

To make a memoir — even a small memoir — means holding and sharing a significant piece of your life.

Small hand-made books might be simply structured by some manner of

## LIST or MAP or GATHERING

Examples from my personal "library" of books and zines:

- \* Lessons from the Warehouse by Kirsten Fedorowicz
- \* Voice of Dad by Carolyn Swiszc
- \* City of Maps: Navigation in Paris, France by Delphine Bedient
- \* My Favorite Things by Maira Karmann (This one is a trade book. It features lively images of shoes and such, paired with delightful, hand-written commentaries. For a podcast treat, check out M.K.'s interview with Krista Tippett.)
- \* My Life as Told by Way of Books
- \* An Atlas of Places I Love to Linger ... etc. ... etc. ... by Mudo! Bakery 76 Rue de Seine Paris
- \* What I've Learned from Picking Up the Guitar at Age 68 ... etc. ... etc. ...
- \* My Life as Told by Way of Books

Some Possible Prompts:



"Go out and work. That is the glory of life."

Maira Karmann

You might tell stories about cherished objects in your home, flat, or room. (Tell them more fully than I was able to do here.)

This recorder belonged to my friend, Barb, who died many years ago. Now I have the pleasure of playing it in our music group.

My mother sent me this blanket, hand-knitted with remnants by my dearly loved nanny.

A perfect wedding gift for Michael and me: Driftwood from the Oregon Coast polished by waves and sand, held together by a sturdy thread.

This hand-printed accordion book by Cathy Ryan is a commentary on sunflowers and their turn toward the light. (Accordion books display beautifully and are easy to make.)

Top Ten Questions Asked by Mother Hens is a tiny book grand-daughter Anika made for Michael. (Anika structured her tiny book by way of a list.)

## 2 Simple Book Structures that Work Well:

- \* 8-page Zines like the one you are holding
- \* Accordion Books

(Find instructions in my zine on simple book and zine structures or check out the web.)



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### Further Considerations:

#### Heart Beat



Writer Elizabeth Jarrett Andrews tells us to consider the heart beat of a book or story.

We are to ask:

- \* What is at stake?
- \* Why does it matter?

#### The Larger Voice

Poet William Stafford tells us that Our specific, personal knowledge is broadened when we invite a larger truth or "voice" into the work. Adding a salient quotation is a simple way to make this happen.

#### Audience

- \* Is your memoir specifically meant for family and friends?
- \* Does it aim to reach a broader public?

This will affect the telling.

### Small, hand-made books are different in kind

Because of their brevity, small, hand-made books contain a palpable narrative arc.

They lend themselves especially well to writing and image-making that is distilled and layered, the way poetry is distilled and layered. A considerable part of their Content is carried through form, imagery, and metaphor.

Like all things made by hand, small, hand-made books retain part of the spirit with which they were made.

**Spirit trumps technique!**  
It always does.

### "Attention is Key"

Eileen O'Toole

The more deeply we engage with a memory, the more it will gather meaning over time — this through the marvelous alchemy of attention.



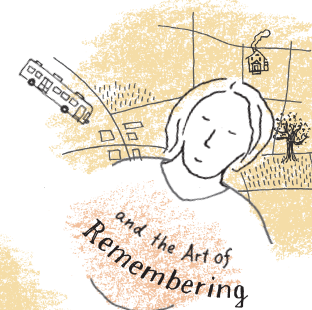
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GRATITUDE to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, authors of The Meaning of Things for informing my thinking about memory and attention in important ways.

Regula Russelle, 2025

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## Making hand-made Mini Memoirs



and the Art of Remembering

\* a tiny HOW TO zine \*