

LIVING FAMILIAL ARCHIVES



ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Intergenerational relationships form a central infrastructure of Vietnamese family life. Yet rapid modernisation and the shifting social and cultural landscape have widened generational differences.

When this gap becomes tension, families often default to avoidance, conflict, or emotional distance, weakening the relational conditions needed for intergenerational exchange. Over time, such strains can harden into long-term estrangement and fractured family dynamics.

The disruption these fractures create is not cultural, but also social and emotional: a reduced capacity for families to understand one another and to sustain connection.

Therefore, this research focuses on addressing the generational gap as a necessity to cultural continuity.

Through reflection and story sharing, enabled by play, the project seeks to externalise how intergenerational tension is experienced in everyday life, what factors participants perceive as contributing to it, and how these dynamics shape familial communication.

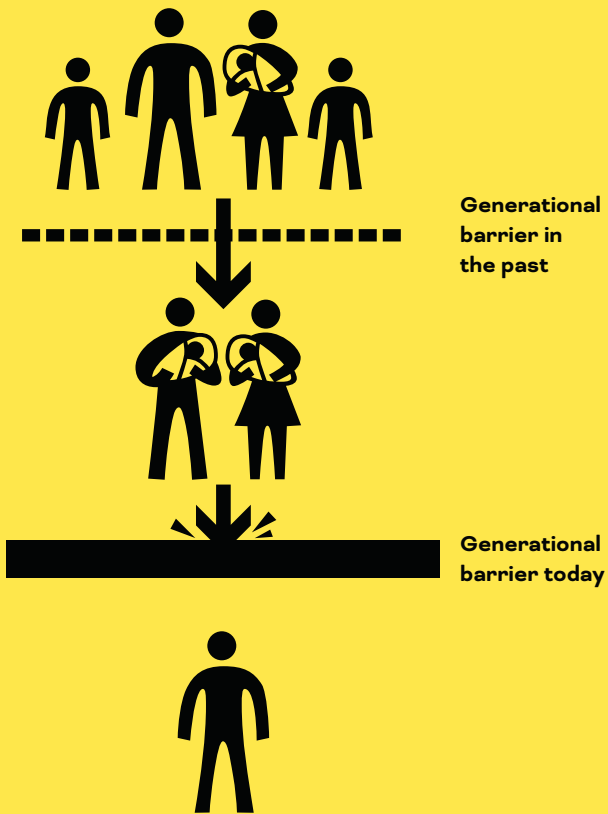
This booklet is a research outcome that hopes to guide readers on a process of self-reflection and memory-making through playful activities with provided prompts and guides. If possible, please engage together with family members you want to learn more about.

I hope you have fun discovering new things about your family you did not know before!

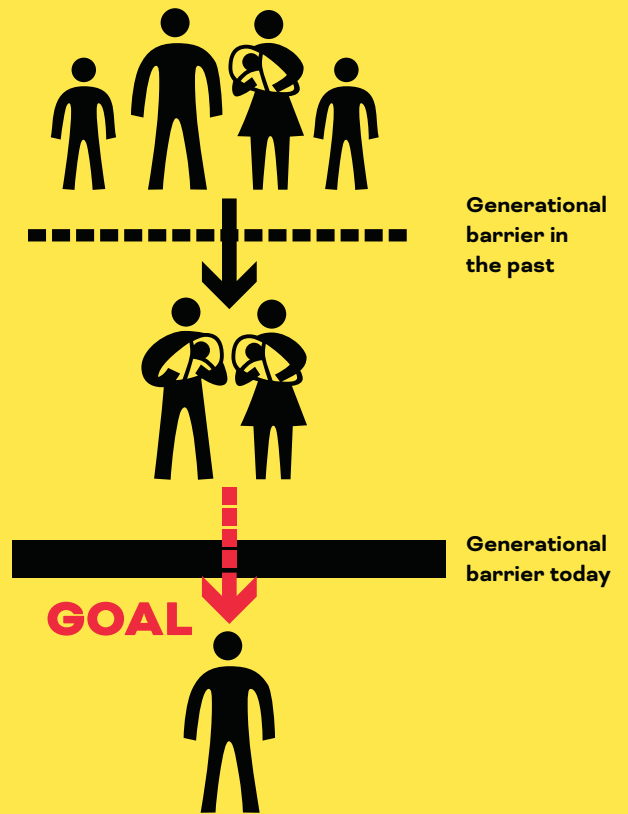


How cultural knowledge is transmitted intergenerationally

What is currently happening



What needs to happen



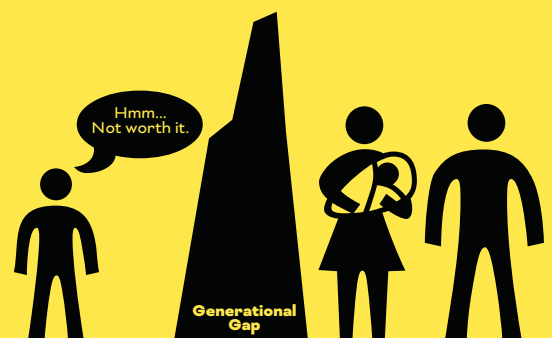
How strains lead to fractured family dynamics



Expectation



Reality





HI THERE!

THIS BOOKLET BELONGS TO

BIRTHDAY: _____

DESCRIBE WHERE YOU'RE FROM



Can you find your country?

WHAT DO YOU LIKE AND DISLIKE?

I like...

I don't like...

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THIS BOOKLET?

Hmmm...

LET'S GET TO KNOW YOUR FAMILY!



Think about your family most of the time (not the best day, not the worst day).
For each question, pick the option that feels most typical.

1 Someone drops a controversial opinion at dinner. What happens?

- A** We discuss it, but there's still a "correct" conclusion we have to arrive at.
- B** We discuss it and it's okay if everyone still disagrees at the end.
- C** We don't really discuss it, someone with authority shuts it down.
- D** We move on from it fast (or pretend it didn't happen).



2 You're stressed. What's the most typical family response?

- A** I can share, but I'm expected to follow the family's "proper" way forward.
- B** I can share and be heard; advice is optional, not mandatory.
- C** I keep it in—sharing feels like it'll create trouble or judgment.
- D** We don't really do emotional check-ins. I deal with it myself.

3 Family hangouts (meals, outings, calls). How often do they happen and why?

- A** Fairly often, because it's important we show up and spend time together.
- B** Often enough, because we enjoy it, and it's okay if people join differently.
- C** They happen mostly out of obligation, not much discussion needed.
- D** Not often, everyone has their own schedule, and that's just how it is.

4 When your family does spend time together, what does it look like?

- A** We do things together, but it's a bit "guided", there's a right vibe to maintain.
- B** We do things together and people can be honest (jokes, feelings, disagreements allowed).
- C** We do the typical activity/ritual, but conversation stays minimal or safe.
- D** We're in the same space, but everyone is basically doing their own thing.

5 When conflict happens, what's most typical?

- A** We talk it out, but we try to land on one agreed version of events.
- B** We talk it out; multiple perspectives and feelings can be respected.
- C** We stop it quickly: "enough," "don't argue," "respect."
- D** We avoid it by disengaging; time passes and it resets.

6 How do "family rules and traditions" feel in daily life?

- A** Important, but negotiable, within limits.
- B** Flexible! It's okay to question and update them if it makes sense.
- C** Non-negotiable, following them proves respect to the authority figure.
- D** Fuzzy or inconsistent; everyone does their own thing.

* This is a non-clinical reflection tool inspired by Family Communication Patterns theory (measuring conversation and conformity orientations in communications). It's meant to spark insight, not diagnose.

SEE RESULTS ON NEXT PAGE →

HERE'S THE RESULTS!

How many did you get for each? **A** = ____ **B** = ____ **C** = ____ **D** = ____

Your most frequent letter suggests **your family's default pattern**.

A CONSENSUAL

You're a "we talk it out" family... but the unspoken mission is usually **unity**. Discussion is encouraged, yet there's often a preferred "right answer" (or at least an "right attitude").

Strength: People stay involved; there's guidance, structure, and a strong sense of team.

Weakness: Disagreement can feel like disrespect, and support can show up as advice but not feelings.



Try this!

Ask before advising: "Do you want comfort, ideas, or help deciding?"

B PLURALISTIC

Your family is basically an **open forum**: lots of talking, lots of viewpoints, and it's normal for people to land in different places. Differences aren't a threat, they're part of everyday life.

Strength: Great environment for honesty, storytelling, and curiosity.

Weakness: Conversations can become endless (big feelings but no landing), and decisions can float.



Try this!

Turn talk into one tiny action: "What's one small thing we can try this week?"

C PROTECTIVE

This is the "**keep the peace**" pattern: harmony often comes from respecting shared rules and authority figures, not long discussions. Talking less can be a way to avoid conflict, especially with sensitive topics.

Strength: Stability, clarity of roles, fewer drawn-out arguments.

Weakness: Emotions and difficult issues may be unheard even when they're technically "being cared for."



Try this!

Start low-stakes conversations: food, routines, childhood memories, then deeper topics later.

D LAISSEZ-FAIRE

This pattern is "**same family, separate lanes**."

There's usually low expectation to talk deeply and align on opinions.

Everyone manages their own life. It can feel peaceful... or distant, depending on what you need.

Strength: Autonomy, low pressure, fewer blow-ups.

Weakness: Connection can get thin; support becomes indirect ("I care, I just don't say much").

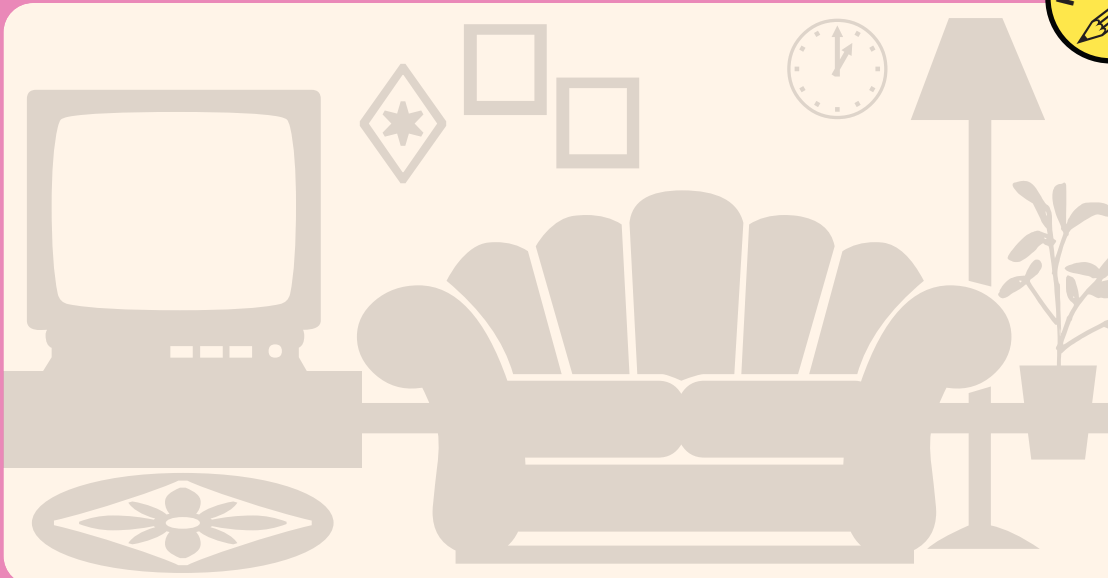


Try this!

Do side-by-side time: cook, walk, errands, easier than face-to-face intensity.



MEET MY FAMILY



Draw a picture of your family, include as many members as you would like.

You may pose them as a portrait shot, or just an everyday casual scene in the living room.

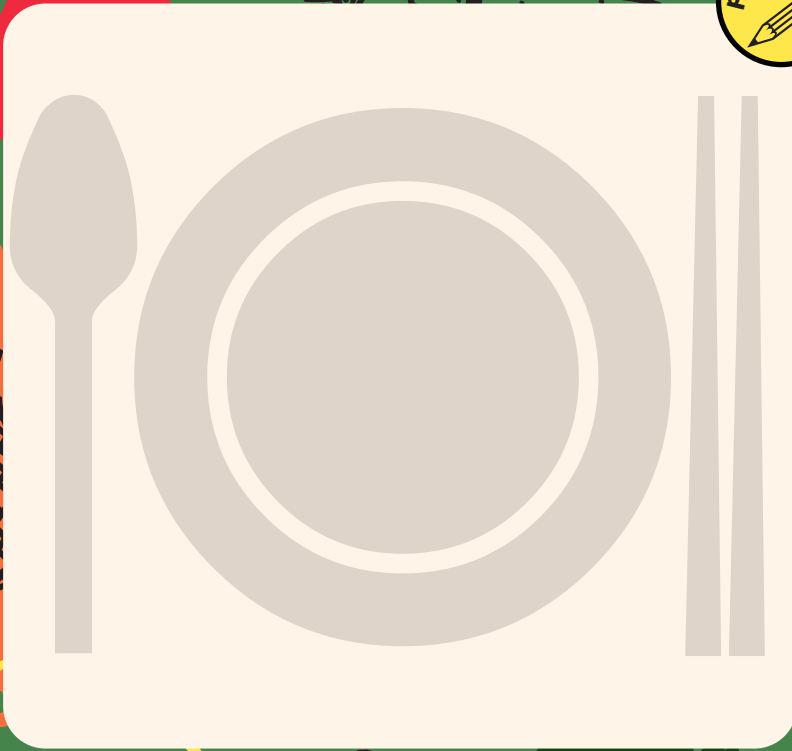
Feel free to decorate the living room to match with your own.



SECRET RECIPE

What secret family recipe do you know? Draw out the special dish as best you can.

If drawing food is not your thing, you can also write down or illustrate the recipe, noting which ingredients are needed, as well as step by step instructions of exactly how you would make it.



FAMILY TREE

Map out your family tree and include as many members as you can remember or fit into the page. For each member, recall a fact about them, and write your most favourite fact in the box below.

My favourite fact about my family is...

VIETNAMESE ZODIAC COMMUNICATION FORTUNE



RAT

You're quick-minded and socially sharp. You often read between the lines faster than others can finish a sentence. That can make you great at navigating group dynamics, but it can also turn your communication into strategy mode (hinting, testing, or over-adjusting).

Tip: Say your need plainly once before you start adapting.

Try this: "Just to be direct: what I need right now is ____."

Tip: Share earlier and smaller, not later and louder.

Try this: "I'm okay, but I'm starting to feel _____. Can we talk for 5 minutes?"



OX

You show love through consistency: being there, doing the practical things, holding it down. Because you're sturdy, you might carry discomfort quietly for too long and then one day it spills out as frustration.



TIGER

You communicate with intensity and conviction. When you care, it shows. People often feel protected by you, but in tense moments your directness can land as pressure or confrontation, even if your intention is love.

Tip: Lead with emotions first, then deliver the truth.

Try this: "I'm on your side. But can I share something honestly?"



HORSE

You value freedom and momentum so you prefer conversations that move forward, not ones that feel stuck.

When things get heavy, your reflex might be to escape (change topic, go busy, go quiet) to stay okay.

Tip: If you need to exit, always offer a return time.

Try this: "I can't do this well right now, can we revisit at ____?"



GOAT

You're soft-hearted and harmony-driven, you want everyone comfortable, and you're often the emotional buffer in the room. That kindness can turn into people-pleasing, where you say "yes" even when you can only do "no."

Tip: Replace over-apologising with clear limits.

Try this: "I want to help, and my limit is ____."



MONKEY

You're playful and quick. Humour is your superpower, and you can lighten a room instantly.

But jokes can also become armour, especially when feelings start getting too real.

Tip: Keep the humour, then add one honest sentence.

Try this: "Haha! Okay but seriously, I'm feeling ____."

Welcome to your totally-not-real “Vietnamese Zodiac Communication Fortune.” This isn’t astrology and it’s not a diagnosis but simply a playful way to spot common communication pitfalls that sometimes match each sign’s stereotype, but also with a tiny tip included that you can try immediately. Find your zodiac, pick the tip that feels most true, and test the recommendation once this week.

While the fortune might not be true, the communication tips certainly are credible, as they are adapted from research-informed practices (e.g., *Family Communication Patterns* theory; *active listening*; *assertive communication/boundaries*; *NVC-style needs/requests*; and *Gottman-informed conflict tools*).



CAT

You’re considerate and sensitive to atmosphere, you can sense tension early and try to smooth it out.

The downside is you may avoid conflict until you feel cornered, then disappear or shut down to protect your peace.

Tip: Practise “small no’s” so you don’t need a big retreat.

Try this: “I want harmony too, so I need to say this early.”



DRAGON

You’re bold, capable, and naturally take the “let’s fix it” role.

That leadership energy can help people feel guided, but it can also crowd out other voices if you jump straight to solutions or certainty.

Tip: Ask one curiosity question before you lead.

Try this: “Before I suggest anything, how are you seeing it?”



SNAKE

You’re observant and private, you notice details and shifts that others miss, but you don’t always announce what you’re thinking. Sometimes you expect people to understand your silence, which can accidentally create distance or misunderstanding.

Tip: Turn your interpretation into a question, not a conclusion.

Try this: “My guess is ____, am I reading that right?”



ROOSTER

You’re sharp, detailed, and direct, you notice what can be improved and you’re not afraid to say it.

Your clarity can be genuinely helpful, but if it lands as correction, people may feel judged and stop sharing.

Tip: Ask permission before giving feedback.

Try this: “Do you want feedback, or do you want me to just listen?”



DOG

You’re loyal and principled, trust means everything, and you take relationships seriously.

When you feel uncertainty, you might start scanning for signs, asking repeated questions, or “building a case” instead of simply naming the insecurity.

Tip: Name the feeling directly, gently, and early.

Try this: “I think I’m feeling unsure, so can you reassure me about ____?”



PIG

You’re warm and easygoing. You want good vibes and you’re often the peacemaker.

Because you dislike conflict, you might smooth over issues (“it’s fine!”) until the real need never gets spoken.

Tip: Say one truth kindly instead of keeping everything vague.

Try this: “I’m okay overall, but one thing I need to address is ____.”

FAMILY HOTLINE



**"I just want to know him
... before it's too late."**

From N.N.H.A. (23, Nha Trang),

Dear Dr. Thao,

I feel like I'm doing this really pathetic thing where I keep trying to unlock my dad's lore but failing badly.

I've been wanting to learn our family stories, not just facts, but the real stuff. What he was like at my age. Why did he pick his career that he complains about so much. Why did he marry my mom. I realised I know shockingly little, and it scares me. Like one day he'll be gone and I'll just be left with awkward photos and nothing else.

But every time I try, he dodges it. If I ask about his childhood, he just laughs and says: "What's there to talk about?." If I ask something deeper, he checks his phone, starts cleaning, or suddenly has an errand. If I say, "Can we sit down and talk properly?" he jokes like I'm being dramatic, or like I'm interrogating him.

I'm angry because... why is it so hard to talk to your own daughter? I'm not asking him to cry on command. I just want to know him.

I'm close to giving up because it makes me feel rejected. And I hate that I'm starting to resent him. Is there a way to do this without him running away? Or do I accept he'll never be that kind of dad?

Dear A.,

You're not pathetic, you're noticing a gap while there's still time to bridge it. Also: deflection isn't always rejection. Sometimes it's discomfort. A "sit-down serious talk" can feel to him like a performance test. So he retreats to what feels safe: jokes, tasks, logistics.

The shift is this: **stop aiming for one big cinematic conversation. Aim for many small doorways.** The goal is to make sharing feel low-pressure and doable.

TRY THIS

- ✓ **Go side-by-side, not face-to-face.** Ask while driving, cooking, walking, or doing chores.
- ✓ **Start with "easy-entry" questions** (small stories that unlock big ones): "What did you do for fun at 20?" / "Who was the strict one at home?" / "What was a typical Saturday?"
- ✓ **Make it feel like favour.** "I want to document family stories, can you help me fact-check something?"
- ✓ **Use a one-sentence intention, then pause:** "I'm not interrogating you. I just want to know you while I still can."

**"I'm scared we're becoming
strangers in the same house."**

From T.T.N., (46, Hai Phong),

Dear Dr. Thao,

I have a 15-year-old daughter and I swear she treats "family activity" like I'm asking her to watch paint dry.

When she was younger, she would do everything things with us: dinner, movies, small outings. Now it's "lame," or she's busy, or she sits with us but on her phone like she's doing community service. When she's home, she stays in her room. If I try to talk, it's one-word answers: "fine," "nothing," "okay." If I push for more details, she says I "wouldn't get it anyway".

I know teenagers want friends. I know I shouldn't take it personally. But I do. I'm scared we're becoming strangers living in the same house. And I'm worried that if she can't talk to us now, she won't come to us when something serious happens.

I don't want to nag. But I don't want to give up and let the distance grow. How do I get her to engage without it turning into a fight?

Dear N.,

This pain is real, and sadly also very common. Teenagers often push away not because they don't love you, but because they're practising independence (sometimes rudely). Your job isn't to make family time "fun." **Your job is to keep a reliable bridge available,** one she can cross without feeling judged or trapped.

Right now, the fastest way to lose her is to make connection feel like a test she's failing.

TRY THIS

- ✓ **Offer small, specific invites (not "quality time" speeches):**
"I'm making popcorn, want to watch one episode of this series with me?" / "I'm going to the supermarket, you wanna come with?"
- ✓ **Give two choices, let her pick:** "Walk or bubble tea?" "Movie or game?"
- ✓ **Use parallel connection.** Side-by-side activities (errands, cooking, driving) lower pressure of "serious quality time".
- ✓ **Swap questions for observations.**
"You seem tired lately." (then pause — no interrogation)

If you want Dr. Thao's advice on your own problems, send in your queries!

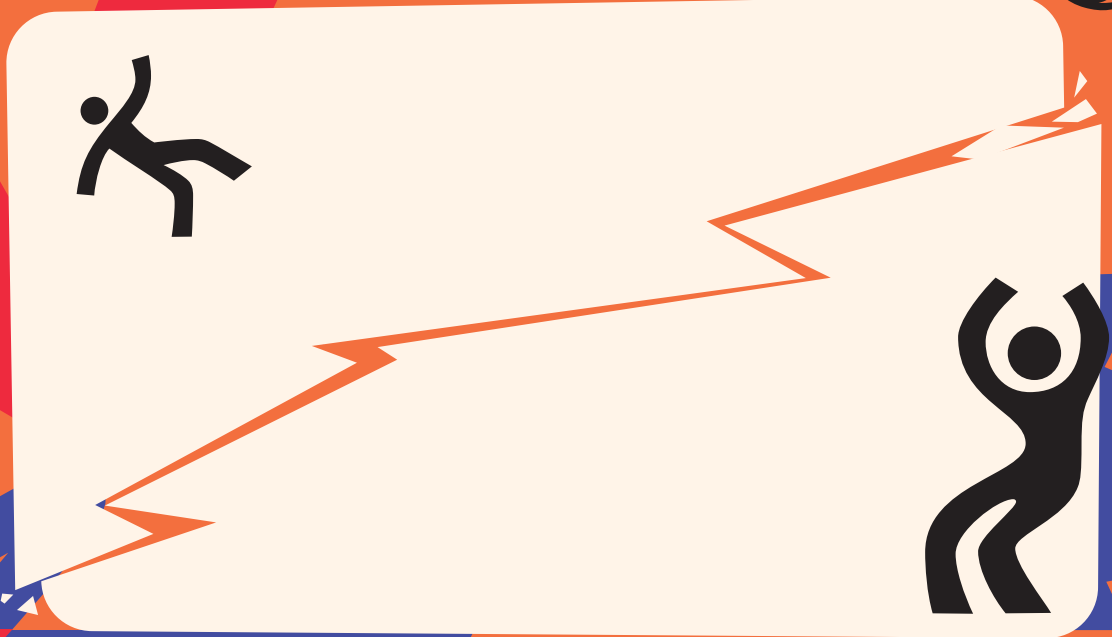
WHAT DOES THE GAP LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

FEEL IT.

How would you describe the gap between you and your parents?
Grandparents??
Extended family member???

What would it look like?
What object would it be?
How would this feeling be expressed visually?

Draw and write what you see into the blank space.



MEASURE IT.

Basically strangers	Very unfamiliar	Know a few things	Just the facts	Cordial greetings	Glad to meet you	Happy to chat	Frequent life updates	Can ask for advice	Emotional confidant	Can share everything
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Color in the picture based on how happy you are with your family's connection. How close do you feel to your family? How freely do you share things with each other? How often do you talk?

J K P A F A C E S A V I N G
D I G I T A L D I V I D E T
E J O R Y T X B I Y N M I L
X T W E P H C V V K D M D A
P A O Z E Q S Y M P E W Q N
S P R I V A C Y Q N O O M N
J M V I B N N E R S R R L N
C R D V M C X D S C K K G S
W I Y K E Y Q E A U E H U Q
H R H W A S K I N K E A A D
P A N M D K G O I S P R H A
D W U C W B H D E R E L V A
Y F V K Z P Q M R S N Z C P
R B O U N D A R I E S I F Y

Which one feels most true in your family right now?
If it's not in the list, then add it here.

KNOW IT.

Here are some potential factors that can exacerbate generational gap. Find them in the box.

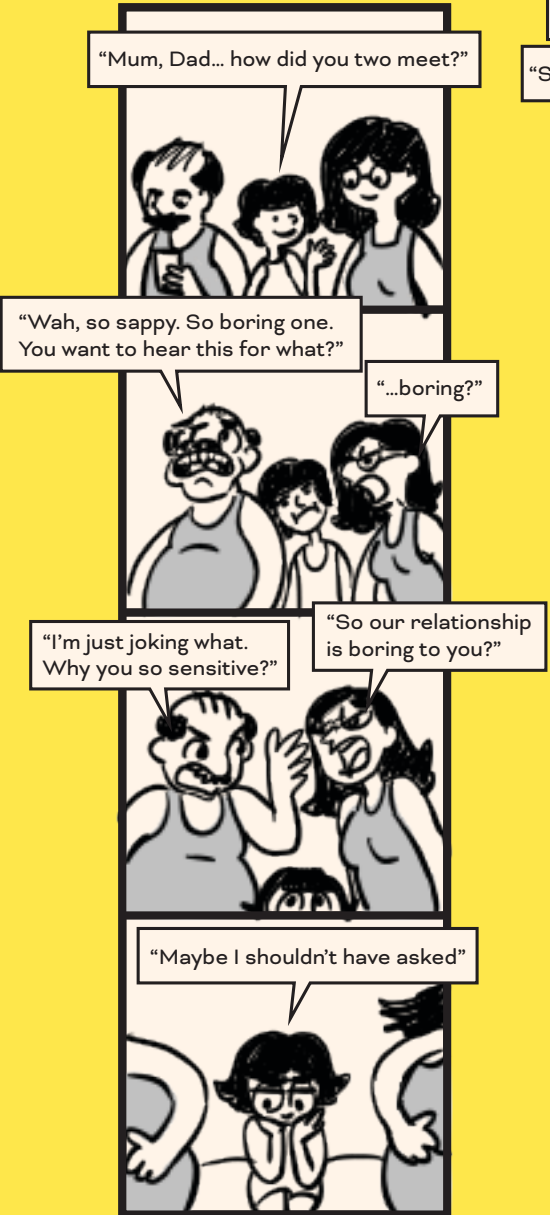
- DIGITAL DIVIDE:** Different tech habits (calls vs texts) can feel like different levels of care.
- LANGUAGE GAP:** Less shared language creates less nuance and more misunderstanding.
- EXPECTATIONS:** Unspoken rules create "I'm being judged" feelings.
- BOUNDARIES:** Different comfort levels with questions can read as love vs control.
- PRIVACY:** Updates vs space, both can be "care," but clash.
- INDEPENDENCE:** Independence can look like maturity or distance depending on generation.
- FACE SAVING:** Avoiding direct talk to prevent embarrassment/blame.
- WORK STRESS:** Stress shrinks patience, making small issues feel huge.
- TIME PRESSURE:** Rushed lives turn connection into an unaffordable luxury.

COMIC CORNER

Stories from our readers about their awkward families interactions.

Submit your own stories to be featured in our upcoming editions!

Love Story



Don't mock the moment.
Support the story first,
then make jokes later.

What to say instead:

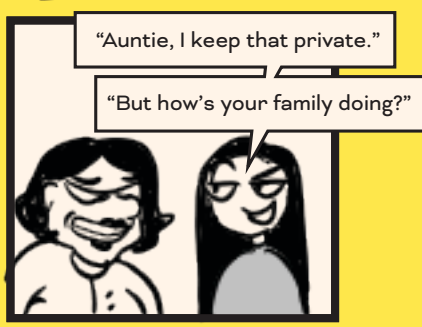


Talking Points



You can set a boundary
without insulting the person.
Use a short line then redirect.

What to say instead:

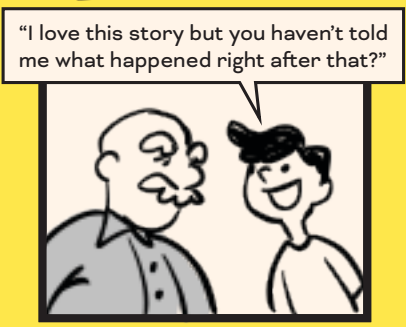


Tell Me Again



If it's a repeated story,
honour it, then ask about a
new aspect to learn more.

What to say instead:




B**I****N****G****O**

It's time to put those communication skills to the test! Here's a fun game you can play with your family to record some interesting stories from them.

Each square is something to fill in with a name / place / year / short sentence. If you don't know, ask a family member (or ask them to fill it). Aim for real answers, not guesses.

The full names of both your grandparents on one side

Where your parents lived at age 20

A job your parent did that they never talk about much

A food your parent loved as a kid

The name of a person who "raised" someone in your family

The first home address you remember

A family nickname and who it belongs to

A family tradition & where it came from

A song that was popular in your parent's teen years

The story behind a scar / injury someone has

The year (or age) your parent moved house the most

A time your parent felt proud of themselves

The "missing chapter": something you want to know

A family recipe + who taught it

A photo: pick one and write what was happening + who took it

One "family rule" from your parent's childhood

A moment your parent got in trouble as a teen

One thing your parent wishes people understood about their generation

A skill your parent learned "the hard way"

A place your family used to gather and why

One object your family has kept for a long time

What your parent wanted to be when they were young

A story your parent always repeats

A family saying or proverb

A big life choice your parent made and why



TAKEAWAYS

COMMUNICATION TIPS

THAT ACTUALLY WORK

2 Go low-pressure to get more honesty

If someone avoids "serious talks," try side-by-side moments (walks, cooking, driving) and one small question at a time. Lower intensity often gets better answers than a big sit-down.

3 Use active listening: reflect, clarify, summarise

When people feel heard, they get less defensive. The basic loop is: reflect back what you heard → clarify → summarise before you respond.

4 Be assertive, not passive or aggressive

Assertiveness = saying what you need while respecting the other person. It reduces stress and improves communication because it replaces hinting/resentment with clarity.

5 Replace criticism with a specific request

Conflict spirals when conversations start with criticism/attack. A more stable move is: name the issue gently and ask for one concrete change.

6 If you need to pause, pause with a return time

Withdrawal/silence can escalate tension. If you're flooded or the timing is bad, step away and decide when you'll continue.

7 Ask permission before advice

Advice can feel like judgement. Asking "listen or solutions?" protects closeness and makes help welcome.

BINGO TIPS!

The Core Mindset

Small beats serious. Don't wait for "the perfect sit-down talk." Collect stories in tiny moments.

Stories first, advice later. Storytelling builds safety but advice can feel like judgement.

Connection over correctness. You're building a bridge of memories, not winning an argument.

One question is enough. Getting one detail is a win.

Lifelines (use when stuck)

Ask a different family member

Use an artifact prompt: photo / object / recipe / song

Switch format depending on who you're asking

Reflection (optional)

- Hardest question: _____ Why? _____
- Easiest question: _____ Why? _____
- Tip that helped most: _____
- One thing I learned that surprised me: _____



Conversation "Recipes" (pick one)

The 2-minute version (for busy families)

1 question → 1 follow-up → thank you
 "Can I ask one small question?"
 "What happened next?"
 "Thanks! I'm going to write that down."

The deflection-proof version (for avoiders)

Side-by-side + easy prompt + exit plan
 "While we're doing this... can I ask one small story?"
 "If now not good, when's better?"
 "Tonight or tomorrow?"

The shy/awkward version (if you feel embarrassed)

Make it a "project"
 "I'm doing a family history bingo. Can you help me fill one square?"
 "You're the best person for me to ask about this."

THANK YOU FOR COMMUNICATING!

You just did something that's honestly not easy: making time to reflect, and (maybe) starting conversations that don't usually happen at home. Whether you filled every square or only did a few pages, your effort matters. If you want to help me understand how play-based prompts can support family communication and shared memory, please consider sharing your reflection with me.

Want to help this research?

If you're comfortable, please share what you made so I can learn from it.



Take photos / scan the pages you completed (even partial is helpful).



Email them to:
lydukhanhhan@gmail.com



Subject line suggestion:
"Booklet Submission – [Your name]"

What to include (optional, but helpful):

- Your age range: (e.g., 18–24 / 25–34)
- Who you did the activities with: (e.g., mum / dad / sibling / grandparent / alone)
- 1–2 sentences reflection on your overall experience.

Privacy note:

Only share what you're comfortable with.

You can blur names, remove pages, or leave sections blank. I'm interested in patterns and reflections, not perfect answers.

Want to know more?

Your input will help explore new ways to connect across generations through play.

If you have any feedback for the prototype or suggestions, or would like to know more about my research and how your stories will be used, feel free to reach out to me.



Ly Du Khanh Han (Ms. Han)



Email: lydukhanhhan@gmail.com



Website: www.haaanly.com



Instagram: @dukhanhhan



Link to research website

COMING SOON

If you enjoyed these activities and bite-sized tips, be sure to check out our digitised collection of **EVEN MORE** fun games for enabling family stories and connection.

Be the first to try it!

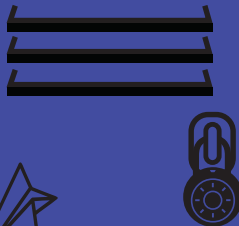
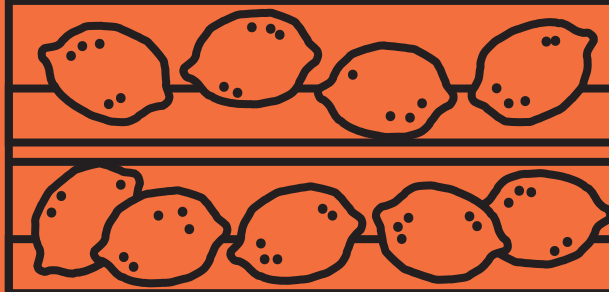
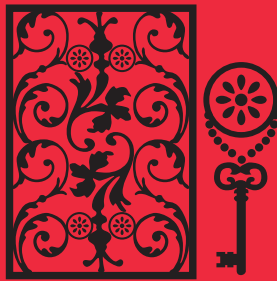
Yes, it's still in progress and your feedback helps shape it.

WE'RE GOING DIGITAL



Scan the QR to check it out today!

Feel free to share with your friends and family!



IS THIS YOU?

- ☐ You love your family... but talking to them is hard.
- ☐ You want to know more juicy family stories, and less "how's life?"
- ☐ Conversations in your family usually turns into jokes, lectures, or silence.
- ☐ You keep thinking, "I should ask about that thing before it's too late."
- ☐ You don't know a lot about your parents (and it feels weird to ask).
- ☐ You want a deep conversation without starting a fight.
- ☐ You want something playful and useful, but not a therapy book.
- ☐ You live apart and doesn't have time for extended family time.
- ☐ You want to keep family memories alive, one small piece at a time.
- ☐ *Or maybe you just want to play some cool games?*

If you checked yes to any of the boxes above then this booklet is for you (and your family)! Have fun exploring the games and activities, while learning interesting facts about family communication and how you can take yours to the next level!

And in the end you'll have a cool keepsake to help hold onto memories as well as the tools to create new ones.

