

FAMILY REMINISCING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SELF

Robyn Fivush

Emory University (USA)
psyrf@emory.edu

Abstract

Narratives are the process and product of self-understanding. Following from both sociocultural and feminist theories, the ways in which we construct narratives of our past experiences is a critical site for the construction of a coherent sense of self and well-being. Substantial research has established individual differences in how families reminisce about the shared and intergenerational past, and relations between family reminiscing and children's developing autobiographical narratives, self-concept and emotional well-being are well demonstrated. A review of the empirical research from preschool through adolescence indicates individual, gender and cultural differences in family reminiscing. Mothers are more elaborative and expressive than are fathers, both mothers and fathers are more elaborative and expressive with daughters than with sons, and independent cultures, such as European cultures, are more elaborative and expressive than interdependent cultures, such as Asian cultures. Empirical relations and implications of these differences in family reminiscing for child self and well-being are discussed.

Keywords: Autobiography; Memory; Narratives; Self; Parent-child interaction.

Resumo

Narrativas são o processo e o produto da auto-compreensão. Partindo das teorias sociocultural e feminista, as maneiras como construímos narrativas das nossas experiências passadas constituem um local crítico para a construção de um sentido coerente de *Self* e de bem-estar. Investigação substancial estabeleceu as diferenças individuais na forma como as famílias recordam o passado comum e inter-geracional, e demonstrou muito bem as relações entre a recordação pela família e o desenvolvimento de narrativas autobiográficas pelas crianças, o auto-conceito e o



bem-estar emocional. Uma revisão da pesquisa empírica desde o pré-escolar até à adolescência indica diferenças individuais, de gênero e culturais na forma como a família se recorda do passado. As mães são mais elaboradas e expressivas do que os pais, tanto as mães como os pais são mais elaborados e expressivos com as filhas do que com os filhos e culturas independentes, tais como as culturas europeias, são mais elaboradas e expressivas que as culturas interdependentes, tais como as culturas asiáticas. Neste artigo discutem-se relações empíricas e implicações das diferentes formas como as famílias recordam o passado sobre o Self e o bem-estar das crianças.

Palavras-chave: Autobiografia; Memória; Narrativas; *Self*; Interação pais-filhos.

Family Reminiscing and the Construction of an Autobiographical Self

Who we are is very much defined through our personal experiences. Our sense of self both emerges from and is constructed through the ways in which we experience and understand our past. Moreover this is a fluid and dynamic process that is created and recreated in social interactions in which we share our experiences, and our selves, with others (Fivush, 2008; McLean, Pasupathi & Pals, 2007). Selves are constructed in the process of creating meaning from our experiences through social interactions with others in which the events of our lives are interpreted and evaluated. Intriguingly, this process begins virtually at birth, as infants are embedded in social and cultural contexts in which stories of personal experiences are told about them, around them and with them, and the process develops across childhood and adolescence, as children become more competent participants in the sociocultural interactions that shape who they are. In this article, I review over 20 years of research from my Family Narratives Laboratory, as well as others' research, that has documented the development of an autobiographical self in family reminiscing interaction across preschool and adolescence. The major objective is to demonstrate the ways in which parentally structured reminiscing helps shape individual autobiography in ways that are consistent with cultural models and values.

I begin with a more detailed description of the sociocultural model of autobiographical memory, and a discussion of the role of language and narrative in the construction of an autobiographical self. I then turn to the research on family

reminiscing and the construction of self during two critical developmental time points: the preschool years when autobiographical memory and self are just emerging, and adolescence, when autobiographical memories coalesce into an overarching life narrative, the “story of me” (Barnes, 1998). At both points, I show how the developing individuals’ autobiographical self is formed through socially co-constructed narratives of personal experiences. I further explore the idea that personal narratives are influenced by larger cultural models of narrative and self. More specifically, stories of parents and grandparents, intergenerational narratives passed down within families, provide critical models and frameworks for placing self in a specific local historical context that provides a sense of situated self.

The Sociocultural Model of Autobiography

In 2004, Nelson and Fivush delineated a sociocultural developmental model of autobiographical memory stemming from Vygotsky’s more general sociocultural approach to development (Gauvain, 2001; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky argued that cultures structure activities such that the skills critical to becoming a competent member of the culture are displayed for young children and activities are structured in such ways to draw young children into participating in these activities. At first, the participation is inter-psychologically structured, with more competent adults scaffolding the child’s activity in ways that support the child’s rudimentary skills. As the child participates more and becomes more competent, the skills begin to be internalized intra-psychologically, and the child becomes able to perform the skill independently. Importantly, it is not only the skills themselves that are internalized, but as the child becomes more practiced and competent, the child also begins to take on the cultural values associated with that skill. A good example is literacy. Especially in post-industrialized western cultures, literacy is a critical adult skill, and infants are already embedded in a literate world from birth. Well before they can understand anything about these strange signs and symbols, infants are surrounded with the artifacts of literacy. There are letters and numbers on crib mobiles, on infant clothing, on building blocks and puzzles. Parents sing alphabet songs and play counting games, and within the first few months of life, infants begin to participate in the rhythm of these interactions. Thus infants and children are drawn into literacy, and through these socially mediated structured activities, begin to internalize the critical cultural tools necessary to become a literate member of society.



Autobiographical memory and narrative, like literacy, is a critical sociocultural skill. The cultural value to having and telling a life story may be particularly important in post-industrial cultures (Fivush, in press; McAdams, 1992; 2001; Nelson, 2003;). Especially in these cultures, families move away from family of origin, children leave home for education or work opportunities, children do not necessarily grow up in close proximity to grandparents or aunts and uncles. Rather, individuals and nuclear families create new communities, and entering and creating new communities requires the ability to provide a coherent sense of who one is. Think about college essays and job interviews, meeting new people in the workplace, or meeting potential romantic partners. Adults in post-industrial cultures are expected to be able to provide a coherent account of self through an autobiographical history that explains who one is and how one came to this place.

As with literacy, infants are enmeshed from birth in autobiographical and family stories. Parents tell their newborn infants stories about the family, the parents, the grandparents, and this new life, well before infants are able to understand anything they are saying (Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, Scwagler & Rimmer, 1995). As children grow older, parents continue to tell stories about their daily adventures. Toddlers are surrounded by stories parents are telling about them to neighbors, extended family and to the children themselves (Miller 1994; Miller, Cho & Bracey, 2005). Children begin participating in these stories virtually as soon as they begin talking (Eisenberg, 1985; Hudson, 1990; see Fivush, 2007 for a full review). At this early age, of about 16 to 18 months old, infants participate minimally, often simply responding to yes/no questions or repeating what the parent says, as in this example of a mother reminiscing about a trip to an aquarium with her toddler:

EXAMPLE 1 (from Reese, Haden & Fivush, 1996):

Mother: Remember when we first came in the aquarium? And we looked down and there were a whole bunch of birdies...in the water? Remember the name of the birdies?

Child: Ducks!

Mother: Nooo! They weren't ducks. They had on little suits. Penguins. Remember what did the penguins do?

Child: I don't know

Mother: You don't remember?

Child: No

Mother: Remember them jumping off the rocks and swimming in the water?

Child: Yeah

Mother: Real fast. You were watching them jump in the water, hmm?

Child: Yeah

As we see here, the toddler is very much a part of the story process even though not providing any specific or explicit information. In fact, the only information the child recalls is incorrect (at least according to the mother), and is not integrated into the ongoing narrative. Rather, the mother tells a bit more of the story with each conversational turn, and the child confirms, and in this way, the structure of storytelling is being displayed, and the importance of engaging in this activity is being highlighted. Very soon, children begin participating more fully in these co-constructed narratives. By 3-years of age, children begin to recall details in response to specific questions, as we see in this example of a mother reminiscing with her daughter about the night her friend slept over in her bed. Note that in this and in all examples, “xxx” indicates an unintelligible word and (unintelligible) indicates an unintelligible phrase.

EXAMPLE 2 (from Fivush, Brotman, Buckner & Goodman, 2000)

Mother: I remember when you were sad. You were sad when Melinda had to leave on Saturday, weren't you?

Child: Uh huh

Mother: You were very sad. And what happened? Why did you feel sad?

Child: Because Melinda, Melinda say, was having (unintelligible)

Mother: Yes.

Child: And then she stood up on my bed and it was my bedroom. She's not allowed to sleep there.

Mother: Is that why you were sad?

Child: Yeah. Now it makes me happy. I also, it makes me sad. But Melinda just left.

Mother: Uh huh

Child: And then I cried.

Mother: And you cried because....

Child: Melinda left.

Mother: Because Melinda left? And did that make you sad?

Child: And then I cried (makes "aaahhhh" sounds) like that. I cried and cried and



cried and cried.

Mother: I know. I know. I thought you were sad because Melinda left. I didn't know you were also sad because Melinda slept in your bed.

Here, the child is recalling a good deal of information; in fact, she is recalling information that the mother does not quite recall in the same way. But the mother continues to elicit this information, and integrates it into the ongoing story such that by the end of the conversation, there is a coherent narrative of the event. Between 3- to 4-years, children are participating to a greater extent, and are highly engaged in these parentally structured recalls, and by age 5, most children are able to provide a fairly coherent account of a personally experienced event on their own.

Language and Narrative in Autobiography

The sociocultural model and the examples provided underscore the role of language and narrative in the development of autobiography. To be more explicit, narratives are the way in which humans make sense of their experiences (Bruner, 1987; Fivush, 2008; Linde, 1993; Ricouer, 1991). Narratives provide a canonical structure for understanding how events unfold, and equally important, what these events mean. Narratives move beyond a simple chronology of actions in the world, to include what Bruner (1990) has called the landscape of consciousness. Narratives provide information about the inner working of human minds, the thoughts and emotions, the intentions and motivations that led to certain actions and that had certain consequences. Further, these intentions, motivations and consequences are evaluated within a moral understanding of how people *should* behave (Fivush, Marin & Merrill, in press; Freeman, 2007; Sclater, 2003). In a very deep sense, narratives create an interpretive framework for understanding human behavior, both of self and other. Narratives are explanatory, evaluative frameworks that integrate what happened with interpretation and meaning.

Thus, as children learn to construct coherent narratives about their personal experiences, they are simultaneously learning how to interpret themselves. Narratives provide the ability to construct a sense of self that stems from and is coherent and consistent with our past experiences (Conway, Singer & Tagini, 2004). Narratives inform, explain and justify who we are (Pasupathi, Monsour & Brubaker, 2007; Pasupathi & Weeks, 2011). From a sociocultural perspective narratives forms and

evaluative frames are learned through countless local socially structured narrative interactions, and in the process of learning to construct a more coherent narrative, children are learning how to understand their actions, and therefore themselves, in the world.

In addition to the coherently organized account of what happened that narratives provide, the expression of internal state language, especially emotion, is critical for narratives to take on self-defining meaning. As emotions of self and other are integrated into narrative accounts of personal past experiences, these experiences become more self-reflective and personally significant (Fivush & Baker-Ward, 2005; Fivush & Zaman, in press). Emotions provide the glue that links the past to the present, that makes the past event meaningful for definition of who one is in the here and now (Fivush, 2001; Schectman, 2003). Not only did this event happen to me, this is how it affected me emotionally then and how it continues to affect me emotionally now. Thus in considering how narratives become self-defining aspects of our autobiographical self, emotions play a crucial role.

Given this perspective, it is particularly intriguing that there are profound individual differences in how families co-construct the past together. This is true early in the preschool years, as children are just learning how to create coherent narratives that define self, and it is true as children grow older, and face the task of forming a more coherent life narrative that describes who they are in terms of where they have come from, what it has meant, and where they are going. In the remainder of this article, I turn to the empirical research documenting the development of an autobiographical self during the preschool and adolescent years, as it develops within family narrative interactions.

Parental Reminiscing Style during the Preschool Years

Substantial research has established that parents, and especially mothers, show enduring individual differences in how they co-construct autobiographical narratives with their preschool children (see Fivush, Haden & Reese, 2006, and Reese, 2002a, 2002b, for reviews). Because the majority of this research has been conducted with mothers, mostly in white middle class western cultures, I will review this research first, before turning to a more nuanced discussion of how gender and culture also influences this process. For the sake of clarity, I will simply refer to participants as “mothers” in this first section, with the understanding that the focus is on a specific cultural group.



Maternal reminiscing style

Several cross-sectional and longitudinal studies have confirmed that mothers vary along a dimension of elaboration when reminiscing with their preschool children (Bauer & Burch, 2004; Farrant & Reese, 2000; Fivush & Vasudeva, 2002; Flannagan, Baker-Ward, & Graham, 1995; Haden, 1998; Harley & Reese, 1999; Hudson, 1990; Leichtman, Pillemer, Wang, Koreishi, & Han, 2000; Low & Durkin, 2001; Peterson & McCabe, 1992; 1994; Welch-Ross, 2001; see Fivush, in press, and Fivush, Haden & Reese, 2006, for reviews). Mothers who display a more highly elaborative reminiscing style talk more about the past, they talk in more detail, including more information about what occurred, as well as including more evaluative and emotional information. Both Examples 1 and 2 above illustrate a highly elaborative maternal reminiscing style. Here is another example, a mother reminiscing with her 4-year-old daughter about going to the lake. At this point in the excerpt, the conversation turns to the child's friend, and swimming on the friend's inflatable float:

EXAMPLE 3 (from Fivush et al., 2000):

M: ...Did you like Lauren?

C: Yes.

M: Oh, remember when we got in Lauren's little float?

C: Yes

M: and what happened?

C: (whispers)

M: You did? (laughs) Was that scary?

C: Yes, and I didn't (like it).

M: Yeah, I know you didn't. What did you do?

C: I said boo hoo

M: No, you said "cry cry", that's what you said. You were crying. Remember and then you wanted to get out of the water?

C: I almost drowned.

M: You didn't almost drown. You didn't almost drown...I was right there. Remember, I got you out of the water. Right away.

Note that the mother introduces the topic with an evaluative question (Did you like Lauren?). The mother turns to what she considers the important activity engaged in with the friend, and helps the child to recall what happened. Again, it is not simply

the action, but also how the child felt about it. In this example as in Example 2 above, the mother does not necessarily accept everything the child says. There is a negotiation, such that the mother clearly wants the child to have a particular emotional evaluative perspective on this event, and works to structure the narrative in such a way, that this is the story. Both mother and daughter are engaged, both are recalling, although obviously not always in the same way, but by the end there is a sense of a shared story. This is even more evident in a co-constructed narrative between a mother and a somewhat older child, her 8-year-old daughter, reminiscing about a bike trip they took during a family vacation:

EXAMPLE 4 (from Reese et al, 1993):

Mother: And we were all goin' on a bike and you didn't wanna go on a bike and so you were just going to jog but you got so tired - -

Child: NOT TIRED!

Mother: (Laughing) You didn't get tired. OK. You didn't get tired --

Child: (giggles)

Mother: -- but you wanted to sit on the bike seat I was peddling. What do you remember about that?

Child: Wanting you to go really really slow. My legs were hurting.

Mother: (laughs) Why were your legs hurting?

Child: Cuz I was like this (spreads legs wide) all the time

Mother: Cuz your legs were spread apart like that.

Child: Yeah, but if you went slowly I could relax.

Mother: Uh huh

Child: And you went too fast

Mother: But you had fun, though, didn't you?

Child: It was great!

Mother: What was that, a half mile or something?

Child: I was afraid I might, uh, you might go flying off the edge (both laughing), edge of the bridge and, umm, I just wanted to jog.

Mother: And you were afraid of riding on the bike with me across the bridge, huh?

Child: Uh huh uh huh uh huh.

Here, of course with an older child we see a much more heavily co-constructed narrative, with the child participating to the ongoing story more fully. But we still see



the mother structuring the story to make it a coherent, evaluative shared event. At the beginning, the mother again negotiates with the child what the child's evaluation of the event is (OK, you didn't get tired, BUT...), and asking the child to elaborate on her experiences. By the end, the mother and child are clearly sharing an emotionally satisfying moment in which they recall how much they enjoyed this activity together. I want to emphasize that elaborative mothers may not always agree with their children's memories, and indeed, may participate in fairly heavy handed negotiations about what happened and what it meant. What is critical is that the child's memory is drawn out, and incorporated into the ultimate story of what happened.

In contrast to mothers who are highly elaborative and evaluative, other mothers are significantly less elaborative and focus clearly on the facts of what happened with little room for evaluative or interpretive detail. Again, an example serves well to illustrate this idea. This is a mother recalling going to the circus with her 4-year-old son:

EXAMPLE 5 (from Reese et al., 1993):

M: What other animals did we see at the circus?

C: A giraffe

M: No, we didn't see a giraffe at the circus. Who did we see at the circus that looked funny? Remember the rhinoceros?...

M: What else did we see at the circus?

C: Um, giraffe.

M: No, we didn't.

Here, the mother is focused on getting a list of animals seen. When the child recalls an animal that the mother does not recall seeing (of course, we do not know whether there was, in fact, a giraffe at the circus), the mother simply dismisses this and tries to get her child to remember another specific animal. Note the difference from Example 3, where the mother and child also disagree on what happened, and the mother also dismisses the child's recall (You didn't almost drown). But in dismissing the child's recall in Example 3, the mother reinterprets and re-evaluates what happened and creates a new narrative. In contrast, in Example 5, the mother dismisses the child's recall, and simply moves onto another topic. The child is not given an opportunity to reconstruct his memory in a shared narrative format. He is simply negated.

Using quantitative coding methods that examine these reminiscing conversations either utterance by utterance (e.g., Reese, Haden & Fivush, 1993), or more globally through coding along a dimension of elaboration (e.g., Reese, 2002a), there is converging evidence that mothers can be easily identified as displaying a high elaborative style or a low elaborative style. Moreover, mothers are consistent over time in reminiscing style. Mothers who are highly elaborative when their children are quite young, remain more highly elaborative than their less elaborative counterparts as their children develop across the preschool years (see Reese, 2002a, 2002b, for reviews). Mothers are also consistent across siblings. Mothers who are highly elaborative with one of their children, are also highly elaborative with their other children (Haden, 1998). But importantly, this is not simply a maternal characteristic of talkativeness. Mothers who are more highly elaborative when reminiscing with their preschool children are not necessarily more elaborative when engaging in other language interactions, such as book reading, free play or care giving activities (Haden & Fivush, 1996; Hoff, 2003; Hoff-Ginsburg, 1991). Thus maternal reminiscing style seems to be specific to the reminiscing context. Indeed, when mothers are asked why they reminisce with their preschool children, they respond that reminiscing is an important activity for creating emotional bonds and a shared history, as well as to help their children to understand who they are by understanding their past experiences (Kulkofsky, Wang & Koh, 2009). Thus both explicitly and implicitly, reminiscing is a context for sharing the past, and understanding relations between the past and the self.

Perhaps just as important in demonstrating individual differences in maternal reminiscing style, several longitudinal studies have further established that these differences matter for children's developing autobiographical narrative skills (Farrant & Reese, 2000; Fivush, 1991; Haden, Haine & Fivush, 1997; Hudson, 1990; Low & Durkin, 2001; Peterson & McCabe, 1992). Mothers who are more highly elaborative early in the preschool years, have children who tell more detailed and coherent narratives later in the preschool years, both when reminiscing with their mothers and when narrating about their past to an unfamiliar adult, indicating that these narrative skills have been internalized and generalized across conversational partners (Fivush, 1991; Haden et al, 1997; Peterson & McCabe, 1992; see Reese, 2002a for an overview). Further, mothers who talk more about the emotional and evaluative aspects of the past, have children who provide more emotionally expressive and evaluative narratives about their personal past later in development (Adams, Kuebli, Boyle & Fivush, 1995; Fivush, 1991; Haden et al, 1997; Kuebli, Butler & Fivush, 1995; Rudek &



Haden, 2005).

Maternal reminiscing style and child self and well-being

It is quite clear that maternal reminiscing style is a critical factor in children's developing autobiographical skills; children whose mothers are more highly elaborative and evaluative when co-constructing the shared past have children, who by the end of the preschool years, have more coherent, emotionally expressive and evaluative personal narratives. The question is whether this also matters for children's developing sense of self and well-being. In a word, yes. Children of more highly elaborative mothers display a more differentiated and coherent self-concept than children of less elaborative mothers (Bird & Reese, 2006; Welch-Ross, Fasig, & Farrar, 1999). More specifically, using a self-concept scale that asks preschoolers to indicate traits that do and do not describe them, children of more highly elaborative mothers provide self descriptions that are more coherent across traits (i.e., endorsing being both friendly and liking other people) and more differentiated between traits (i.e., not endorsing both being shy and being outgoing). In addition, mothers who use more internal state language when reminiscing with their preschoolers have children who endorse a more coherent self-concept (Wang, Doan & Song, 2010).

Children of more highly elaborative mothers also show earlier and better understanding of emotion. They are better able to label emotions, to understand the causes of emotional states, the links between emotion and behavior, and they show better regulation skills when coping with negative experiences (Fivush, 2007). For example, Laible and her colleagues (Laible, 2004a, 2004b; Laible & Thompson, 2000) have shown that more elaborative mothers have children who display more emotional stability, are better able to delay gratification, and show higher levels of moral reasoning. Moving beyond the preschool years, Sales and Fivush (2005; Fivush & Sales, 2006) have further shown that mothers who are more elaborative and explanatory when reminiscing about highly stressful events with their 9- to 12-year-old children have children who show more flexible and adaptive coping strategies. Thus, in the process of developing more coherent and emotional evaluative narratives of self, children are also developing a more coherent, differentiated and emotionally stable sense of self as well. This begs the question of why some mothers may be more elaborative than others when reminiscing. This is a complicated question in that there are most likely multiple reasons why any individual mother is elaborative (see Fivush et

al., 2006, for a full discussion), but we do know that reminiscing style is related to both gender and culture.

Gender and parental reminiscing style

As already mentioned the majority of research on early reminiscing style focuses on mothers. A much smaller body of research also examines fathers, and the results indicate that both gender of parent and gender of child play a role in reminiscing style. Both mothers and fathers are more elaborative when reminiscing with daughters than with sons (Fivush, Berlin, Sales, Mennutti-Washburn & Cassidy, 2003; Fivush, Brotman, Buckner & Goodman, 2000; Reese, Haden & Fivush, 1996; Zaman & Fivush, 2012). And especially in relation to emotional expression within reminiscing narratives, both mothers and fathers focus more on emotion with daughters than with sons (Fivush et al, 2000; Fivush & Zaman, in press). Mothers and fathers use more emotion words overall when reminiscing with daughters than with sons, and they talk about the causes of emotional experience, especially sadness, with daughters than with sons. Again, some examples illustrate. First is an example of a mother reminiscing with her 4-year-old daughter about a time the daughter was sad:

EXAMPLE 6 (from Fivush et al., 2000):

M: Well, one thing that made you really sad is when your best friend Susie moved away, right? Yeah, and did we watch all her things go on the moving truck? Uh-huh, and do you remember why she had to move away?

C: ...Because Susie's Dad had to work.

M: Susie's Daddy was going to start working at a new job...And do you still miss Susie when you think about it? Yes?

C: Yes.

M: It makes you sad. Doesn't it? But is she still your friend even far away? Yes! What can you do even though she's far away?

C: Give her a happy letter with a (drawing) on it.

M: Give her a happy letter, right, and we have a drawing, don't we?

Here we see a fully coherent narrative that explores the child's emotional life, why she was sad, how and why sadness was an appropriate reaction, and how this emotion is linked to the child's emotional self in the present (you still miss her) as well as her self-understanding as someone who cares about and keeps important emotional



relationships, ending with a specific resolution that integrates her sad feelings with her self-concept of herself as a friend. Contrast this with a conversation between a mother and her 4-year-old son, also about being sad:

EXAMPLE 7 (from Fivush et al., 2000):

M: How did you feel when Mindy wouldn't let you play the other day, when she was playing with Becky and she told you boys to go away? How did that make you feel?

C: Umm, sad.

M: And why does Mindy do that?

C: Because she's mean.

M: (laughing) Is she mean? Is she mean all the time? When she doesn't let you play, you're not very happy, are you?

C: ummm.

Again, the source of sadness is another, but here it is not a loss of relationship, but a blocking of the child's desire. When the son offers an interpretation of why his sister, Mindy, would not allow him to engage (because she's mean) the mother doesn't quite accept this interpretation (she laughs) but she doesn't quite challenge it either. There is no re-interpretation or resolution. The mother simply changes topic after this last utterance. Fathers show similar patterns in reminiscing with daughters as compared to sons. Fathers talk more about emotions with daughters especially sadness, and more about the causes of emotions with daughters than with sons (Fivush, et al., 2000; Zaman & Fivush, 2012).

It is also the case that mothers and fathers differ from each other. In particular, mothers are more elaborative overall and reminisce more about emotions than fathers (Reese & Fivush, 1993; Zaman & Fivush, 2012). The net result is that reminiscing between mothers and daughters is highly elaborative and emotionally expressive, and reminiscing between fathers and sons is the least elaborative and emotionally expressive of the possible dyads (see Fivush & Zaman, in press, for a full description and discussion). Mother-son and father-daughter reminiscing sits somewhere in the middle. These findings raise two questions: why might we see these gender differences, and do these early differences in parent-child reminiscing matter for the development of an autobiographical self?

That mothers are more elaborative and emotionally expressive when reminiscing

than are fathers follows from both theory and data on gender differences in the value and engagement in social interactions more broadly. Conversation, and especially conversations about emotional experiences, is stereotypically female, and, indeed, women engage in conversations about relationships and emotions to a greater extent than do males (Fischer, 2000; Owen-Blakemore, Berenbaum & Liben, 2009; Ross & Holmberg, 1990). Much of everyday conversation focuses on reminiscing about our past experiences with others. By some estimates, conversations about the past emerges as a topic of conversation about once every 5 minutes (Bohanek, Fivush, Zaman, Thomas-Lepore, Merchant & Duke, 2009; Miller, 1994), and more than 90% of our emotional experiences are shared with another person in conversation within 24 hours of its' occurrence (Rime, 2007). Women are engaging in more frequent and more emotional conversations on a daily basis than are men, and thus it follows that mothers would do so more than fathers. What is interesting is that both mothers and fathers are following the stereotypes in that both are engaging their daughters to a greater extent than their sons in this activity, even though there are no gender differences in children's memory abilities or responses within these reminiscing conversations until the end of the preschool years (Fivush, 2007; Reese, 2002a; 2002b). This suggest that adult differences in autobiographical narrative may be socialized in early parentally structured reminiscing interactions, in which parents may be socializing their daughters to engage in, and perhaps value, the activity of reminiscing in more elaborated and emotional ways more so than their sons.

Indeed, by age 4, females are telling longer, more detailed and more emotionally expressive personal narratives than are boys, and this difference increases across childhood (Bucker & Fivush, 1998; Fivush, Haden & Adam, 1995). In middle childhood, there are few gender differences in the number of component actions included in personal narratives, but girls continue to increase in the number of evaluative components in their narratives to a much greater extent than do boys across middle childhood (Buckner & Fivush, 1998; Pasupathi & Wainryb, 2010). Throughout adulthood, females tell longer, more detailed, more vivid, and more emotionally expressive narratives than do males (Bauer, Stennes & Haight, 2003; Cross & Madson, 1997; Niedzwienska, 2003; Ross & Holmberg, 1990). These findings suggest that the autobiographical self is more emotionally imbued for females than for males. Although the empirical link between early parentally structured reminiscing that differs by gender to adult differences in autobiographical narratives has yet to be examined, the speculation of the connection is compelling.



Parental reminiscing style and culture

Following from sociocultural theory, autobiographical reminiscing should be related to the cultural values of having and telling a life story. These values differ by culture. More specifically, Wang and her colleagues (Wang, in press; Wang & Ross, 2007) have argued that in cultures with a more independent model of self, a model of self as autonomous and distinct, autobiographical reminiscing should support more self-focused experience. This would be expressed as autobiography centered on the self and internal emotions and thoughts, and less on others, community standards and group behavior. In contrast, cultures with a more interdependent sense of self, a self that is defined in relation to others, autobiographical reminiscing should reflect this focus by centering on the social group and on behavioral norms. Research examining multiple interdependent cultures, mostly Asian cultures, including Chinese, Korean, and Japanese, have concurred that parent-child reminiscing in these cultures reflect these cultural values. More so than Western cultures, including multiple European and Euro-American cultures, Asian mothers are less elaborative overall, integrate less emotion into their reminiscing with their preschoolers, and focus more on the social group, behavioral norms, and community standards (Wang, 2001; 2006; 2007; Wang & Fivush, 2005).

By middle childhood, children in Asian cultures tell less elaborated narratives about their personal past, focus more on what usually happens rather than on the specific details of any given experiences, and include less emotional information (Han, Leichtman & Wang, 1998). In adulthood, this pattern continues. Asian adults tell sparser autobiographical narratives than do Western adults, and include less self-references, fewer emotions, and more references to others and to group standards. Importantly, this pattern of autobiographical reminiscing is related to endorsement of a sense of self as interdependent or independent. The more an individual endorses an independent sense of self, the more they narrate an elaborated, self-focused past (Wang, in press; Wang & Ross, 2007). Although we do not yet have the empirical links, arguing across the parent-child reminiscing literature and the adult autobiographical memory literature, it is tempting to argue that early parentally structured autobiographical reminiscing sets the stage for emerging adult autobiographical self. Indeed, we now turn to research, albeit mainly with Euro-American samples, that suggests that the role of family reminiscing continues to play a major role in the development of autobiographical self through adolescence.

Family Reminiscing during Adolescence

By the end of the preschool years, children have developed competencies in recalling their past, and are easily able to engage with parents, family and friends in telling about their experiences. But obviously these skills continue to develop across childhood, and especially in adolescence, when the child faces the task of constructing a healthy adult identity. Adolescence heralds new skills and new challenges that culminate in what Erikson (1968) called the “identity crisis,” a time of questioning, reflecting on, and ultimately accepting and/or creating values, goals and life plans, and much of this meaning making is done through narrative (see McLean & Pasupathi, 2011, for an overview). Adolescents develop specific cognitive and social skills, as well as sociocultural models and motivations to create a life narrative (see Fivush, Habermas, Waters & Zaman, 2011, for a discussion).

Cognitively, adolescents are able to understand time and temporal patterns in new ways. The developmental understanding of time is a surprisingly late ability (Friedman, 1993; Friedman, Reese & Dai, 2009). It is not until middle to late childhood that children can reliably sequence events along a timeline that represents one event as before or after the other, especially if they occur more than a few months apart. This skill is related to developing understanding of cultural markers of time, including calendars. With temporal understanding comes more complex causal understanding as well, the ability to understand how one event is causally related to another (Habermas, 2007; 2011; Habermas & Bluck, 2000). These are necessary skills for developing a personal timeline. In addition, adolescents begin to be able to take the perspective of others in more complex ways, moving beyond the ability to simply represent another’s point of view, to be able to coordinate multiple points of view and to develop a third person perspective that integrates these multiple perspectives into a more overarching, and perhaps more objective perspective (Harter, 1999).

Socially, adolescents move further away from the family and more into the peer group, and begin to develop more intimate peer relationships. This leads to questioning of family activities and values as the only perspective, and allows the adolescent to begin to reflect on their own individual values. This is not to say that adolescence is necessarily about antagonistic family relationships. Most adolescents maintain quite close relationships with their family and do not engage in problematic behaviors (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Rather, these burgeoning abilities allow the adolescent to more fully reflect on accepted wisdom, and to decide how and what they believe for



themselves (Kroger, 1996). And, similar to the preschool years, much of this takes place within parentally structured narratives about past experiences that helps the adolescent to understand and evaluate personal experiences in ways that provide a platform for understanding of self and well-being. Moreover, with the increasingly outward perspective of adolescence, a new kind of family narrative also becomes important, intergenerational narratives. These are narratives about the family members before the adolescent was born, stories about the parents and the grandparents growing up and starting families. Intergenerational narratives help situate adolescents in their own family story, and provide models and frameworks for understanding how lives should be lived (Fivush, Bohanek & Duke, 2005; Pratt & Fiese, 2004; Norris, Kujack & Pratt, 2004). Here, I review research from our Family Narratives Lab that explores both how shared family reminiscing, and intergenerational narratives, specifically narratives the adolescent knows about their parents' childhoods, helps shape adolescents' emerging self.

Shared family reminiscing

Based on the research with parentally structured reminiscing during the preschool years, the first question we addressed was how families continue to reminisce as children enter adolescence (Fivush, Bohanek, Robertson & Duke, 2005; Fivush, Marin, McWilliams & Bohanek, 2009; Marin, Bohanek & Fivush, 2008). Working with 40 broadly middle-class racially diverse families, we asked mothers, fathers and all the children in the family to reminisce together about shared past experiences. Each family had at least one child entering adolescence (10- to 12-years of age), that we targeted for collecting additional data on their identity and well-being. We focused on family reminiscing about emotional experiences, both positive and negative. As the research with preschoolers established, parentally structured reminiscing that is emotionally expressive and evaluative may facilitate children's abilities to understand and regulate emotional experiences in ways that are beneficial.

We note that in this study we asked the family as a whole to reminisce together, rather than focusing on a parent-child dyad, as in the preschool research. We made this decision based on family systems theory (Kreppner, 2002) which posits that the dynamics of family interaction are greater than the sum of the individual participants, and that examining the family as a whole would provide insight into larger family patterns of interaction. However, since the preschool data are all based on dyadic

interaction and this is one of the few reminiscing studies in the literature based on whole family reminiscing (but see also Hirst & Manier, 1996), we are not able to draw explicit comparisons about how dyadic versus family reminiscing might be similar and/or different. It will be important in future research to directly compare these different social contexts in order to establish how each contributes to adolescent development.

The narratives were transcribed and coded in ways analogous to the elaborative and evaluative coding schemes used with the parent-preschool conversations. More specifically, we examined all the utterances that mothers, fathers, and children produced that were elaborative, in that they provided new information to the emerging story, and we coded all the emotional expressions as expressing emotion (we were sad) and/or explaining emotion (we were sad because Grandpa died). We also coded the frequency with which each person's statement during the narrative was validated by another person (yes, we were sad). Overall, mothers were more elaborative than fathers, replicating findings within families with preschoolers. Perhaps surprising, we found no relations between parental reminiscing about the positive events and child well-being. But for the stressful events, multiple relations emerged (Fivush et al., 2009). To put this in context, the majority of stressful events discussed were about loss, the death of a family member (12 families) or a beloved pet (8 families). Five families discussed a serious illness or injury, and 5 discussed an accident or natural disaster. The remaining 10 families varied, a few discussing a family argument, and the rest discussing a move to a new city, or a mishap during a vacation. Families clearly varied in how elaborative, emotionally expressive and validating they were during reminiscing about a stressful event. For example, here is one family with a 12-year-old daughter discussing the death of the father's grandfather (the child's great-grandfather):

EXAMPLE 8 (from Marin et al, 2008):

Father: And we had to go up at Christmas time for Grandpa's funeral, didn't we?

Child: mmmhmm

Father: mmmhmm, and, what do you remember about that?

Child: It was very sad and

Father: It <was sad

Child: scary>

Father: Especially that it was right at Christmas time and Grandma had just passed away about a year before that, which made it really hard for everyone.



And I had to get out of work early and Mother had to get out of work and you had to get out of school and we all had to go up to Michigan and it was sad cause it was around the holidays

Mother: Yeah...I thought it was especially sad for um Grandpa, you- your Father.

Father: Mmmhmm

Mother: You know having to deal with that

Father: Yeah, it was sad for me cause it was my last grandparent too

Mother: Yeah

Father: How did it affect you Roseanne?

Child: I thought it was sad even though I didn't spend a whole lot of time with Grandpa, our Great Grandpa, but it was still sad you know a member of the family had passed away

Father: mmmhmmm

Mother: Why was it scary? You just said a minute ago it was kind of scary

Child: Well because I mean...Just seeing him lay in the casket kind of scared me

Mother: Mmm-hmm

Child: and there were so many people there and then we had that mass before

Mother: Mmmhmm

Child: that I didn't really wanna xxx but and it was just sad and it was scary because of those xxx

Mother: Yeah, Are you still scared of stuff like that?

In this excerpt, the father begins by asking the child about her feelings and then immediately validates feeling sad, going on to explain why the event was so sad. The mother chimes in that it was, indeed, sad for the whole family, again elaborating on the circumstances that made it particularly difficult. Early on, the child also mentions being scared, but the father does not elaborate on this. The mother picks up this theme later in the conversation, asking the child why she was scared. They then go on to explore this emotion in a very accepting way. We see this again in the following example of a family with two preadolescent daughters talking about moving to the U.S., a different kind of event in that it also involves a loss, here of place and friendships, but simultaneously involves positive change for the family:

EXAMPLE 9 (from Marin et al, 2008)

Mom: So now we're going to talk about something that is not such a good

experience.

Dad: Yeah. Let's talk about coming back to the United States from the Philippines and going to new schools and all that stuff.

Mary: Yeah. (Giggles) All right.

Mom: Well, I, you know, definitely one of the first worst parts (chuckles) was saying goodbye to (relatives).

Mary: <(Sadly) On no.

Jane: (Sadly) Oh gosh. >

Mom: That was very painful.

Mary: That was sad

Jane: They were crying.

Mary: They were crying...they were crying so hard.

Mom: Uh huh.

Mom: Okay. So then, was moving here positive or negative?

Jane: Well, it was moving so it was <negative.

Mary: Negative.> And then as soon as I got used to it...

Dad: Well, yeah, Jane got used to her friends over at College Park Baptist Church and she had all those good friends and then, we moved again.

Mary: (Unintelligible) house was so cool...in Florida.

Jane: Yeah. And school was getting better. I mean it always gets better like with time (unintelligible).

Mom: Uh huh.

Jane: So by the end of the year it was much better. I had much more friends and I was better friends with people at church (unintelligible).

Here we see the family very much sharing in the sadness of leaving relatives behind, but then the mother moves the conversation to help the children explore both negative and positive aspects of the experience. One child initially focuses on the negative, but the father picks up on the mothers' theme and explicitly states some positive aspects (finding new friends) and then that they had to move again! With the mothers' encouragement, Jane ends the conversation on a positive note by focusing on how things get better with time. Overall, there is a sense of family sharing difficult experiences and working together to overcome these difficulties. Compare this with the following excerpt from a family discussing the death of a beloved pet cat named Sugar:



EXAMPLE 10 (from Marin et al. 2008):

Mother: You know, its, the only thing I can say though, is about this is that we have worked through a lot of grief so while it's, you know Sugar's death was was difficult and it remains, you know I think about <it all the time she's like

Child: You're gonna cry (whispering)>

Mother: I'm no-, Maryann!

Child: (laughs)

Mother: I'm not gonna cry but if I do I do, give me a break. Um, <you know

Child: I wasn't really xxx> that sad

Mother: What?

Child: I wasn't really sad

Mother: Really?

Father: Yes you were

Child: I wasn't

Mother: How did you feel then? I xxx I mean think back to that day <(unintell)

Child: I don't> cry a lot (laughs)

Mother: Honey, you will!

Child: (laughs)

Father: Hey <Maryann Maryann

Here, the child dismisses the mother's deeply expressed emotion about the death of the family cat, and claims that she, herself, is simply not sad and does not cry. The parents directly negate the child's emotional expression. We do not know if the child was or was not upset, but the family is clearly in disagreement about this. There is a sense of dismissal by both the parents and the child about each other's emotional lives, each claiming the high ground. There is certainly no sense of a shared emotional experience.

Families that were more elaborative, and expressed and explained more negative emotion had children who displayed higher levels of self-esteem, higher social competence, and fewer internalizing (anxiety, depression, withdrawal) and externalizing (anger, aggression, acting out) symptoms. These patterns echo and extend the findings with preschoolers. Parents and children who co-construct more elaborated, more jointly coherent and expressive validating narratives about their shared past have children who display higher levels of well-being. In the preschool data, longitudinal research allowed exploration of direction of effect, showing that

earlier narrative interactions were related to later child well-being. In these data, we were able to examine a subset (24) of these same families two years later, when the target child was between the ages of 12 and 14 years old. Families that had co-constructed elaborative, emotionally expressive and explanatory shared narratives about stressful experiences had children who, two years later, were displaying higher levels of self-esteem and well-being (Marin et al, 2008). Thus there is some suggestive evidence that parentally structured reminiscing that helps children to create more elaborative, emotionally expressive and explanatory narratives especially about stressful experiences, continues to help children develop a positive sense of self and well-being as they enter adolescence.

Dinnertime conversations

Research on elicited narratives, where families are asked explicitly to reminisce about shared family experiences, sheds light on this important family process. But we wanted to explore how narratives might arise more spontaneously in everyday family interaction. Thus we chose to examine family dinnertime conversations (Bohanek et al, 2009). With each family member leaving the home in the morning and engaging in individual activities, the ways in which families come together at the end of the day and reconnect as a family over the dinner table may be particularly important for adolescent's emerging self. Thirty-six of the families that had participated in the study of elicited narratives just described also provided us with audiotapes of a typical weekday dinner conversation. Working from these transcribed tapes, we identified each time a family member referred to a past event. Not surprisingly, many of these references were to events that occurred earlier that day, as each family member shared the interesting and important details of their daily lives. These "today, I" narratives served to inform family members about each other's days and to reunite the family as a unit with shared knowledge. But there were also a surprising number of references to more remotely experienced events, such as reminiscing about previous family vacations or movies seen. In fact, these more remote narratives comprised about one third of all narratives told. Every family studied told at least one remote narrative over about a 30 minute dinner conversation, and in total, families told over 60 such stories. Equally interesting, children were just as likely to introduce these stories into the conversation as were mothers or fathers, suggesting that, by this age, children are fully engaged in reminiscing about the family past.



We examined the “today, I” stories and the remote narratives for level of elaboration. Specifically we examined the extent to which the mother, father or child requested or provided new information. Confirming findings from the elicited narratives, mothers were generally more elaborative than fathers. In terms of relations to child well-being, for the “today, I” narratives, fathers who requested more information had children with fewer internalizing and externalizing symptoms. Maternal and child contributions to these narratives were not related to child well-being. In contrast, for the remote family narratives, higher levels of both maternal and child elaboration was related to fewer behavioral symptoms in children. These patterns suggest that mothers and fathers play a somewhat different role in family reminiscing; fathers who are more involved in keeping track of daily activities, and mothers who are more involved in elaborating on a shared family history, have children with high levels of well-being. These findings extend the findings from the research with families with preschoolers. In that research, it was maternally structured narratives of the shared past that seemed particularly important for child outcome. We see the same pattern in adolescents when families are reminiscing about more remote events that they experienced together. Thus mothers may play a particularly important role in helping families keep shared stories. This is consistent with anthropological research that indicates that in most cultures, mothers are the “kin-keepers” the keepers of family history (Rosenthal, 1985; Wamboldt & Reiss, 1989). But fathers are important too, although perhaps more so in the day to day bonding of the family. Thus in thinking about the role of family reminiscing in children’s emerging identity and well-being, we must think more deeply about what kind of stories and who is participating.

One extremely interesting type of story that emerged around the dinner table were stories about the parents’ childhoods. These are stories about events that the children have not obviously directly experienced, but may help children understand their own experiences in new ways, within frameworks provided by the parents’ experiences. Stories about the parents’ childhoods, intergenerational stories, may be particularly helpful for children to develop intergenerational bonds, to identify with the parent and their experiences in ways that may be beneficial in understand their own self (Fiese, & Bickham, 2004; Fivush, Bohanek & Duke, 2005; Norris, Kujack & Pratt, 2004; Pratt & Fiese, 2004;). Many of these stories seem quite mundane. For example, in this excerpt, that family, with two children, pre-adolescent Becca and younger sibling Benjamin, are talking about what happened at school choir practice. The father ties this to his own experience in high school choir:

EXAMPLE 11 (from Fivush, Bohanek & Duke, 2004)

Becca: Well, we didn't get to hear any other bands. We would have liked to but, you know, we had to leave.

Father: Hmm. I remember when I was in choir, when I was in high school.

Becca: uh huh

Father: We didn't do so good. (he and Becca laugh). I think we got 3's and 4's.

Becca: Yeah, yeah, see the thing I don't like about our choir is, uh, they sound really nice, but they're all whispering, you know (in a whispering voice).

(several intervening comments about the music being sung)

Father: I remember we did, uh, ones like Ave Maria

Benjamin: (sings)

Father: yeah, stuff like that. Exactly. Exactly.

Becca: ...Cool

Although the father does not tell an elaborated story about his childhood experiences, he touches base with his daughter, validating her current experience with his own prior experience. The daughter is obviously interested in sharing across the generations. Father and daughter laugh together and Becca then extends her father's comments about not doing so well in her own choir. Note that little brother Benjamin is an active listener in this conversation, chiming in by singing in order to participate, and the father and daughter accept this joint participation making this a true family experience. Many of the stories were not about experiences shared across the generations, but were just about experiences the parents had as a child, as in this excerpt, a family with 2 boys, 12-year-old Conner and 14-year old Aaron, talks about the vegetable garden that the mother had when she was growing up:

EXAMPLE 12 (from Fivush, Bohanek & Duke, 2004):

Mother: I told you about asparagus, how weird it is.

Conner: And how you hated it when you were a kid.

Mother: I didn't like it when I was a kid, which is really a terrible thing 'cause my father grew it fresh in the garden.

Aaron: Well, at least it was better than the stuff you buy at the store.

Mother: I know. I'm sorry I missed it...My parents didn't make me 'cause they liked it so much they didn't care if I didn't eat it (chuckles). They made me eat the frozen or canned peas, but they didn't care if I didn't eat the asparagus from the



garden.

Conner: ...But I thought you said that they didn't...

Aaron: (overlapping with his brother)...they didn't grow peas in the garden.

Mother: They did, actually did. They grew peas and beans and rhubarb and asparagus. One year he grew corn. That was pretty cool.

Aaron: Did it turn out ok?

Mother: It was okay. It wasn't great.

There are several interesting aspects to this co-constructed narrative. First, it is obvious that this is a story that has been told before; both boys know about the mother's childhood vegetable garden. Second, even though this is a story about the mother, and only she has direct experience, both boys are fully engaged in helping the mother tell the story. Both even question their mother about the accuracy of her story during this telling given what she had presumably said in the past! This suggests that these stories are important to the children. These kinds of family stories help situate children within their family histories and provide them with a sense of continuity that goes beyond an individual life to include generational identities. And, in fact, families that engaged in telling more intergenerational stories had children who showed higher levels of well-being. In particular, mothers and children who were more engaged in elaborating during this kind of story telling was related to fewer internalizing (e.g., anxiety, depression, withdrawal) and fewer externalizing (e.g., anger, aggression, acting out) symptoms for the child. We found the intergenerational stories, and what they might mean for identity and well-being, intriguing and decided to study them in more depth.

Intergenerational stories

We extended the study of intergenerational narratives to somewhat older adolescents, a group of 65 broadly middle class, racially diverse 13- to 16-year olds. We simply asked them to tell us stories that they might know about their mothers and their fathers when they were growing up (Fivush, Bohanek & Zaman, 2011; Zaman & Fivush, 2011). We kept the elicitation as open as possible to get a better sense of the kinds of stories that adolescents might know and tell about their parents' childhoods. After the adolescent completed the narrative, the interviewer asked what the adolescent had learned from the story. We included this question to get a better sense of how the adolescent understood the story, especially in terms of what it might mean

for their own identity. Virtually all of the adolescents were easily able to tell us a couple of stories about both their mothers and their fathers, confirming that these kinds of stories are told and heard, at least in American middle class families. There were also, not surprisingly, large individual differences in how adolescents told these stories. Some adolescents told highly elaborated detailed stories about their parents' experience, replete with information about how their parents thought and felt about the event. Others, in contrast, told spare narratives, often not even referencing a specific event. For example, here is one 14-year-old male telling a story he knows about his father:

EXAMPLE 13 (from Zaman & Fivush, 2011):

In high school he was a big football player and he got like a cool star on his helmet. Uh...uh I don't know much more than that, but he was supposed to be a really good player. And uh... Uh he used to tell me that he wasn't very big and stuff and was like real skinny and couldn't gain weight. And then, in high school, he started getting like bigger and stronger and he started playing football and he was like really good. And he said all the people that were on his team were like 6' 7" and he was like 5' 10". (Interviewer asks: And what did you learn from that story?) Not much.

This is barely a narrative at all. There is no specific event told, just generalities about his father's adolescent activities and participation in sports. Although there is some meaning conveyed in that there is a sense that the father struggled and worked hard to become a good athlete, this adolescent really does not tell a compelling story about his fathers' experiences. Indeed, the adolescent himself claims not to have learned much from this story. A bit more detail is included in the next example, also from a 14-year-old male:

EXAMPLE 14 (from Zaman & Fivush, 2011):

Um...well, he told me how much he and his brother, so my uncle, liked to play outside together at the pool. Um, well, one time he got stitches at the pool. Well, he was at the pool playing with his brother and I don't know very much about this story, but he said that he got stitches and I think they were on his forehead and my grandmother was really scared. And um but she took 'im to the hospital and he was okay. But he ended up getting stitches like six times in his childhood.



(Interviewer asks: And what did you learn from that story?) He was very active.

This story has a good deal more specificity than Example 11. There is a specific event being told, and specific details of what happened, with inclusion of both causes and consequences. There is also some reference to internal states, although note that it is the fathers' mother who was scared, not the father himself. The adolescent does learn something about his father from his story, that he was active. But there is no connection made to the self by this adolescent. In contrast to these bare bones stories, many adolescents told stories that were quite specific and detailed, focusing in specific incidents, as this example of a 15-year-old male indicates:

EXAMPLE 15 (from Zaman & Fivush, 2011):

I know some stories about when he went and shot out the light system at the football stadium. Oh, yeah. Him and some of his friends, they got together and they decided it would be fun to go and shoot one of their guns. It was a bee bee gun and one of his friends had just got it. So they went and they were shootin' at some targets and stuff. And then they decided to go and shoot it inside the stadium and they went and they um actually shot out the lights on the big stands where the lights are. And they shot out a whole lot of them. And they ended up having to replace them and all. But my dad said that he was punished severely for it. But um it was an interesting story because he had to um actually work off the money to um pay back the lights and all that. And they actually shot out the whole thing so him and his friends had quite a bit of money to come up with and they had to put 'em in and things like that. But he said he was punished severely and they never shot a gun again so... (Interviewer asks: And what did you learn from that story?) I learned that um we have to take responsibility for our actions and that we can't just go out and destroy property just for fun.

In this very specific and detailed story, the adolescent provides a coherent narrative that includes motivation and internal states (they decided it would be fun), as well as consequences (they ended up having to replace them). Moreover, these consequences are elaborated on, as the adolescent tells how the father had to work for the money. When asked what he learned from this story the adolescent provides a clear life lesson, that one must take responsibility for one's actions. A final example is from a 14-year old girl, telling about a time that her mother got in trouble at school for

doing what was right:

EXAMPLE 16 (from Zaman & Fivush, 2011):

Um I think she was in sixth or seventh grade. Yeah, it was middle school, and she was going to class and she saw these two twins that had always, always been picked on and some boys and girls I think were just crowded around them and calling them names and everything. And, actually, it was just one of the twins. And she was just sitting there crying and she couldn't do anything. And my mom felt so bad, she went up and she grabbed the girl and she said, "Come with me now." and she stormed off and just took 'er up to the office and she said, "This girl needs some help. Will you please help her?" And then she ran to her class, but she was late and um so my mom's teacher got really, really angry 'cause she didn't have a pass or anything and so she gave her a detention I think. And my mom just didn't have the courage just to fight back because it was a big scary teacher. So she just didn't fight back and um so she told me that I think when I didn't have the courage to stand up to a teacher or tell a teacher that I was struggling in the class or something. So she just told me that story and said, you know, I shouldn't...she said that I should have written the teacher a letter because verbally speaking is really, really difficult. So she said, "I wish that I had, you know, sat down later that night and written my teacher a letter and stuck it in her mailbox. And then maybe the teacher would have realized what I had been doing and that it was a good thing and that I was trying to help someone out." So um I mean I've written teachers letters now and it helps me to actually understand and for the teacher to understand too.

This is very complicated narrative with multiple episodes and multiple lessons. First, the mother stands up for others who are being bullied, and because of this, she gets in trouble. The mother does not at this point stand up for herself. Note that in telling this story, the adolescent clearly "gets in her mother's head." She relates how her mother felt and thought, and uses direct speech to capture her mother's responses to the situation. Once the narrative is told, the adolescent turns to what the story meant to her in her own struggles with unfair teachers. The adolescent ends the story with a clear connection between how her mother (mis)handled this situation and how this taught the adolescent better ways to handle similar situations. There is a clear connection from the mother's experiences to the adolescent's experiences in ways that



help the adolescent to define the kind of person she is.

We examined the intergenerational narratives in several ways. First, based on the large literature on autobiographical narratives and the research from our lab on family reminiscing showing gender differences, we explored whether adolescent males and females told different kinds of stories about mothers and fathers. We then examined whether the ways in which adolescents told these stories mattered for their emerging identity and well-being. We examined the narratives along multiple dimensions, including how elaborative and detailed they were, and the inclusion of internal state language, specifically referencing how the parent thought and felt at the time of the experience. We reasoned that the inclusion of this kind of language indexed the adolescent's ability to take the perspective of their parent in the story, and that this would be important for if and how the adolescent understood the story as relevant for self.

Looking first at gender, we found that both boys and girls told stories about their mothers that were more elaborated and included more internal state language than stories about their fathers (Zaman & Fivush, 2011). Without going into too much detail it is important to point out that we also asked these adolescents to tell us stories about themselves. In these stories, we saw the expected gender differences, with girls telling stories about themselves that were longer, more elaborated and included more internal state language than boys' stories about themselves. So the difference we found for the intergenerational stories likely reflects how the stories were told to the adolescents, with mothers telling more elaborated, more emotionally expressive stories about their childhoods to their adolescents than do fathers. We note here that we did ask the adolescents how they knew these stories and the overwhelming response was that the parent had told them the story. This pattern suggests that adolescents are telling stories about their parents that reflect the parents' gendered narrative lens rather than their own (Fiese & Skillman, 2000; Peterson & Roberts, 2003).

In terms of identity, we coded each intergenerational narrative for if and how the adolescent made a connection to self (Fivush, Zaman, Merrill & Waters, 2010). There could be no connection at all, as in Example 11, or it could be that the adolescent learned something about the parent, but not about the self, as in Example 12. The adolescent could also draw a lesson about the world more generally, as in Example 13. Finally, as in Example 14, there could be an explicit connection made between parent and self. We also asked adolescents to complete an identity scale that assesses the

extent to which the adolescent is in a state of diffusion, unsure of who they are, versus a state of achievement, a commitment to a set of internalized values and goals. Adolescents who made more explicit connections to self in these narratives showed higher levels of identity achievement. Interestingly, females who made more connections to both mothers and fathers showed higher levels of identity achievement, but for males, only connection to self in stories about their fathers was related to identity achievement. Related to this, girls who made connections to self in their intergenerational stories about their mothers showed higher self-esteem, but there were no relations for stories about father. Just the opposite for boys; males who made more connections to self in intergenerational stories about their fathers showed higher self-esteem, but there were no relations for stories about mothers. These patterns suggest within gender identification, such that connection to own gender parent is more important for identity development than cross-gender parent.

A somewhat different pattern emerged for well-being (Fivush & Zaman, 2011). Girls who told stories about their mothers that included more internal state language indicative of taking their parents' perspective on the event showed higher levels of well-being, as assessed by fewer internalizing and fewer externalizing behaviors. There were no relations between girl's well-being and their intergenerational stories about their fathers, again suggesting within gender identification being critical. But for boys, there were no relations with either stories about mothers or fathers to their well-being.

Overall, the research indicates that family reminiscing remains a critical site for the development of self and well-being in adolescents. Stories told over the dinner table, stories told about highly stressful shared experiences, and stories told about the intergenerational past are all related to adolescent development. Families that share more stories, that are more elaborative and emotionally expressive and explanatory when sharing these stories, and that share stories of the family's past have adolescents who are showing higher levels of identity achievement, higher self-esteem and higher levels of emotional well-being. Provocatively, these stories are gendered. Mothers are more elaborative than fathers, and adolescents seem to identify more strongly with their same gender parent than the other gender parent.

Conclusions: Family Reminiscing and Self

The stories we share with our families are deeply related to our sense of self. We are the stories we tell about ourselves (Barnes, 1998; McAdams, 2001), and we tell



these stories with and to others, who help shape the story and its' meaning. To summarize, there are profound and enduring individual differences in how parents structure reminiscing with their children. Some of these differences are related to gender and culture, such that parents reminisce in more elaborated and evaluative ways with daughters than with sons, and Western families reminisce in more elaborative and evaluative ways than Asian families. Beginning very early in development, children are participating in parentally structured reminiscing that shapes their abilities to recall their past and to understand themselves. By the end of the preschool years, children of more highly elaborative and evaluative parents tell more coherent and detailed autobiographical narratives, and this is related to a more coherent and differentiated sense of self and higher levels of emotional understanding and regulation. Gender differences also emerge very early in development. Mothers are generally more elaborative and evaluative when reminiscing than are fathers, and both mothers and fathers are more elaborative and evaluative when reminiscing with daughters than with sons. Whereas there are no gender differences in children's autobiographical narratives early in the preschool years, by the end of the preschool years girls are telling more elaborated and emotionally saturated autobiographical narratives than are boys.

Parental structure continues to be important as children enter adolescence and begin to develop a more reflective sense of self. Mothers remain more elaborative and emotionally expressive than fathers, especially when sharing past family events. Mothers who are more elaborative and emotionally expressive when reminiscing about the shared family past have adolescents who show higher levels of self-esteem and fewer behavior problems. Fathers also play an important role; fathers who are more engaged in sharing stories of the day have adolescents who show higher levels of emotional well-being. In addition to stories about the children themselves, families engage in other kinds of family stories, stories about the family past before the child was born. There are likely multiple kinds of intergenerational stories that are important for adolescent development; certainly, stories about the parents' childhoods are critical. Adolescents who tell more elaborated narratives about their parents' childhoods that include their parents' perspectives on the event, as well as making explicit connections to what the parents' experience might mean for the adolescents' sense of self, show higher levels of identity achievement, higher self-esteem, and higher levels of emotional well-being. Gender remains a factor. Within gender identification with parents intergenerational stories may play a particularly important role in adolescent

identity and well-being.

Across the research reviewed here, several themes emerge. First, as argued at the beginning of the review, autobiographical memory and narrative is critical in the emerging sense of self in the preschool years and in the construction of a more reflective identity in adolescence. Parents, and especially mothers, who are more elaborative and evaluative with their preschool children, have children who develop more coherent and emotionally regulated self concepts. And as this process continues through adolescence, families that narrate more elaborated and emotionally explanatory narratives of personal and intergenerational experiences have adolescents with higher levels of identity achievement and emotional well-being. Thus it is clear that the ways in which families reminisce about the past is related to children's developing autobiographical narratives and, in turn, to their developing self and well-being.

Equally important, as postulated by sociocultural and feminist theories, this process is social. Personal memories are formed within social interactions, and these social interactions shape specific forms of personal remembering. Thus our very sense of self and identity is social in origin. During the preschool years, children are internalizing ways of understanding their personal past that helps form a sense of who they are in the world. A limitation to this conclusion is that, at present, we have little longitudinal research linking early reminiscing during the preschool years to adolescent narrative identity. In the only study of its' magnitude, Reese, Yan, Jack and Hayne (2010) followed a group of families from preschool through adolescence and found that early elaborative maternal reminiscing was related to adolescent well-being. These are critical data in establishing long term developmental trajectories, and certainly need replication.

What is further evident is that reminiscing is a gendered process. Following from feminist theory, gender is constructed through social interactions that highlight or foreground particular ways of being in the world (Fivush & Zaman, in press). Gender differences in reminiscing emerge for both parents and children. In studies with both preschoolers and adolescents, whether in dyadic reminiscing or family reminiscing, mothers are more elaborative and emotionally expressive than are fathers. Mothers and fathers also reminisce in more elaborative and expressive ways with daughters than with sons. By the end of the preschool years, girls are reminiscing in more elaborated and expressive ways than are boys and these differences remain throughout adolescence, and through adulthood, such that, as adults, females engage



in more elaborative and expressive reminiscing with their children than do males thus completing the developmental cycle.

These data indicate one critical way in which individuals create a gendered sense of self. Through more elaborated and expressive personal narratives, females are constructing a sense of self that is more situated in past experiences that are richly embellished and textured, whereas males' sense of self may not be as richly situated in past experiences. Again, because reminiscing is social, females may also have a more relational sense of self than do males, as postulated by gender identity theory (Gilligan, 1982). Future research needs to examine these processes in more detail. Although relations between parent-child reminiscing and adult autobiographical narratives are provocative, empirical links need to be established. Is it the case that children, especially girls, who participate in more elaborated and expressive reminiscing early in development construct a more elaborated, expressive and relational sense of self as they grow older?

Equally interesting in terms of gender are differential relations between family reminiscing and well-being for girls and boys. Consistent with females having a more relational sense of personal past and self, girls who narrate more elaborated and expressive narratives about their mothers' childhood experiences show higher levels of identity achievement and emotional well-being, but these relations do not emerge for boys. This again suggests that girls are developing a more elaborated narrative past that extends intergenerationally. This research is in its' infancy and a great deal more data on intergenerational narratives and their relations to adolescent identity and well-being are needed.

In terms of parental gender differences, mothers who engage in more family storytelling, elaborating and structuring stories of the shared family past, have adolescents who show higher levels of well-being. This is consistent with the preschool data showing that creating a more elaborated and expressive shared history with their child leads to higher child well-being. Thus we see consistency in maternal role across development. Fathers are a different story. There is little evidence that father-child reminiscing during the preschool years is related to child well-being, and during adolescence, there are no relations between paternal contributions to family storytelling and adolescent well-being. But fathers' role in creating coherent stories of the child's daily experiences is related to adolescent well-being. Thus, whereas mothers are the story keepers, fathers may be more important for creating daily family coherence.

Certainly we do not have enough research on fathers. This is a critical issue moving forward.

Finally, the role of culture in all of these processes needs to be better understood. Following sociocultural and feminist theories, cultural values and frames are critical in facilitating specific ways of understanding a life and a self. Wang and her colleagues (Wang, in press; Wang & Ross, 2007) have done a great deal of research to further our understanding of the roles of culture in reminiscing, especially between Asian and European cultures. Much of this research confirms sociocultural hypotheses that relate reminiscing to self as independent or interdependent. But we need more longitudinal research that examines culture, as well as more nuanced research on more diverse cultures.

In conclusion, while we have learned a great deal about the importance of family reminiscing for the development of self and well-being, many questions remain unanswered. Most important, we need more longitudinal research to better establish patterns of relations over time. Longitudinal research with families with preschoolers has helped establish direction of effect from family reminiscing styles to child outcome, but the research with adolescents is almost completely cross-sectional, and as such, direction of effects cannot be determined. What has been clearly established is that the autobiographical self develops in social interactions. Family reminiscing creates a shared history and emotional bonds among family members, but it also creates individuals. Our very sense of self is created in innumerable social interactions in which we share the minutia of our day and the important events of our lives with our family, and the ways in which they help structure and evaluate these stories comes to define who we are.

References

- Adams, S., Kuebli, J., Boyle, P. A., Fivush, R. (1995). Gender differences in parent-child conversations about past emotions: A longitudinal investigation. *Sex Roles*, 33 (5-6), 309-323.
- Barnes, H.E. (1998). *The story I tell myself: A venture in existentialist autobiography*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Bauer, P.J., & Burch, M.M. (2004). Developments in early memory: Multiple mediators of foundational processes. In J.M. Lucariello, J.A. Hudson, R. Fivush, & P.J. Bauer (Eds.), *The development of the mediated mind* (pp. 101-125). Mahwah,



NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Bauer, P. Steenes, L., & Haight, J. (2003). Representation of the inner self in autobiography: Women's and men's use of internal states language in personal narratives. *Memory, 11*, 27-42.
- Bird, A., & Reese, E. (2006). Emotional reminiscing and the development of an autobiographical self. *Developmental Psychology, 42*, 613-626.
- Bohanek, J.G., Fivush, R., Zaman, W., Thomas-Lepore, C., Merchant, S. & Duke, P. (2009). Narrative interaction in family dinnertime conversations: Relations to child well-being. *Merrill Palmer Quarterly, 55* (4), 488-515.
- Bruner, J. (1987). Life as narrative. *Social Research, 54*, 11-32.
- Bruner, J. S. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Buckner, J. P. & Fivush, R. (1998). Gender and self in children's autobiographical narratives. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 12*, 407-429.
- Conway, M.A, Singer, J.A., & Tagini, A. (2004). The self in autobiographical memory: Correspondance and coherence. *Social Cognition, 22*, 491-529.
- Cross, S.E., & Madson, L. (1997). Models of the self: Self-construals and gender. *Psychological Bulletin, 122*, 5-37.
- Eisenberg, A. (1985). Learning to describe past experience in conversation. *Discourse Processes, 8*, 177-204.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: youth and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Farrant, K., & Reese, E. (2000). Maternal style and children's participation in reminiscing: Stepping stones in children's autobiographical memory development. *Journal of Cognition and Development, 1* (2), 193-225.
- Fiese, B. H., & Bickham, N. L. (2004). Pin-curling grandpa's hair in the comfy chair: Parents' stories of growing up and potential links to socialization in the preschool years. In M.W. Pratt & B.H. Fiese (Eds). *Family stories and the life course*. (pp. 259-277). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Fiese, B.H., Hooker, K.A., Kotary, L., Scwagler, J., & Rimmer, M. (1995). Family stories in the early stages of parenthood. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 57*, 763-770.
- Fiese, B. H. & Skillman, G. (2000). Gender differences in family stories: Moderating influence of parent gender role and child gender. *Sex Roles, 43*, 267-283.
- Fischer, A.H. (2000). *Gender and emotion: Social psychological perspectives*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Fivush, R. (1991). The social construction of personal narratives. *Merrill-Palmer*

- Quarterly*, 37, 59-82.
- Fivush, R. (2001). Owing experience: The development of subjective perspective in autobiographical memory. In C. Moore & K. Lemmon (Eds.). *The self in time: Developmental perspectives* (pp. 35-52). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum
- Fivush, R. (2007). Maternal reminiscing style and children's developing understanding of self and emotion. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 35, 37-46.
- Fivush, R. (2008). Remembering and reminiscing: How individual lives are constructed in family narratives. *Memory Studies*, 1, 45-54.
- Fivush, R. (in press). Maternal reminiscing style: The sociocultural construction of autobiographical memory across childhood and adolescence. In P.J. Bauer & R. Fivush (Eds.) *Handbook of the Development of Children's Memory*. NY: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Fivush, R., & Baker-Ward, L. (2005). The search for meaning: Developmental perspectives on internal state language in autobiographical memory. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 6, 455-462
- Fivush, R., Berlin, L. J., McDermott-Sales, J., Menuti-Washburn J., Cassidy, J. (2003). Functions of parent-child reminiscing about emotionally negative events. *Memory*, 11 (2), 179-192.
- Fivush, R., Bohanek, J. G., & Duke, M. (2005). The intergenerational self: Subjective perspective and family history. In F. Sani (Ed.). *Individual and collective self-continuity*. Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Fivush, R., Bohanek, J., Robertson, R., & Duke, M. (2004). Family narratives and the development of children's emotional well-being. In Pratt, M.W., & Fiese, B.H. (Eds.). *Family stories and the life course*. (pp. 55-76). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Fivush, R., Bohanek, J. G. & Zaman, W. (2011). Personal and intergenerational narratives in relation to adolescents' well-being. In T. Habermas (Ed.). "The development of autobiographical reasoning in adolescence and beyond" *New Directions in Child and Adolescent Development*, (pp. 131), 45-57. DOI: 10.1002/cd.288
- Fivush, R., Brotman, M. A., Buckner, J. P., & Goodman, S. H. (2000). Gender differences in parent-child emotion narratives. *Sex Roles*, 42, 233 – 253.
- Fivush, R., Habermas, T., Waters, T.E.A., and Zaman, W. (2011). The making of autobiographical memory: Intersections of Culture, Narratives and History. *International Journal of Psychology*, 46, 321-345.



- Fivush, R., Haden, C. & Adam, S. (1995). Structure and coherence of preschoolers' personal narratives over time: Implications for childhood amnesia. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *60*, 32-56.
- Fivush, R., Haden, C.A., & Reese, E. (2006). Elaborating on elaborations: Maternal reminiscing style and children's socioemotional outcome. *Child Development*, *77*, 1568-1588
- Fivush, R., Marin, K., McWilliams, K., & [Bohanek, J. G.](#) (2009). Family reminiscing style: Parent gender and emotional focus in relation to child well-being. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, *10* (3), 210-235.
- Fivush, R., Marin, K., & Merrill, N. (in press). Voice and power: Constructing moral agency through personal and intergenerational narratives. In H. Recchia and C. Weinryb (Eds). *Talking about Right and Wrong: Parent-Child Conversations as Contexts for Moral Development*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fivush, R., & Sales, J.M. (2006). Coping, attachment, and mother-child reminiscing about stressful events. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *52*, 125-150.
- Fivush, R., & Vasudeva, A. (2002). Remembering to relate: Socioemotional correlates of mother-child reminiscing. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, *3*, 73-90.
- Fivush, R., & Zaman, W. (2011). Intergenerational narratives: How collective family stories relate to adolescents' emotional well-being. *Aurora*, *10*, 51-63.
- Fivush, R. & Zaman, W. (in press). Gender, subjectivity and autobiography. In P.J. Bauer & R. Fivush (Eds.) *Handbook of the Development of Children's Memory*. NY: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Fivush, R., Zaman, W., Merrill, N., & Waters, T. (2010). Situating self in family stories. Adolscnt Narrative Workshop, University of Frankfurt, Frankfurt, GE.
- Flannagan, D., Baker-Ward, L., & Graham, L. (1995). Talk about preschool: Patterns of topic discussion and elaboration related to gender and ethnicity. *Sex Roles*, *32*, 1-15.
- Freeman, M. (2007). Autobiographical understanding and narrative inquiry. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*. (pp.120-145). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.
- Friedman, W. J. (1993). Memory for the time of past events. *Psychological Bulletin*, *113*, 44-66.
- Friedman, W., Reese, E., & Dai, J. (2009). Children's memory for the times of events from the past years. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *23*, 1-17.
- Gauvain, M. (2001). *The social context of cognitive development*. NY: Guilford.

- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Habermas, T. (2007). How to tell a life: The development of the cultural concept of biography across the lifespan. *Journal of Cognition and Development, 8*, 1–31.
- Habermas, T. (2011). The development of autobiographical reasoning in adolescence and beyond. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 131*.
- Habermas, T., & Bluck, S. (2000). Getting a life: The emergence of the life story in adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin, 126*, 748-769.
- Haden, C. A. (1998). Reminiscing with different children: Relating maternal stylistic consistency and sibling similarity in talk about the past. *Developmental Psychology, 34*, 99-114.
- Haden, C.A., & Fivush, R. (1996). Contextual variation in maternal conversational styles. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 42*, 200-227.
- Haden, C., Haine, R. A., & Fivush, R. (1997). Developing narrative structure in parent-child reminiscing across the preschool years. *Developmental Psychology, 33*, 295-307.
- Han, J. J., Leichtman, M. D., & Wang, Q. (1998). Autobiographical memory in Korean, Chinese and American children. *Developmental Psychology, 34* (4), 701-713.
- Harley, K., & Reese, E. (1999). Origins of autobiographical memory. *Developmental Psychology, 35*, 1338-1348.
- Harter, S. (1999). *The construction of the self: A developmental perspective*. New York: Harvard University Press.
- Hirst, W., & Manier, D. (1996). Remembering as communication: A family recounts its past. In D. C. Rubin (Ed.), *Remembering our past: Studies in autobiographical memory* (pp. 271-290). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hoff, E. (2003). The specificity of environmental influence: Socioeconomic status affects early vocabulary development via maternal speech. *Child Development, 74*, 1368-1378.
- Hoff-Ginsburg, E. (1991). Mother-child conversations in different social classes and communicative settings. *Child Development, 62*, 782-796.
- Hudson, J. A. (1990). The emergence of autobiographic memory in mother-child conversation. In R. Fivush, & J. A. Hudson (Eds.), *Knowing and remembering in young children* (pp. 166-196). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kreppner, K. (2002). Retrospect and prospect in the psychological study of families as systems. In J. McHale & W. Grolnick (Eds.), *Retrospect and prospect in the psychological study of families*, (pp. 225-257). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.



- Kroger, J. (1996). Identity, regression, and development. *Journal of Adolescence*, 10, 317-337.
- Kuebli, J., Butler, S., & Fivush, R. (1995). Mother-child talk about past emotions: Relations of maternal language and child gender overtime. In J. Dunn (Ed.). *Connections between emotion and understanding in development*. 265-284. UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kulkofsky, S., Wang, Q., & Kim Koh, J. B. (2009). Functions of memory sharing and mother-child reminiscing behaviors: Individual and cultural variations. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 10 (1-2), 92-114.
- Laible, D. (2004a). Mother-child discourse in two contexts: Links with child temperament, attachment security, and socioemotional competence. *Developmental Psychology*, 40, 979-992.
- Laible, D. (2004b). Mother-child discourse about a child's past behavior at 30-months and early socioemotional development at age 3. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 50, 159-180.
- Laible, D., & Thompson, R. (2000). Mother-child discourse, attachment security, shared positive affect, and early conscience development. *Child Development*, 71, 1424-1440.
- Linde, C. (1993). *Life stories: The creation of coherence*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Leichtman, M.D., Pillemer, D.B., Wang, Q., Koreishi, A., & Han, J.J. (2000). When Baby Maisy came to school: Mothers' interview styles and preschoolers' event memories. *Cognitive Development*, 15, 99-114.
- Low, J., & Durkin, K. (2001). Individual differences and consistency in maternal talk style during joint story encoding and retrospection: Associations with children's long-term recall. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 25, 27-36.
- Marin, K., Bohanek, J. G., & Fivush, R. (2008). Positive effects of talking about the negative: Family narratives of negative experiences and preadolescents' perceived competence. *Journal of Research in Adolescence*, 18, 573-593.
- McAdams, D.P. (1992). Unity and purpose in human lives: The emergence of identity as a life story. In R. A Zucker, A.I. Rabin, J. Aronoff & S.J. Frank (Eds). *Personality structure in the life course*, (pp. 323-375). New York, NY: Springer.
- McAdams, D. P. (2001). The psychology of life stories. *Review of General Psychology*, 5, 100-122.
- McLean, K. C. & Pasupathi, M. (2010). *Narrative development in adolescence:*

- Creating the storied self.* New York, NY: Springer.
- McLean, K., Pasupathi, M. & Pals, J. (2007). Selves creating stories creating selves: A process model of self-development. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 11, 262-278.
- Miller, P. J. (1994). Narrative practices: Their role in socialization and self-construction. In U. Neisser & R. Fivush (Eds.), *The remembering self: Construction and accuracy in the life narrative* (pp. 158-179). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Miller, P. J., Cho, G. E., & Bracey, J. R. (2005). Working class children's experience through the prism of personal story-telling. *Human Development*, 48, 115-135.
- Nelson, K. (2003). Narrative and self, myth and memory. In R. Fivush & C. Haden (Eds.), *Connecting culture and memory: The social construction of an autobiographical self.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Nelson, K., & Fivush, R. (2004). The emergence of autobiographical memory: A social cultural developmental theory. *Psychological Review*, 111, 486-511.
- Niedzwinska, A. (2003). Gender differences in vivid memories. *Sex Roles*, 49, 321-331.
- Norris, J.E., Kuiack, S., & Pratt, M.W. (2004). "As long as the go back down the driveway at the end of the day": Stoires of the satisfactions and challenges on grandparenthood. In M.W. Pratt & B.H. Fiese (Eds.) *Family stories and the life course: Across time and generations* (pp. 353-373). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Owen- Blakemore, J.E., Berenbaum, S.A., & Liben, L.S. (2009). *Gender Development.* NY: Psychology Press.
- Pasupathi, M., Mansour, E., & Brubaker, J. R. (2007). Developing a life story: Constructing relations between self and experience in autobiographical narratives. *Human Development*, 50, 85–110.
- Pasupathi, M., & Wainryb, C. (2010). On telling the whole story: Facts and interpretations in autobiographical memory narratives from childhood through midadolescence. *Developmental Psychology*, 46 (3), 735–746.
- Pasupathi, M., & Weeks, T. L (2011). Integrating self and experience in narrative as a route to adolescent identity construction- In Habermas, T. (Ed.), *The development of autobiographical reasoning in adolescence and beyond.* *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 131, 31-44. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Peterson, C., & McCabe, A. (1992). Parental styles of narrative elicitation: Effect on



- children's narrative structure and content. *First Language*, 12, 299-321.
- Peterson, C., & McCabe, A. (1994). A social interactionist account of developing decontextualized narrative skill. *Developmental Psychology*, 30, 937-948.
- Peterson, C. & Roberts, C. (2003). Like mother, like daughter: Similarities in narrative style. *Developmental Psychology*, 39, 551-562.
- Pratt, M.W., & Fiese, B.H. (2004). *Family stories and the life course: Across time and generations*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Reese, E. (2002a). A model of the origins of autobiographical memory. In J. W. Fagen & H. Hayne (Eds.), *Progress in Infancy Research* (Vol. 2, pp. 215-260). Mahwah NJ: Erlbaum.
- Reese, E. (2002b). Social factors in the development of autobiographical memory: The state of the art. *Social Development*, 11, 124-142.
- Reese, E., & Fivush, R. (1993). Parental styles of talking about the past. *Developmental Psychology*, 29, 596-606.
- Reese, E., Haden, C. A. & Fivush, R. (1993). Mothers, fathers, daughters, sons: Gender differences in autobiographical reminiscing. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 29 (1), 27-56.
- Reese, E., Yan, C., Jack, F., & Hayne, H. (2010). Emerging identities: Narrative and self from early childhood to early adolescence. In K.C. McLean & M. Pasupathi (Eds.). *Narrative development in adolescence: Creating the storied self* (pp. 23-44). NY: Springer-Verlag.
- Ricoeur, P. (1991). Life in quest of narrative. In D. Wood (Ed.) *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and interpretation* (pp. 20-33). London: Routledge.
- Rime, B. (2007). The social sharing of emotion as an interface between individual and collective processes in the construction of emotional climate. *Journal of Social Issues*, 63, 307-322.
- Rime, B. (2007). The social sharing of emotion as an interface between individual and collective processes in the construction of emotional climate. *Journal of Social Issues*, 63, 307-322.
- Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- Rosenthal, C.J. (1985). Kinkeeping in the familial division of labor. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 47, 965-974.
- Ross, M., & Holmberg, D. (1990). Recounting the past: Gender differences in the recall of events in the history of a close relationship. In M.P. Zanna & J.M. Olson (Eds.), *The Ontario Symposium: Vol. 6, Self-inference processes* (pp. 135-152).

- Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Rudek, D., & Haden, C. A. (2005). Mothers' and preschoolers' mental state language during reminiscing over time. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *51*, 557-583.
- Sales, J.M., & Fivush, R. (2005). Social and emotional functions of mother-child reminiscing about stressful events. *Social Cognition*, *23*, 70-90.
- Schechtman, M. (2003). Empathic access: The missing ingredient in personal identity. In R. Martin & J. Barresi (Eds.). *Personal identity*, (pp. 238-259). Oxford: Oxford press.
- Sclater, S.D. (2003). What is the subject? *Narrative Inquiry*, *13*, 317-330.
- Steinberg, L., & Silk, J.S. (2002). Parenting adolescents. In M.H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting: Vol 1: Children and parenting (2nd Ed.)* (pp. 103-133). Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wamboldt, F.S., & Reiss, D. (1989). Defining a family heritage and new relationship identity: Two central tasks in the making of a marriage. *Family Process*, *28*, 317-335.
- Wang, Q. (2001). "Did you have fun?": American and Chinese mother-child conversations about shared emotional experiences. *Cognitive Development*, *16*(2), 693-715.
- Wang, Q. (2006). Relations of maternal style and child self-concept to autobiographical memories in Chinese, Chinese Immigrant, and European American 3-year-olds. *Child Development*, *77* (6), 1794 – 1809.
- Wang, Q. (2007). "Remember when you got the big, big bulldozer?" Mother-child reminiscing over time and across cultures. *Social Cognition*, *25* (4), 455-471.
- Wang, Q. (in press). The cultured self and remembering. In P.J. Bauer & R. Fivush (Eds.) *Handbook of the Development of Children's Memory*. NY: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Wang, Q., Doan, S.N., & Song, Q. (2010). Talking about internal states in mother-child reminiscing influences children's self-representations: A cross-cultural study. *Cognitive Development*, *25*, 380-393.
- Wang, Q. & Fivush, R. (2005). Mother-child conversations of emotionally salient events: Exploring the functions of emotional reminiscing in European-American and Chinese families. *Social Development*, *14* (3), 473-495.
- Wang, Q., & Ross, M. (2007). Culture and memory. In S. Kitayama & D. Cohen (Eds.), *Handbook of cultural psychology* (pp. 645-667). New York, NY: Guilford Press.



- Welch-Ross, M.K. (2001). Personalizing the temporally extended self: Evaluative self-awareness and the development of autobiographical memory. In C. Moore & K. Skene (Eds.), *The self in time: Developmental issues* (pp. 97-120). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Welch-Ross, M.K., Fasig, L., & Farrar, M.J. (1999). Predictors of preschoolers' self-knowledge: Reference to emotion and mental states in mother-child conversation about past events. *Cognitive Development, 14*, 401-422.
- Zaman, W. & Fivush, R. (2012). Intergenerational narratives and adolescents' emotional well-being, *Journal of Adolescence, 21*, 703-716.
- Zaman, W. & Fivush, R. (submitted manuscript). *Parental gender differences in reminiscence about emotional events.*