

Creating a Thoughtful Legacy

When people think about leaving a legacy, they usually first think about leaving behind material items such as money and other valuables including jewelry and family possessions.

But there are other thoughtful ways to leave a legacy for family and close friends. Often some of the most meaningful types of legacy are those that don't have a monetary value, but are emotionally meaningful.

Here are some things to consider when thinking about leaving your legacy for others.

1. First, think about who will be the recipient(s) for this type of legacy.

Some possible recipients:

- Family (kids, parents, siblings, grandkids, cousins, nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles etc.)
- Friends
- Mentors
- Colleagues
- Neighbors
- Church members
- Others?

2. Next, determine what the content of your message might be. This will vary depending on your relationship with each recipient.

Some possible content to consider:

- Appreciations - what the person meant to you, favorite memories of time together, etc.
- Advice
- Favorite quotes
- Family stories - captured in books, letters, photos, movies/videos
- Meaningful prayers, poems, songs, blessings

3. Also decide how you might leave behind your final thoughts or words.

Some possible approaches:

- Have a personal conversation (say things you have wanted to say).
- Write a letter to be read at a specified time (before, or after death).
- Write a memoir.
- Gift a favorite object accompanied by a note describing the significance of the item for the recipient, and/or to you as the giver.
- Share audio or video recordings - of family stories/history (Story Corp, Phone, Audiotape).
- Make a slide show of significant photos.
- Share a timeline of significant events in your life.
- Make memory books/photo albums/scrapbooks.
- Create a journal or book designed to share your reflections.

Leaving these types of thoughtful legacy is often deeply meaningful and memorable.