-first naming for scanned photos and tapes, so your stories and pictures will sit side by side neatly.

CHAPTER 23

The 3-2-1 Backup Rule

This is the most important chapter in the guide. A recording that exists in only one place is one dropped phone away from being gone. The **3-2-1 rule** is the simple habit the government's cybersecurity agency (CISA) and professional archivists recommend.

The rule	What it means
3 copies	The original plus two backups.
2 kinds of storage	For example, a computer or external drive, and the cloud.
1 copy away from home	Usually the cloud, or a drive kept at a relative's house.

A practical 3-2-1 for family stories

1. **Copy 1:** the recording on your phone.
2. **Copy 2:** the cloud. Turn on the phone's own backup for recordings (below), or put the files in iCloud Drive, Google Drive or a similar service.
3. **Copy 3:** a computer or a USB external drive at home, or a second drive given to a family member in another house.

Turn on the phone's own backup

Where	How
iPhone Voice Memos	Settings > [your name] > iCloud > See All, then turn on **Voice Memos**. Recordings then sync to your other Apple devices.
Pixel Recorder	In Recorder, tap your account picture > **Recorder settings > Back up & sync**.
Phone videos	iCloud Photos on iPhone, or Google Photos backup on Android, keeps videos safe if it's turned on and you have enough storage.

HEADS UP

Syncing isn't quite the same as a backup

iCloud and Google keep the same recordings on all your devices. That's great if a phone is lost, but it also means a deletion on one device can delete it everywhere. That's why the third copy, on a drive you control, matters. The National Archives also advises not to rely on the cloud alone.

Keep it working

- **Test once in a while.** CISA's advice is to make sure backups can actually be restored. Open a few recordings from the drive and the cloud and play them.
- **Copy to new drives every few years.** Drives and discs wear out. When you get a new computer, bring the family stories along first.
- **Mind the storage.** Video fills free cloud space quickly. Check how much space you have before a big interview.

FROM BILL

Want a hand setting up backups?

Getting a 3-2-1 setup right once means you never have to think about it again. I can set it up with you, remotely or at your kitchen table: (330) 200-8042.

CHAPTER 24

Getting Files Off the Phone and Sharing with Family

From iPhone Voice Memos

1. Tap the recording, then tap the **More** button (three dots) and choose **Share**.
2. To save a copy, scroll down and tap **Save to Files**, pick a folder (iCloud Drive or a USB drive plugged into the iPhone), and tap **Save**.
3. To send it, choose Messages, Mail or AirDrop instead. You can select several recordings first by tapping **Select** above the list.

From Pixel Recorder

1. Touch and hold the recording, then tap **Share**.
2. Tap **File** and choose **Audio** (the sound) or **Transcript** (the words), then the app to send it with, such as Gmail or Google Drive.
3. Or, for a backed-up recording, go to **recorder.google.com**, open it, tap **Share**, and choose who can play it.

STAY SAFE

Share with people, not with "anyone"

Recorder's shared links are private unless you make them public, and Google warns that anyone with a public link can play the recording. Choose specific people instead. The same goes for Google Drive and iCloud links.

Sharing a whole collection

The easiest way to share many recordings with the family is a **shared folder** in a cloud service such as Google Drive or iCloud Drive. Put the files in one folder, then invite family members by email as viewers so they can listen and download but not delete. My Google Drive guide shows the steps.

TIP

Video is too big to email

Most email services won't carry an hour of video. Share a link to a cloud folder instead, or copy the files to a USB drive and hand it over. A USB drive in a birthday card is a lovely gift.

CHAPTER 25

Transcribing Recordings

A transcript turns spoken stories into words you can read, search, print and put in a book. You rarely need to type it all yourself any more.

Using what your phone already made

If you used	Do this
iPhone Voice Memos	More > **Copy Transcript**, then paste into Notes, Pages, Word or an email (Chapter 12).
iPhone call recordings	The transcript is in the **Notes** app, in the Call Recordings folder.
Pixel Recorder	Touch and hold > Share > **Transcript (.txt)**, or open the recording and use More > Share to send it to Google Docs.
Samsung Voice Recorder	**Transcript assist**, then send it to Samsung Notes.

Tidying up a transcript

1. Paste the transcript into a document and save it with the same name as the recording.
2. Listen through once with the text in front of you. Fix names, places and misheard words.
3. Add who's speaking where the phone didn't: **Mom:** and **Me:** work fine.
4. Where you truly can't tell, type **[unclear]** rather than guessing.
5. Break it into paragraphs, and add a heading for each story.
6. Keep the speaker's own words and way of talking. Light tidying of "um" and repeated words is fine; rewriting their story isn't.

TIP

Share the work

Transcribing is a good job to split among grandchildren or cousins: one recording each. It's also a wonderful way for them to hear the stories.

HEADS UP

Online transcription services

There are websites and apps that transcribe uploaded audio, some free, some paid. Before you upload a family recording, read how the company stores and uses your files, and prefer the tools built into your phone where you can. Private family stories deserve the same care as private papers.

PART 7

Making Something to Keep

Turning the stories into a printed book, a slideshow or short film with the storyteller's own voice, and a gentle word of caution about AI voice cloning and the scams that use it.

CHAPTER 26

Turning the Stories into a Book

A printed book is the keepsake most families treasure. There are two roads: let a story service do it, or make one yourself.

Road 1: a story service prints it

Storyworth and Remento both end the year with a hardcover book (Part 2). Remento adds a **QR code** to each chapter, a small square pattern that plays the original recording when someone points a phone camera at it, so the book keeps the voice as well as the words.

Road 2: make it yourself

1. **Gather the words.** Collect the tidied transcripts (Chapter 25) or written stories in one document, one story per section.
2. **Put them in an order.** Most families go by the years of the storyteller's life, from childhood on.
3. **Pick photos** for each story: the people, places and keepsakes mentioned.
4. **Choose how to print.** A **photo book** from a service such as Google Photos or Shutterfly works well for short stories with lots of pictures. For a longer, mostly-words book, a print shop or an online book-printing service can bind a document as a paperback or hardcover.
5. **Have someone proofread**, especially names and dates, before you order.
6. **Order one copy first**, check it, then order copies for the family.

GOOD TO KNOW

Photo book limits

Photo books have page limits. A Google Photos photo book, for example, runs from 20 to 140 pages. My Photo Printing & Photo Books guide walks through Google Photos, Shutterfly and the store options step by step.

TIP

Make your own QR codes

If you've shared a recording by link (Chapter 24), you can print a QR code for that link next to the story. Many free QR-code makers exist. Use a link shared with specific family members, not a public one, and test the code with a phone before printing.

TIP

Leave room for the next chapter

A spiral notebook or a three-ring binder of printed stories is just as precious as a bound book, and you can keep adding to it.

CHAPTER 27

A Slideshow or Short Film with Their Voice

Old photos with the storyteller's own voice telling what's in them is one of the most moving things a family can watch together, at a reunion, an anniversary or a memorial.

The simple recipe

1. Pick one story recording, three to five minutes long. Trim it if needed (Chapter 11).
2. Choose 10 to 20 photos that match the story, in order.
3. In a video app, add the photos first, then add the **recording** as the sound track instead of music.
4. Stretch or shorten each photo so it's on screen while the story talks about it.
5. Add a title card with the storyteller's name and the date of the recording.
6. Save or export it as a video file, and keep it with your 3-2-1 backups.

Which app

On	Try
iPhone, iPad, Mac	**iMovie** is free from Apple and lets you add audio from your files or music library to a project.
Windows	**Clipchamp**, Microsoft's free video editor, which opens from the Photos app's create a video option. You can drag your own recording into a project.
Any device	**Google Photos** can make highlight videos with music; for your own narration, iMovie or Clipchamp give you more control.

GOOD TO KNOW

More detail

My Making a Photo Slideshow guide covers each of these apps step by step, plus showing the finished slideshow on a TV.

HEADS UP

Music and posting online

If you add a popular song as background music and post the video on YouTube or Facebook, it may be muted or blocked for copyright. The storyteller's own voice has no such problem. Keep music soft and under the voice, or leave it out.

CHAPTER 28

AI Voice Clones: A Gentle Caution

This chapter isn't meant to frighten anyone away from recording. It's here because the same thing that makes a recording precious, a real person's real voice, is something scammers now try to copy.

What a voice clone is

AI software can make a fake copy of someone's voice from a sample of their real voice, then make that fake voice say anything. The FTC warns that scammers can do this using audio a person has posted online, and use it in "family emergency" calls.

SCAM ALERT

"Grandma, it's me. I'm in trouble."

A call that sounds exactly like a grandchild, or a son or daughter, says they've been in an accident or arrested and need money right away, and asks you not to tell anyone. The voice may be a clone. The FTC's advice: don't trust the voice. Hang up and call the person back on a number you already know, or check with another relative. Requests for wire transfers, gift cards or cryptocurrency are the sign of a scam.

SCAM ALERT

The robocall in a familiar voice

The FCC has ruled that robocalls using AI-generated voices are illegal without the person's prior consent, and it warns that fake celebrity and familiar voices are used in scam calls and texts. If a recorded voice asks you to act, pay or press a key, hang up.

SCAM ALERT

A video call that isn't who it seems

The FBI warns that criminals use AI-made audio and video, and have used AI to appear as officials on video calls. Seeing a face doesn't prove who's on the other end. Never send money because of a call or video you didn't expect; hang up and call back on a number you know.

How to protect the voices you've saved

1. **Share recordings privately**, with named family members, not with "anyone with the link" (Chapter 24).

2. **Think before posting long clips publicly.** The FBI suggests limiting the voice and image content you put online and keeping social media accounts private. A short private video for the family is fine.
3. **Agree on a family secret word** or phrase that only you know, and ask for it if a call about an emergency ever comes. The FBI recommends this.
4. **Tell the storyteller**, so they know a voice on the phone isn't proof either.

HEADS UP

"Bring back a loved one's voice" apps

Some apps and websites offer to make an AI voice of a loved one from your recordings. Whatever you decide about that, know that uploading their voice hands a sample to a company. Read who keeps it, what they may use it for, and how to delete it, and talk it over with the family first. Never upload a living person's voice without their permission.

TIP

Already sent money or think you were fooled?

Call your bank or card company right away using the number on your card. Report it at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**. My AI Voice Clones & Deepfake Scams guide has the full list of what to do and who to call.

PART 8

Help and Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary of everything in this guide.

CHAPTER 29

When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so you can record and keep your family's stories on your own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time, worry or a lost recording, so here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **A recording you're afraid of losing**: an only copy on an old phone, a cracked phone, or a voicemail from someone who's gone. Call before you try anything that might erase it.
- **Setting up 3-2-1 backups** for your recordings, photos and videos, once, properly.
- **Getting set up to record**: the right app, transcripts turned on, call recording, and a practice run, so interview day goes smoothly.
- **Recording a faraway relative** over Zoom, with both computers ready to go.
- **Moving files** from phones to a computer, a USB drive or a shared family folder.
- **A call or message that worries you**, such as an urgent call in a familiar voice. Ask before you send anything.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace: no rushing, no talking down, and no jargon. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll tell you honestly when you don't need to buy anything. I serve Portage County, Ohio, and I bring more than 30 years of professional experience to every visit.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. Help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. If I'm with another customer, my AI receptionist, Sophie, will answer and make sure I get back to you. No question is too small.

Thank you for taking the time to save your family's stories. The voices you record this year will be a gift to people who haven't even been born yet.

— Bill

CHAPTER 30

Your Family Stories Cheat-Sheet

Print just this page and keep it with your phone. The whole guide, boiled down.

Where things are

I want	Go here
iPhone voice recording	**Voice Memos** app
iPhone transcript	Voice Memos > recording > More > **View Transcript**
iPhone call recordings	**Notes** app > Call Recordings folder
Pixel recording and transcript	**Recorder** app; backups at **recorder.google.com**
Samsung recording	**Voice Recorder** app (Interview mode for two people)
Recover a deleted voice memo	Voice Memos > **Recently Deleted** > Recover

Everyday moves

To do this	Do this
Back up Voice Memos	Settings > [your name] > iCloud > See All > **Voice Memos** on.
Back up Pixel Recorder	Account picture > Recorder settings > **Back up & sync**.
Save a voice memo to a drive	More > Share > **Save to Files**.
Record a faraway relative	Phone call recording, or **Zoom** on a computer.
Name a file	**2026-11-15 Mom - growing up on the farm**

Before every interview

- Quiet room, TV off, phone on Do Not Disturb, charged and with free space.
- Light in front of the storyteller, never a window behind them.
- Ask: "Is it OK if I record this for the family?"
- Say the date, place and names at the start.

Keep handy

Item	
Storyteller(s)	_____

Item	
Where the recordings are backed up	_____
Story service and renewal date	_____
Family secret word kept by	_____

Safety, in three lines

- Three copies, two kinds of storage, one away from home.
- Share recordings with named family members, not public links.
- A familiar voice asking for money is not proof. Hang up and call back.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

You know how to record a loved one clearly, keep those recordings safe, and turn them into something the family will treasure. When you'd like a hand, call (330) 200-8042.