

Audio Script #2

Family Recipes, Old Photos & Antiques: Listening to Your Life

I have my grandmother's recipe for sugar cookies. I've never made them. Perhaps I will some day. I'm not really sure why it was so important to me to get the recipe from my mother and put it where I knew I wouldn't lose it.

I'm not sure why the recipe is so important but, whenever I ask people to think about family recipes that are part of their spiritual memoir, this is the first recipe that comes to mind — my grandmother's sugar cookies.

What is it about this recipe that seems to hold a piece of who I am? What memories are stirred when I think about these cookies? Just recalling the taste connects me with this grandmother who died when I was nine years old. I don't have as many clear memories of her as my other grandmother. But I have a connection through the sugar cookies. They tell me something about her and who she was in my life.

I know instinctively they hold a piece of who I am. They are a piece of my spiritual memoir.

The writer, Frederick Buechner, advises: "Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery it is. In the boredom and pain of it, no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it, because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace."¹

Listen to your life. Spiritual memoir is more than simply relating our memories to others. It is a journey of discovery. As we remember, we learn more about ourselves, our spiritual journey, and the patterns of our lives that have led to our spiritual growth.

In the simple, ordinary stories you share today through recipes, old photos, or a family antique, there are patterns, gifts, and spiritual teachings; you are listening to your life. Listen for grace - those moments of life's learning, when there was gift, when there was a sense of the Sacred present in Love. Wonder about the gifts hidden in your stories.

¹ Frederick Buechner, *Now and Then: A Memoir of Vocation*. Harper, 1991.