

# Questions for Interviewing a Grandparent

## The Present, Aging, Life Lessons and Legacies

### *The Present*

Do you have any hobbies or special interests? Do you enjoy any particular sports?  
What's your typical day like now? How is it different from your daily routines in the past?  
Is the present better or worse than when you were younger?  
What do you do for fun?  
Who do you trust and depend on?  
What things are most important to you now? Why?  
What do you see? (Hold a mirror up to the person)

### *Aging*

What do you remember about your 20s? 30s? 40s? 50s? 60s? What events stand out in your mind? How was each age different from the one before it?  
There are some ages we don't look forward to. What birthday were you least enthusiastic about celebrating and why?  
If you could go back to any age, which age would it be and why?  
How do you feel now about growing old? What's the hardest thing about growing older? The best thing?  
What were your parents like when they got older?  
Did you have any expectations at various points in your life about what growing older would be like for you?  
How should a person prepare for old age? Is there anything you wish you'd done differently?  
Do you think about the future and make plans? What are your concerns for the future?  
If you live another 20-30 years, what will you do? Do you want to live another 20-30 years?  
What do you look forward to now?

### *Life Lessons and Legacies*

What's your most cherished family tradition? Why is it important?  
What have you liked best about your life so far?  
What's your happiest or proudest moment?  
What do you feel have been the important successes in your life? The frustrations?  
What's the most difficult thing that ever happened to you? How did you deal with it?  
What do you think the turning points have been in your life? What were you like then?  
Are there times of your life that you remember more vividly than others? Why?  
What have been the most influential experiences in your life?  
Describe a person or situation you remember from childhood that had a profound effect on the way you look at life.  
If you were writing the story of your life, how would you divide it into chapters?  
What, if anything, would you have done differently in your life?  
What do you know now that you wish you'd known when you were young?  
What have you thrown away in your life that you wish you hadn't? What have you held on to that's important and why is it important? What "junk" have you held on to and why?  
Over time, how have you changed the way you look at life/people?  
What advice did your grandparents or parents give you that you remember best?  
Do you have a philosophy of life? What's your best piece of advice for living? If a young person came to you asking what's the most important thing for living a good life, what would you say?  
How do you define a "good life" or a "successful life"?  
Do you think a person needs to first overcome serious setbacks or challenges to be truly successful?  
In what way is it important to know your limitations in your life or career?  
If you had the power to solve one and only one problem in the world, what would it be and why?  
What do you see as your place or purpose in life? How did you come to that conclusion?  
What would you like your children and grandchildren to remember about you?  
If you could write a message to each of your children and grandchildren and put it in a time capsule for them to read 20 years from now, what would you write to each?