

**Everybody has a story.  
What's yours?**

### ***Family Writing Guide***

*“All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” - Leo Tolstoy*



Somewhere amongst your family - however you define the abstract term - lies the precarious nature of your character.

How much of who you are is made up of genetics? How much is environmental? The very debate on nature versus nurture is elemental in drawing awareness to your very constitution. These questions can help you understand the full impact your upbringing has had on you compounded by what you were most certainly also predisposed to. To push the thought further, can we find evidence pointing in both directions? If everything can be shaped to fit both truths, can the impact also be shaped by our thoughts?

Can it be possible that sometimes the very thing that uplifts us is the same as that which delimited is? Is it possible that the thing that makes us happy can also be the thing that makes us unhappy?

With each of these writing prompts, feel free to flow through your thoughts, unconstrained by time, space, or objective. Simply feel what comes up as you write. We also invite you to create a visual board (through collage or multi-media montage) to manifest your thoughts in alternate ways.

Complete the following steps:

1. Write your name down in the middle of a blank paper.
2. Create the branches to your family tree (nuclear, extended, chosen, and other, you decide).
3. With a coloured marker, highlight the names of the people who have had a significant impact on your life in a positive way.
4. With a different marker, highlight the names of the people who have had a significant impact on your life in a negative, limiting or conflicting way.

**PAUSE. REFLECT.**

5. Take out another piece of paper. Write down the names of the people you highlighted in both colours. In list form, or in two short sentences, write down how and why each person had the impact they had on you. Go through this exercise for each name you highlighted.

**PAUSE. REFLECT.**

**CREATION TIME.**

Read back your responses. Can you find a common theme, or a connecting thought that weaves both categories together?

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Is there a way for you to weave the stories of positive impact to those of negative or vice versa?

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What do these stories reveal about you?

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**SETTING INTENTIONS**

In each of the circles, write a few emotions that came up during this exercise reserving the left circle for positive emotions and the right one for negative emotions or limiting beliefs. Then, set an intention that allows you to hold space for your emotions while also releasing them. Write that intention at the centre.

