Troubleshooting Card: When Stories Get Stuck

Sometimes people give very short answers, drift off, or feel stuck. That's normal. Use these gentle prompts to keep the story alive.

One-Word Answers

- Ask for specifics:
  "Can you tell me about a time when that really happened?"

- Use senses:
  "What did it look/sound/smell like?"

- Invite detail:
  "What happened next?"

Going Off-Topic

- Bring them back gently:
    - "That's a wonderful story. How does it connect to what you said earlier?"
    - "You mentioned ___ before — could you tell me more about that?"

Feeling Stuck

- Offer choices:
  "Would you rather tell me about your childhood, or about work?"

- Try contrasts:
  "What was the happiest time? What about the hardest?"

- Use time frames:
  "Can you tell me about 'the first time' or 'the last time' you remember that happening?"

Finding the Gems

Listen for:

- Emotions: "I was scared… proud… relieved…" → *"Can you tell me more about that feeling?"*
- Turning points: "That's when everything changed…" → *"What made it change?"*
- Key people: "My grandmother always…" → *"Why was she so important?"*

Remember: Your role isn't to collect every detail, but to notice the golden moments and invite the storyteller to go deeper.

Together with the Hero's Journey Quick Pick card, this ensures every conversation has depth, flow, and meaning.