

Why We Need Our Family Story Now More Than Ever



Scott and Angelle Anderson

Bringing family history to life is a pursuit about which Scott and Angelle Anderson are passionate. They volunteer for the free site, “The Family History Guide,” and love to help make everyone's family history journey easier, more efficient, and more enjoyable. Scott has a PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy, and is a retired Institute of Religion teacher. Angelle puts both her degree in Elementary Education and her Family History Certification to good use daily, and has definitely earned the nickname of “Grandma Camera.” Scott and Angelle are parents to seven children, grandparents to 34 grandchildren, and have six great grandchildren - all of whom they hope will be recipients of the promised blessings of their own and their family's involvement in temple and family history work. The Andersons co-host “Gathering,” a weekly series for “Hi Five Live ” on Facebook, and often present at various conferences and events on family, gospel, family history, and related topics. Currently, Scott serves as a ward Elders Quorum counselor over temple and family history, and Angelle serves as a ward temple and family history consultant.

RootsTech 2023 Class Description

Grandchildren and great-grandchildren share how they are continually blessed and benefited by their Grandma Jan’s family narratives. Watch how this beloved matriarch weaves the family story into the tapestry of everyday life.

Benefits Resulting From Knowing Your Family Story

“If you want a happier family, create, refine and retell the story of your family’s positive moments and your ability to bounce back from the difficult ones. That act alone may increase the odds that your family will thrive for many generations to come.”

“The last few years have seen stunning breakthroughs in knowledge about how to make families, along with other groups, work more effectively...After a while, a surprising theme emerged. The single most important thing you can do for your family may be the simplest of all: develop a strong family narrative” Bruce Feiler [The Family Stories That Bind Us](#)

Research cited by Bruce Feiler in the article referenced above:

- The [children] who knew a lot about their families tended to do better when they faced challenges.
- The more children knew about their family's history, the stronger their sense of control over their lives, the higher their self-esteem and the more successfully they believed their families functioned.
- The [children] who knew more about their families proved to be more resilient, meaning they could moderate the effects of stress.
- Children who have the most self-confidence have a strong "intergenerational self." They know they belong to something bigger than themselves.
- The "Do You Know?" scale (see the twenty questions below) turned out to be the best single predictor of children's emotional health and happiness.

What Are the Twenty Questions?

1. Do you know how your parents met?
2. Do you know where your mother grew up?
3. Do you know where your father grew up?
4. Do you know where some of your grandparents grew up?
5. Do you know where some of your grandparents met?
6. Do you know where your parents were married?
7. Do you know what went on when you were being born?
8. Do you know the source of your name?
9. Do you know some things about what happened when your brothers or sisters were being born?
10. Do you know which person in your family you look most like?
11. Do you know which person in the family you act most like?
12. Do you know some of the illnesses and injuries that your parents experienced when they were younger?
13. Do you know some of the lessons that your parents learned from good or bad experiences?
14. Do you know some things that happened to your mom or dad when they were in school?
15. Do you know the national background of your family (such as English, German, Russian, etc)?
16. Do you know some of the jobs that your parents had when they were young?
17. Do you know some awards that your parents received when they were young?
18. Do you know the names of the schools that your mom went to?
19. Do you know the names of the schools that your dad went to?
20. Do you know about a relative whose face "froze" in a grumpy position because he or she did not smile enough?

Blessings From Knowing Your Family Story

“It's wonderful to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers by telling important family history stories in ways that are accessible and memorable. Perhaps having family history documents, stories, photos, and memorabilia always before our eyes can strengthen our testimonies (see Mosiah 1:5). President Russell M. Nelson [Open the Heavens through Temple and Family History Work](#)

“Connecting with our ancestors can change our lives in surprising ways. From their trials and accomplishments, we gain faith and strength. From their love and sacrifices, we learn to forgive and move forward. Our children become resilient. We gain protection and power. Ties with ancestors increase family closeness, gratitude, miracles. Such ties can bring help from the other side of the veil.” Gerrit W. Gong [We Each Have a Story](#)

“I invite the youth of the Church to learn about and experience the Spirit of Elijah. I encourage you to study, to search out your ancestors, and to prepare yourselves to perform proxy baptisms in the temple for your kindred dead. As you respond in faith to this invitation, your hearts shall turn to the fathers. Your love and gratitude for your ancestors will increase. You will be safeguarded in your youth and throughout your lives. Your testimony of and conversion to the Savior will become deep and abiding.”

David A. Bednar [The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn](#)

“Still very much alive, our ancestors deserve to be remembered. We remember our heritage through oral histories, clan records and family stories, memorials or places of remembrance, and celebrations with photos, foods, or items which remind us of loved ones...Each of our stories is a journey still in progress, as we discover, create, and become with possibilities beyond imagination. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, ‘It may seem to some to be a very bold doctrine that we talk of—a power which records or binds on earth and binds in heaven.’ The sociality we create here can exist with eternal glory there. Indeed, ‘we without [our family members] cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect,’ that is, in ‘a whole and complete and perfect union.’” Gerrit W. Gong [We Each Have a Story](#)

“Engaging in family history research teaches us of the vastness and grand scope of God’s creation and underscores the individual and merciful reach of Christ’s Atonement...In addition, learning about our ancestors’ lives can remind us that not everything in life will work easily, that there will be disappointments and inequalities in this fallen world. But learning about their lives and performing ordinances for them can also remind us that no one is outside the reach of God’s love (see [Romans 8:38–39](#)).” Amy Harris [How Family History Changes Our Hearts and Minds](#)

Finding Family History Stories

See [Ten Ways To Find Family Stories](#) for information, ideas, and helpful links in the following categories:

1. Create accounts, fill in information on trees, add memories on any family history websites and also see what has been uploaded on your lines.
2. Interview living family members and others.
3. Search family history repositories, archives, and collections.
4. Discover what family stories are already preserved elsewhere online.
5. Subscribe to email or text notifications from family history sites.
6. Use a variety of on-line research options.
7. Check out [FamilySearch Discovery](#) for ideas.
8. Find your family stories on FamilySearch using the [All The Stories Site](#).
9. Create sacred places and spaces for family storytelling.
10. Collaborate with others on online family history sites and on social media.

Resources

(search for more RootsTech classes [here](#))

[Elder David A. Bednar: The Power of Family Stories • RootsTech 2022](#)
[Elder and Sister Holland Keynote: Family Discovery Day • RootsTech 2021](#)
[Seven Ways to Preserve and Share Your Family Story Today](#)
[Stories for Your Family History: Vague Memories to Vivid Stories • RootsTech 2022](#)
[How Sharing Memories and Family Stories Helps with Grief • RootsTech 2022](#)
[Save Your Precious Family Story! • RootsTech 2022](#)
[Engaging the Family in Telling Your Family Story • RootsTech 2022](#)
[Documenting Underrepresented Family Stories Rootstech 2022](#)
[Strengthening Families Through Generational Stories Rootstech 2022](#)
[The Healing Power of Storytelling—Even Difficult Stories • RootsTech 2022](#)
[Record My Story • RootsTech](#)
[Photos and Stories on FamilySearch • RootsTech](#)
[Collecting Family Stories - RootsTech 2022](#)
[A Story Worth Telling RootsTech 2022](#)
[Strengthening Families Through Generational Stories](#)
[LiveStory - Give voice to your family stories • RootsTech](#)
[The Basics of Telling Your Family Stories • RootsTech 2022](#)
[Sharing Your Faith Using Family History • RootsTech 2022](#)
[Panel: Building Storytelling Opportunities with FamilySearch](#)
[RootsTech 2016 | Bruce Feiler \(Keynote\)](#)
[Write Away: Why Journaling Matters • RootsTech 2022](#)
[Discover, Gather, and Connect Your Family * RootsTech 2020](#)

[Family History Activities To Supercharge Your Family Reunion • RootsTech 2022](#)
[Ancestors and Homeland Research with The Family History Guide • RootsTech 2022](#)
[The Power of Storytelling: Taking Family History off the Shelf through Storytelling • RT 2022](#)
[Capture Family Stories with Oral History. Part 1 of 2 • RootsTech 2022](#)
[Capture Family Stories with Oral History. Part 2 of 2 • RootsTech](#)
[Find Your Family in Church History • RootsTech](#)
[Finding Your Family's Stories * RootsTech](#)
[Bradley Pierson: Family Stories • RootsTech 2022](#)
[10 Apps for Capturing and Sharing Your Family's Story](#)
[Family History and Temple Work: Sealing and Healing](#)
[The Promised Blessings of Temple and Family History Work](#)
[The Promised Blessings of Temple and Family History Work 2](#)
[The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn](#)

[The Family History Guide](#)

[Family Activities: 5-Minute Ideas for Latter-day Saints](#)
[Family Activities: For Latter-day Saints](#)
[Youth Home | Youth: Latter-day Saints](#)
[Weekly Family History Activities - A Come, Follow Me Companion](#)

Contact Information

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