

Remember to Remember

By Julia Woodbury

There are many ways to keep track of how the Lord has blessed you.

One of my most valuable possessions is a dog-eared bundle of letters that I've written to myself. I wrote the first letter on my 16th birthday. I sealed it up, tucked it in my drawer, and didn't read it until a year later on the night of my 17th birthday. So much had changed in just a year! I had written about my life, describing things I wouldn't have remembered on my own. I had joked with myself, saying that the things I was worrying about then probably wouldn't matter much in a year. I was right.

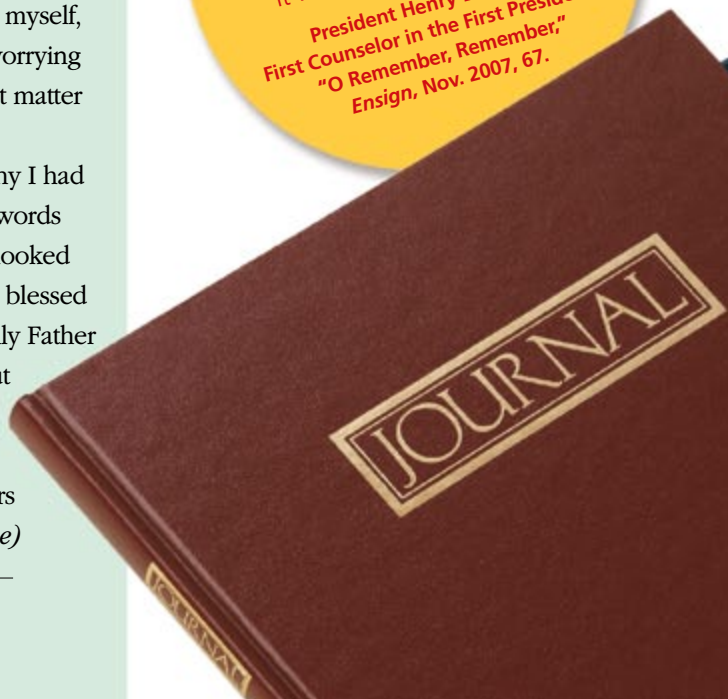
Best of all, I told myself why I had a testimony. A year later, my words were a timely reminder. As I looked back, I could clearly see how blessed I was and how much Heavenly Father loves me. Excited, I pulled out another piece of paper, and wrote my next letter. With each year, the bundle of letters continues to grow. *(Next page)*



REMEMBER GOD'S KINDNESS

"My point is to urge you to find ways to recognize and remember God's kindness. It will build our testimonies."

*President Henry B. Eyring,
First Counselor in the First Presidency,
"O Remember, Remember,"
Ensign, Nov. 2007, 67.*



JUMP-START YOUR Journal

There is more to a journal than just events and dates.

Journals record who we are and how we are blessed. Try some of these fun ideas for keeping track of your daily blessings.

- Type your journal, print it out, and keep it in a binder instead of writing in a book. You can also add handwritten notes about something you learned in church, or other items such as programs or magazine articles.
- Use newspaper clippings to show what's happening in your world, and then write how the events have affected you.
- Record your feelings through art, poetry, or music.
- Print off and save emails you've sent that talk about your life.
- Keep a joint journal with a brother or sister. Take turns writing in it each night.
- Keep a travel journal of places you go or of places you would like to go. Include your tickets, brochures, and photos.
- Write about what you read in the scriptures each day. Record favorite verses and how they make you feel or promptings you receive while reading.
- Write entries from other people's perspectives, such as how your sibling view you after you've had a misunderstanding or how the day might look from your parents' point of view. You might talk to the people involved to see if your perspective of them is correct.
- Keep a gratitude journal. Every day write down those things for which you are thankful.
- Keep a journal jar (see Journal Jar sidebar to find out how). By Shanna Butler

GET THE PICTURE

Who was in your Beehive class? What did that house you painted look like before and after your quorum service project? How did your family look ten years ago? You might not remember these details on your own, but with a picture, you'll never forget.

Here are some fun ideas for using photos to help you remember your life and the blessings that you've received.

Include Church activities. Take pictures after seminary or at young women's camp. Take a photo of your priesthood quorum or Young Women class once a year and give everyone a copy. Years from now you'll be able to see who your leaders were and what your friends looked like way back when.

Go on a hunt. Go on a picture scavenger hunt. See if you can photograph your family's favorite spots around your home and neighborhood.

Capture the norm. Want to liven up a regular day? Take a camera along and get shots of some of these things: Your bedroom, your car, your school, your favorite pair of shoes, your pet, the view out your window, your classroom, who you eat lunch with, afterschool activities, your church class, and anything else you encounter in a normal day.

Say cheese. Ask your parents if you can try to take family pictures every year. This is a great opportunity to get the whole family together and look back and see what everyone looked like growing up.

Take a vacation from vacation. Pictures aren't just for trips. Take pictures of your family at home. Maybe you love seeing your family sitting together around the kitchen table, or you like to see your siblings playing outside. Take a picture of these things so you'll always remember them.

Remember that time. Try recreating some of your favorite pictures. Go on that hike again, or revisit that same spot downtown and take the picture again. You will make new memories while remembering old ones.

Be sure to print out and keep all your picture memories in a safe place like a box or an album, and label them with the place, the date, and the names of the people in the picture.

PRINT IT!

Just a tip: Many digital media have a shorter life than we might expect. CDs, DVDs, USB drives, and hard drives won't last forever. Programs change and become outdated so that, before you know it, you can't access your files. Be sure to print out your pictures and documents on archive paper so you will always be able to have them.

Remember, Remember

You might not think of my experience in writing these letters as exactly the same thing as keeping a journal in the classical sense. But it is a way of keeping a record that is my own. It is a way for me to remember spiritual things, as President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has suggested. He described how, after keeping a daily journal of how the Lord was blessing him and his family, that “trying to remember had allowed God to show me what He had done” (“O Remember, Remember,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 67).

I’ve learned that when you try to remember your blessings, you let your Father in Heaven show you how He has blessed you. You also show gratitude for your blessings when you take the time to remember and record them—whether it’s in a journal or in letters, whether it’s handwritten or keyboarded into a computer—and that it’s important to preserve your records for yourself and for those who may benefit from your experience later on (such as, someday, your children).

Help Him Show You

There can be many ways to help Heavenly Father show you how He has blessed you. You can keep a journal or make a personal history. You can take pictures or make recordings. You can save papers and documents or sentimental items. The idea is just to preserve memories of your life so you will always be able to look back and remember your blessings. That is the importance of your record. And who knows? Maybe someday down the road you and many others will find strength in your record of Heavenly Father’s love and the blessings He has given to you. **NE**



A RECORDABLE RECORD

Video or audio recordings can be a great way to help you remember great things in your life. Here are some ideas for things you might want to record:

- Make a recording of your own **testimony**.
- Next time you give a **talk in church**, give it again later at home, and make a recording of it.
- Ask your parents or older siblings to talk about **experiences** they had when they were your age. You might learn a lot of new things **about the people you love most**.
- Make a recording of your family’s **favorite memories**. Have siblings tell their favorite stories and ask your parents to share their feelings about raising your family.
- Revisit a **home or neighborhood** that you used to live in. Take a walk through it and record the thoughts and memories that you had there.



STEPS TO SAVING

Finding materials for a fun and interesting journal or personal history is easier than you may think! Just set aside a box and start saving. Here’s a list of the things you might want to keep:

- Priesthood ordination certificates and Duty to God booklets, or Young Women certificates and Personal Progress booklets
- Ticket stubs or programs from movies, concerts, and shows
- A copy of your report card
- Your class schedules
- Newspaper clippings of important events
- School photos of yourself and your friends
- Calendars, daily planners, and to do lists
- Your best school papers, especially if they’re personal essays
- Copies of speeches or church talks that you give
- Maps from amusement parks or historical sites you’ve visited
- Funny sayings from people you know, like a college quote wall
- Letters and cards that you receive
- Little mementos from you life, like swatches of cloth or other items that store well and are small or that can lay flat
- Printouts of blog posts, good IM conversations, and e-mails



JOURNAL JAR

Out of ideas? Start a journal jar! Cut the prompts below into strips and put them in a jar. Add additional strips with ideas of your own. Then, when you need something to write about, just reach for your jar.

If I could invent something, it would be . . .

One thing I have learned from the scriptures is . . .

I love my mom because . . .

When I look up from the page, the first thing I see is . . .

Five things I ought to throw away are . . .

I want to be better at . . .

From general conference, I learned that . . .

My favorite song is . . .

My best friend is great because . . .

Tomorrow, I am going to . . .

One thing I could do better to get along with my family would be . . .

If I could meet anyone in the world it would be . . .

Last Sunday at church, I learned . . .

When I turn 16 (or any other age) . . .

My favorite memory is . . .

These are the good things people say about me . . .

I believe in Jesus Christ because . . .

If I had three wishes, they would be . . .

When I grow up I want to be . . .

My favorite subject at school is . . .

The best place I've ever been is . . .

I keep the Word of Wisdom because . . .

The last book I read was . . .

My dad is great because . . .

My favorite sport is . . .

Our bishop sets a great example by . . .

One thing I have learned from the prophet is . . .

I am happy when . . .

I first realized I had a testimony when . . .

I am preparing to marry in the temple by . . .

My favorite foods are . . .

The things I learn in my daily routines are . . .

If I cleaned out my backpack I would find . . .

Today I ate . . .

Today while I was studying the scriptures I realized . . .

My favorite book is . . .

I know Heavenly Father answers prayer because . . .

ALWAYS RELEVANT

"We urge our young people to begin today to write and keep records of all the important things in their own lives. . . . Your own private journal should record the way you face up to challenges that beset you. Do not suppose life changes so much that your experiences will not be interesting to your posterity. Experiences of work, relations with people, and an awareness of the rightness and wrongness of actions will always be relevant."

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895-1985),
"The Angels May Quote from It,"
New Era, Oct. 1975, 4-5.

