



Using Your Senses to Capture Past Memories for Your Memoir

A gentle, sensory-based guide to help you unlock the stories your body still remembers.



How to use this guide:

Each section in this guide is a collection jar to magically put yourself back into the memory while you're expanding the story from your snippets. It will help you get into your own head so that the story is visible to the reader--as if they are in your head, living it for the first time with you.

Using each sense in this guide for each snippet that you're expanding on will help make your memoir(s) exciting rather than a chore laden laundry list.

But first... so you don't get stuck in an endless loop...

Your 5-Minute Sensory Memory Practice

1. Choose a sense
2. Choose a trigger
3. Notice your body
4. Write for 60 seconds
5. Label the memory

I'll give you one example on the next page of the first sense to explore, Temperature.

Your Body Remembers What Your Mind Forgot

Temperature

Prompt:

What temperatures defined different eras of your life?

Guided Questions:

- Where were you?
- What was your body doing?
- Who was there?
- What emotion lived in that temperature?

Writing in your notebook for your expanded story:

Use these notes to put yourself in the picture when you expand the story from your snippets. For instance:

The snippet in my workbook is: *“Sliding backwards down the driveway on the ice”*

I was in the '68 GMC Carryall

My body was scared stiff. White fingers on the steering wheel; frozen toes jamming the brake pedal.

I was alone, coming home from work.

My emotion was fear, anger, frustration. Mostly fear.

Labels:

Memory Tags: Cabin Living, Why I Work from Home, Winter and Work...

And now it's your turn. Grab your coffee (or tea, or...), timer, and *have fun*.

Your Body Remembers What Your Mind Forgot – Capture Set

Note: Work with one snippet only for each *Capture Set*

#1 Temperature

Prompt:

What temperatures defined different eras of your life?

Guided Questions:

- Where were you?
- What was your body doing?
- Who was there?
- What emotion lived in that temperature?

Snippet (to keep you focused on one story):

Writing Space:

Label:

Memory Tag: _____

#2 Smell

Prompt:

What scents instantly take you back?

Guided Questions:

- What room or place appears with this smell?
- Who or what is connected to it?
- What emotion rises first?

Snippet:

Writing Space:

Label:

Memory Tag: _____

#3 Sound

Prompt:

What sounds were the background?

Guided Questions:

- What sound do you miss?
- What sound signaled safety?
- What sound signaled change?

Snippet (to keep you focused on one story):

Writing Space

Label:

Memory Tag: _____

#4 Touch

Prompt:

What textures bring you back to the specific moment?

Guided Questions:

- What object did you hold?
- What texture comforted you?
- What texture unsettled you?

Snippet (to keep you focused on one story):

Writing Space

Label:

Memory Tag: _____

#5 Sight

Prompt:

What images still feel “charged”?

Guided Questions:

- What colors define that memory?
- What was the lighting like?

- What emotion fills the room?

Snippet (to keep you focused on one story):

Writing Space

Label:

Memory Tag: _____

Your Final Assignment

Reflection Box:

“What surprised me today...”

Stop – Breathe -- Good Job! 

