

THE QUESTIONS WE LEAVE BEHIND

Preserving human wisdom in the age of AI.

A perspective on legacy, memory
and the understanding we carry forward.



A life's wisdom. A little further.

Research-informed perspective.
Not an original survey.

OUR PERSPECTIVE

A life of stories. *Still unfolding.*

You know the stories you want to leave.
You cannot know every question they will ask.

A letter can preserve a thought. A recording can preserve a voice. Still Ask begins with a question: could those records help people explore a life through questions that were never anticipated when the record was made?

Our ambition is to carry understanding forward, not to claim that a person has been recreated. This paper brings that ambition into contact with published evidence about AI and grief, then sets out the product and partnership hypotheses we want to test.

PUBLISHED EVIDENCE

Findings attributed to Empathy and Censuswide. No Still Ask survey was conducted.

OUR INTERPRETATION

What we think those findings could mean. Interpretation is not a measured result.

PROPOSED PRODUCT

Ideas to test—not claims of a released service or proven benefit.

The argument and published evidence	03–07
The Still Ask proposition	08–15
Validation, sources and next steps	16–19

Published for prospective users, professionals and partners. Estate-planning discussion is a product proposal, not legal advice. This paper does not establish clinical benefit.

THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

Preserve the record. *Make room for questions.*

Our starting hypothesis is that an interactive legacy should help people understand preserved material without confusing a new AI response with the person's own words.

56%

Reported comfort with AI organising photos and recordings.

25%

Reported comfort with text simulation of the deceased.

80%

Reported expectation that AI use only real content, not generated responses.

Different survey questions—not stages in a funnel. These are Empathy/Censuswide findings, not results from Still Ask users.

[1] Printed pp. 17–18 / PDF pp. 18–19. The survey did not test Still Ask, willingness to pay or AI will-writing.



PUBLISHED EVIDENCE / PART ONE

When grief arrives, *people turn to people.*

Family and friends remain the main reported sources of support. Unmet needs are not simply requests for more technology.

31%

Said they had all the support they needed. This does not mean everyone else wanted an AI tool.

57%

Reported support from family.

44%

Reported support from friends.

UNMET NEEDS REPORTED

More emotional support from family or friends	22%
More time off or flexibility	21%
In-person therapy they could not access	15%

STILL ASK INTERPRETATION

Design for connection between living people. Do not treat a lack of human support as demand for a simulated relative.

[1] Printed pp. 5–6 / PDF pp. 6–7. Adults with experience of grief or loss, UK, US and Canada. Categories are not presented as mutually exclusive. Image: AI illustration, not study participants.

PUBLISHED EVIDENCE / PART TWO

AI is being used.
The experience is mixed.

24%

Of AI users in the study had used AI during grief
—not 24% of all adults.

97%

Reported at least one positive impact in the
report's section on AI experiences.

The report also records emotional comfort at 39% and feeling less alone at 34%. The experience chart does not publish detailed subgroup bases.

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES REPORTED

28%

Concerns about
emotional dependence.

25%

Interaction
felt artificial.

21%

Emotional uncertainty
about the tool.

18%

Sense of
boundary crossing.

STILL ASK INTERPRETATION

Measure usefulness, source comprehension and control—not time spent chatting alone. Positive and negative experiences can coexist. A comforting interaction is not evidence of lasting benefit or freedom from harm.

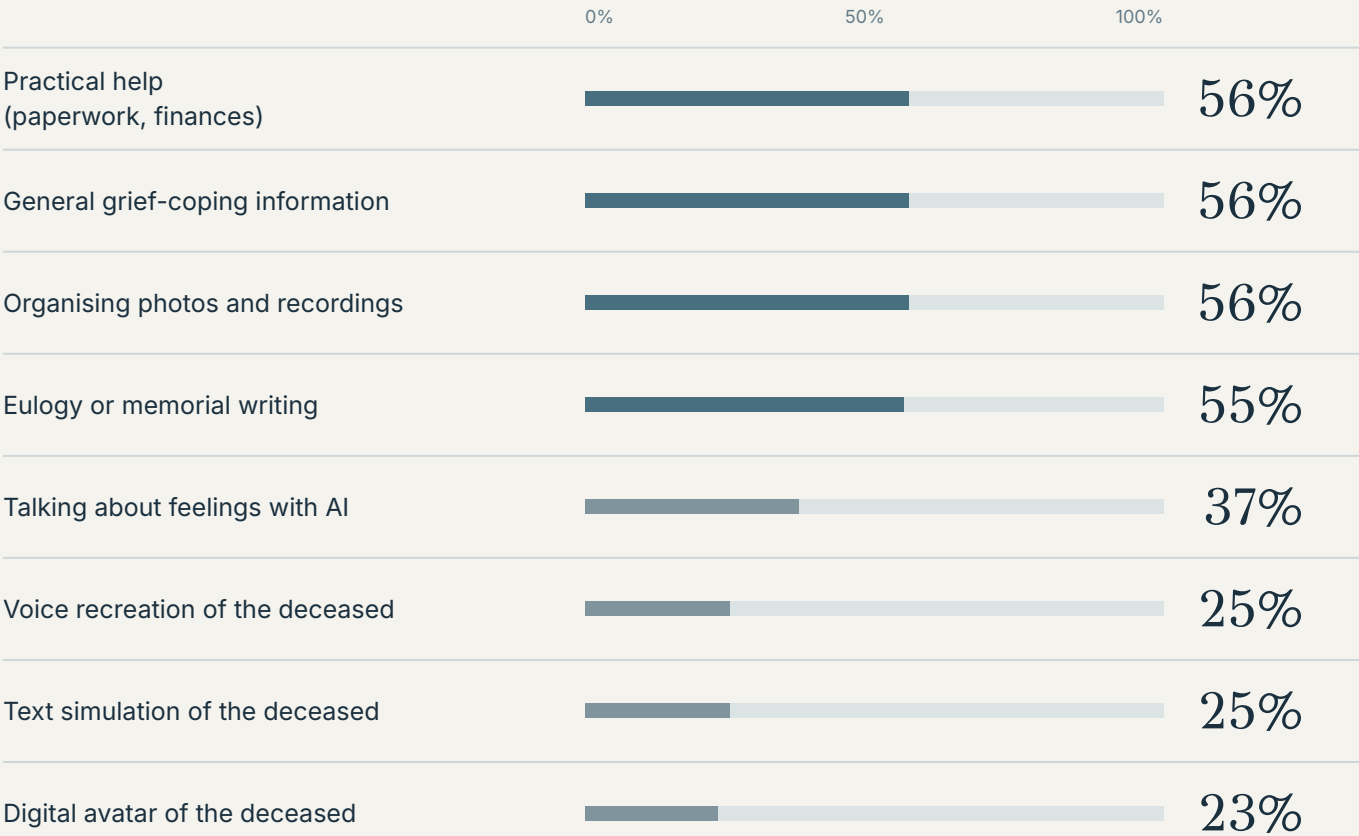
[1] Printed pp. 11 and 14 / PDF pp. 12 and 15. Reported experiences, not diagnoses or treatment outcomes. Categories may overlap; these figures must not be added into one impact score.

PUBLISHED EVIDENCE / PART THREE

Comfort depends *on the use case.*

Practical and organisational uses differ from simulations of a deceased person. The survey did not directly test source-grounded question answering.

REPORTED COMFORT WITH EACH AI USE CASE



THE DISTINCTION TO TEST

“Help me find what she recorded” and
“speak to me as her” are different promises.

Comfort is not purchase intent. Other response categories are not detailed; everyone outside the comfortable group should not be assumed opposed.

[1] Printed p. 17 / PDF p. 18. Redrawn on a common 0–100% scale. Pooled survey figures, not UK-only estimates.

PUBLISHED EVIDENCE / PART THREE

Trust is a baseline. *Not a slogan.*

The reported conditions centre on choice, transparency, consent and human involvement—not a complete legal or operating standard.

86% Voluntary use.

80%

“AI uses only real content, not generated responses.”

Read this literally. It is not the same as approving generated answers whenever a citation is attached.

86% Transparency: real versus AI-generated.

85% Restricted to adult use

80% Consent for voice, likeness and data

76% Family authorisation

71% Grief counsellor or therapist involvement

Still Ask implication: test original-source retrieval as a genuine mode. Separately evaluate whether people want summaries and what they believe those summaries represent.

[1] Printed p. 18 / PDF p. 19. Labels shortened. The last item concerns grief counsellor or therapist professional support. Detailed response scales are not supplied.

STILL ASK INTERPRETATION

An archive is not *an impersonation.*

There is no single “AI legacy” experience. These choices change what the system does—and what someone may believe they receive.

01 ORIGINAL-SOURCE RETRIEVAL

“Show me what they left.”

Find relevant letters, passages or recordings. Keep the original accessible, with date and contributor attribution. This is the first mode we propose to test.

02 LABELLED SYNTHESIS

“Help me understand the record.”

Provide an AI-written summary or interpretation linked to supporting material. Distinguish it from a quotation. Evaluate usefulness and misinterpretation separately.

03 PERSONA SIMULATION

“Answer as this person.”

Generate new first-person language or a recreated voice. This is a different proposition requiring separate consent, review and evidence. It is not the default first pilot.

The survey did not compare these three modes directly. Source-grounded Q&A could still feel like simulation. This classification is a design hypothesis—not a demand finding.

Basis: [1], printed pp. 17–18. The three-mode framework and pilot preference are Still Ask proposals.



THE STILL ASK CONCEPT / IN DEVELOPMENT

Two ways in. *One human purpose.*

A Fractal is our name for a partial, interactive reflection grounded in preserved words and records. It is not the person, their consciousness or a way to recover unrecorded memories.

FOR YOUR OWN STORY

Leave the why. *Along with the what.*

Choose the stories and perspectives you want others to understand. Review, correct and decide who may explore them. Begin with living adults who actively approve their record.

A smaller archive should support
a narrower, more honest reflection.

FOR INHERITED STORIES

Start with *what they left.*

Gather diaries, memoirs, letters and recordings. Keep first-person records distinct from later recollections. Review rights, wishes, privacy and disputed material before a pilot.

[2,3] Intended product, not established live functionality. Image is an AI-generated illustration—not participants or a real family archive.

ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT / FICTIONAL MATERIAL

One passage. *New questions.*

NOTEBOOK / SEPTEMBER 1987 / FICTIONAL

“I nearly turned the job down.
Leaving home frightened me, but I
didn’t want fear to make the decision
for me.”

Original fictional excerpt from Still Ask’s concept demonstration.

[2] Designed illustration—not a live AI output, a real family record or evidence of product accuracy.

WORKED EXAMPLE / FICTIONAL MATERIAL

Three answers.

Three clear boundaries.

01 / ORIGINAL WORDS

Why did she take the job?

The relevant passage is:

“I didn’t want fear to make
the decision for me.”

Read the full excerpt on the preceding page rather than treating this quotation as the whole story.

02 / POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION

What did courage mean to her?

This passage could suggest acting despite fear. That is an interpretation of this record—not a definition she explicitly gave, or a complete statement of her beliefs.

03 / NOT ENOUGH EVIDENCE

Would she tell me to move abroad?

The notebook does not say what she would advise about your circumstances. It records how she approached one decision in her own life.

Her words. An interpretation. An unknown.

The difference should always be clear.

[2] Fictional notebook demonstration. Additional interpretation is illustrative. Generated interpretation is an optional mode to evaluate—not demonstrated product accuracy.

ESTATE PLANNING / PROPOSED USE CASE

Leave the why. *Alongside the what.*

A companion to planning—not a replacement for it. People may want to preserve why something mattered, what shaped a decision, or what they hope others will understand.

01 / FORMAL DOCUMENTS

Keep the legal service separate.

Use the appropriate professional process. A Fractal is not proposed as an instrument that changes instructions.

02 / APPROVED EXPLANATIONS

Preserve what they chose to say.

Keep review, dates, versions and access decisions attached to the living participant's approved record.

03 / SOURCE-AWARE QUESTIONS

Return the relevant original.

Where no explanation exists, say so. Do not infer an unrecorded testamentary intention or let a persona improvise new instructions.

A qualified professional should help define scope, review and escalation before real planning decisions are involved. The first proposed estate-related mode uses original recordings and exact excerpts.

Still Ask proposal. The Empathy survey did not measure this service, AI will-writing or reduced inheritance disputes. Not legal advice or a dispute-resolution claim.

PARTNER DISTRIBUTION / HYPOTHESES

Meet people in a *conversation that matters.*

Test an optional invitation within an existing planning relationship. Reach matters only if people choose to participate and complete the experience.



Illustrative archive · AI-generated image, not a real family record.

01 Will-writing and private-client firms

Test reviewed story capture alongside planning. Ask whether it improves understanding or the record without adding disproportionate work.

02 Financial advisers and protection partners

Explore a voluntary family-legacy benefit. Keep archives separate from underwriting, product selling and general-purpose marketing.

03 Care settings and retirement communities

Treat resident-led story capture as a distinct later pilot. Organisational agreement does not replace the participant's choice and an appropriate review process.

THE FIRST OFFER
TO TEST

A small, co-branded recording-and-review pilot—not a replacement practice system, unlimited subscription or promise of permanent storage.

[1] Printed p. 19 / PDF p. 20 advocates institutional hybrid support. This channel sequence goes beyond the survey. No partner, pilot commitment or channel revenue is established.

A BENAIHAH CONCEPT / PROPOSED ARCHITECTURE

Technology moves on. *Understanding should carry forward.*

The wider thesis is continuity of identity, memory and context as AI changes. Still Ask gives it a specific test: can an approved record remain useful without losing its origin or permissions?

01 / PRESERVE

Original records

Files, transcripts, dates, authors and contributors.

02 / CONTEXTUALISE

Source-linked record

Approval, versions, corrections and visible gaps.

03 / AUTHORISE

Purpose-bound access

Who may see what, and what may be generated.

04 / EXPLORE

Questions and sources

People first; authorised agents as a later ambition.

WHAT SHOULD PERSIST

The approved record, its origin and access decisions—not a promise to freeze one model forever.

WHAT STAYS SEPARATE

Private archives, training permissions and other products' memory. Shared software is not shared private data.

Architectural proposal, not a production audit. Generated answers must not authorise spending, change beneficiaries or grant new access. Better models cannot supply missing original evidence.

PROPOSED DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Something this personal *deserves real care.*

Turn expectations into product decisions. These are requirements to implement and evaluate—not assurances that every safeguard is already in place.

01

Participation by choice

Invite the person recording and the recipient to decide separately. No surprise messages or unsolicited calls in a loved one's recreated voice.

02

Keep the source in sight

Show original material and attributed contributions. A relative's recollection must not quietly become the subject's own memory.

03

Room for the unknown

Abstain when evidence is insufficient. Distinguish retrieval, summaries and inference instead of hiding them behind a confidence score.

04

Make control practical

Design pause, access withdrawal, export and closure from the beginning. Describe retention honestly; do not sell an undefined "forever".

05

Support relationships

Do not present Still Ask as grief treatment. Test whether it helps people understand and share—not merely remain engaged.

06

Earn every claim

Evaluate failures, corrections and support burden before broadening a pilot. Personalisation is not the same as fidelity.

Whose words are these?

Why am I seeing them?

What does the system not know?

Research basis: [1], printed pp. 17–19. Operational requirements are Still Ask proposals. Their effectiveness in a Still Ask implementation has not been established.

PROPOSED VALIDATION PLAN

Evidence before *expansion.*

A waitlist can reveal interest. It cannot establish faithful answers, partner economics or lasting usefulness. We propose three progressively more demanding tests.

01 / UNDERSTANDING

Can people explain what it is?

Use fictional material. Ask participants to distinguish an original quotation, an AI summary and an unknown. Test whether they mistake the Fractal for the person.

02 / CHOSEN PARTICIPATION

Will they approve a useful record?

Begin with consenting adults and appropriate permissions. Track completion, corrections, approval, sharing and recipient comprehension. Compare retrieval with optional labelled summaries.

03 / REPEATABLE DELIVERY

Does each side value the experience?

Measure invitation-to-completion, professional review time, support cost, paid uptake and repeat use where appropriate. Test who pays, for what and for which preservation period.

STOP OR REDESIGN

When consent is unclear, records are disputed, users confuse invention with evidence, or distress exceeds what the pilot can address responsibly.

Still Ask proposal. No pilot results, conversion benchmarks, clinical effects or forecasts are claimed. Define denominators and report withdrawals, skipped items and adverse feedback as well as success.

EXPAND ON EVIDENCE

When a defined cohort finds value, understands boundaries and can rely on failure handling—and delivery economics are credible.

METHODOLOGY & INTERPRETATION NOTES

Read the evidence *with its limits intact.*

6,002

Adults aged 18+ with lived
experience of grief and loss.

UNITED KINGDOM

2,002

UNITED STATES

2,000

CANADA

2,000

Online fieldwork: 7–18 May 2026.

Published by Empathy, developed with Censuswide.

What the publication supplies

A cross-market snapshot of reported AI use, experiences and attitudes. This paper follows its three research themes before offering separate Still Ask interpretations.

What it does not supply in detail

The full questionnaire, recruitment and weighting detail, item-level denominators, country cross-tabs and response distributions needed for stronger inference. No significance tests or market projections are computed here.

What the findings do not establish

Clinical benefit, causal effects, durable demand, willingness to pay, Fractal usefulness, or the safety and effectiveness of a product. One survey does not establish a trend.

Empathy operates in the category and favours hybrid AI-and-human care. This context does not invalidate its data; the publisher's recommendations are not independent tests of every competing model.

[1] Methodology: printed p. 20 / PDF p. 21; foreword and conclusion for context. Observations concern the supplied publication, not undisclosed underlying research.

Evidence Register

Sources.
And what they support.

[1] Empathy, with Censuswide · 2026

Grief in the Age of AI

Supplied 22-page report. Fieldwork: 7–18 May 2026. All empirical percentages in this white paper come from this source, not Still Ask research.

Finding used	Printed	PDF
Human support and unmet needs	5–6	6–7
AI use during grief	11	12
Positive and negative experiences	14	15
Comfort by use case	17	18
Conditions and expectations	18	19
Hybrid-support recommendation	19	20
Methodology	20	21

[2] Still Ask · 16 September 2026

Landing Page Product Requirements Document

Version 1.0, internal specification. Supports the proposed entry points, fictional notebook example and validation scope—not live-capability claims.

[3] Still Ask · 16 September 2026

Brand Narrative & Creative Direction

Version 1.0, internal creative brief. Supports language and visual identity; it is not empirical evidence.

First text edition: 17 September 2026. This design rebuild: 18 September 2026. Original findings remain credited. Charts are redrawn; no Empathy or Censuswide endorsement is implied. Editorial assistance and illustrative imagery use AI. Images do not depict study participants, actual family records or testimonials.

Still Ask · A Benaiah concept · stillask.com. No original survey, primary pilot results, legal-service capability or agreed partnership is asserted by this paper.

THE NEXT CHAPTER STARTS HERE

For everything you still *want to ask.*

Preserve a life's understanding
for questions that arrive later.

We are exploring a source-first way to preserve your own
story, or understand the records someone left behind.

stillask.com ↗

Explore the idea and join the waitlist. Prospective partners can help test
where thoughtful legacy capture belongs.

A life's wisdom. A little further.

In early development. This paper is not an announcement of a released Fractal platform, will-writing service or agreed partnership.

