

Open-Ended Questions Tip Sheet:
Supplement to Special December 2012
Loyalty Letter e-News,
“Advanced Interviewing Secrets.”
(Compiled by Lisa Sargent)

Full article at: <http://www.lisasargent.com/enews/SpecialDecember12.htm>

1. Tell me your story...
2. Will you help me understand...
3. Describe for me...
4. Would you please tell me about...
5. What are your plans for the future?
6. What's the best/worst thing that's happened to you...
7. Where do you think you'd be now if you hadn't/had...
8. How did you first hear about...
9. If you could say one thing to the people who support XXX, what would it be?
10. What have you learned since...
11. How did you make that choice...
12. What does that mean to you...
13. In what way does...
14. How is life different for...
15. How did you feel when...
16. What made you decide to...
17. Why did you start...
19. What did you do next?
20. When did you feel most afraid/happy/sad...
21. What did you want to be when you were growing up?
22. If you could say one thing to others who now stand in your shoes, what would it be?
23. Can you re-enact the story for me, please?
24. What was the moment when everything changed? (Ask for the turning point)
25. What are the biggest challenges you face/faced?

26. What is your ideal solution/resolution?
27. How do you know that?
28. What makes you say that?
29. What does that mean?
30. Can you give me an example?
31. What's that like?
32. And?
33. How often does that happen?
34. How did you feel when...?
35. How does that make you feel...?
36. What's it like to be...?
37. Tell me a story from your childhood...
38. If you could choose, what would you be doing X years from now...?
39. If you hadn't become _____, what might you have done...?
40. What was the best day of your life...?
41. Who was the person who most influenced you, and how?
42. If you were writing your epitaph, what would you say?
43. What's your vision for...?
44. What is your earliest memory?
- *45. How did being [homeless, hungry, abused, first in your family to graduate from college, etc.] change you?
46. What were your parents like?
47. What lessons did you learn from this time in your life? [Option: what lessons have you learned from...]
48. What are some of the happiest moments of your life?
49. What are some of the saddest?
50. Who are some of the most important people in your life? Can you tell me about them?

51. Do you have any regrets?
[And: Would you like to share them? Have you worked to overcome them? How?]

52. What have you learned about yourself [from your experience, etc.]?

53. If you have children or family, what do you want them to know?

54. What has been a difficult thing to communicate to family, friends, or loved ones about [your experience]?

55. What was your relationship to Do you have any traditions to honor _____?

56. What is one of your favorite memories of _____?

57. How did you change after losing _____?

58. When did you find out about _____'s death?

59. What has helped the most in your grief?

60. What was your relationship to _____?

61. What was your relationship like?

62. Tell me about _____.

63. What did _____ look like?

64. Do you have any favorite stories about _____?

65. LAST QUESTION OF ANY INTERVIEW: Is there anything else you'd like to tell me today?

Sources:

1. *Questions 45-64 from the fabulous StoryCorps National Day of Listening. Find all their questions here: <http://nationaldayoflistening.org/militaryvoices/great-questions/>. And visit StoryCorps for more incredible resources and powerful stories: <http://storycorps.org/>.
2. "[Storytelling for Nonprofits: The Magic Seeds You Need First.](#)" Lisa Sargent, *The Loyalty Letter e-News*, April 2010.
3. "[John Sawatsky and the Power of Simple Questions.](#)" 37 *Signals*, August 2006.