

Creating Legacy Letters - October 22, 2018

At this class, we will be discussing the origin of Legacy Letters (also known as Ethical Wills) and you have time to ponder, create outlines and, hopefully, begin the process of creating your letter(s). Please bring a journal or notebook for the writing portion. If writing your Legacy Letter on your computer or tablet feels more natural for you, bring that along as well. You may be in a place that you have considered what to say in a Legacy Letter for a while and are looking to use this as time to finally write it. If that is the case, you may want to bring the special journal or paper that you already have in mind.

Legacy Letters, as the name suggests, are usually letters written to pass down your values (life lessons, dreams, hopes, words of appreciation). But you should not feel confined by only using letter form. It can be a list of those values, it can be shared through poems or quotes, it can be illustrated by photos or expressed through recipes, memories, mementos. If any of those would help you in expressing your values, bring those with you or start to gather them at home so they are available.

Your first step in preparing for the class is to begin to think about who will receive your letter(s). Historically, Legacy Letters were given by the older generation to the younger one. However, your letter may be addressed to anyone. Audiences to consider are: children, grandchildren, siblings, nieces and nephews, godchildren, parents, spouse or partner, and friends. Write down the name(s) of who will receive your letter and, if it is more than one person, whether you will write one letter or multiple letters if you have different things to say to different people.

Once you identify who will receive a Legacy Letter, you then need to ask yourself “Why is this letter important to me?” and “What is my goal in writing a Legacy Letter to this person(s)?” It may be to express love and gratitude, to share what life lessons are important to you, to explain bits of family history, to ask for or to give forgiveness or to express your hopes for the future. Or it may be bits of all this. Thinking about the why and what prior to the class will help you focus on the message and create a letter that is true to your intention.

Below are the questions to consider of Who/Why/What for your Legacy Letter prior to the class:

Who/Why/What

Who are you writing to?

Why is this letter important to you?

What do you hope to express in this Legacy Letter?

What is the single most important thing that you wish to say?

How do you want your words to make him/her feel?

I look forward to continuing the Legacy Letter process with you on October 22nd.