

Chapel Hill PD Support Group 11/1/16:

Notes from discussion on writing a memoir

- A memoir can take various forms - -poetry, recipes, anecdotes, autobiography, video, gathering written letters, etc.
- The idea of a memoir is to tell people who you are/were, including your memories, experiences, and life lessons, and to leave your legacy
- If you've ever written a journal or diary, you've written a memoir
- A memoir can be on about your whole life or about pieces of it
- The way you organize your memoir or who you choose to write it doesn't matter so much (e.g., chronologically VS thoughts as they come; typing VS writing VS dictating VS blogging VS being interviewed VS being videotaped)
- David's memoir is a collection of anecdotes and observations from his life, which he wrote as he thought of them. He then put them in order. He had them published into a soft cover book form, which he did through a self-publishing company called Blurb. He sent them his files and they set and bound the book for free, and then he ordered/paid for as many copies as he wanted.
- David described that "In a way, you get to have the life you choose and be remembered the way you want to because you get to decide what stories you want to include and what you don't."
- After David described his experience, we asked everyone to review their experience with Parkinson's by answering certain questions (see other document) and then discussing it both with the person next to them and then the full group
 - Many find the review of their life or particular experiences/challenges "healing and clarifying"
 - A number of people appreciated noticing similarities in one another's experiences
 - A number of people discussed what they've learned through living with Parkinson's, including "learning to let go," "not being as scared of Parkinson's over time," and that "you need to make room for it in order to live a normal life"