

## SOME TOPICS FOR A SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY OR WRITTEN LEGACY

Dedication: To family or friends or....

My reasons for making this ethical will

My feelings about my life

How I feel about today's world

My life philosophy

My thoughts about what is good and what is bad

The things for which I am grateful

How I feel others should be treated

My goals in life

My rules and standards for living

Standing up for what I believe

How I deal with emotional issues

Despair

Anger

Faith

Self-Importance

Procrastination

How I have grown from past experience

Live life to the fullest

Happiness

Charity

How I have grown from past experience (continued)

Courage

Compassion

Luck and good fortune

Loyalty

Equanimity

Reviving memories and reflecting on the past

How I have learned to overcome

Loneliness

Finding fault

Being overextended

Facing unpleasantness

Injustice

Suffering

Despair of our times

How faith and belief influenced my life

Spirituality and religion, the role of prayer

My thoughts on Life and Death

My hopes for the future and my descendant's

My favorite poem, music, or other beloved writing

# What Shall I Leave Unto the Seventh Generation?

“They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God.  
In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap.” (Psalm 92: 13-14)

<p>List at least four spiritual gifts God has given you.</p>	<p>To whom would you like to leave each of these gifts?</p>
<p>Name at least four special talents God has given you.</p>	<p>Choose people to whom you want to leave these talents.</p>

Consider concluding each section by composing a blessing-prayer for those you mentioned.  
If you are still in contact with these people, send them a note telling what you are leaving to them as your gift.  
It will help them find their own God-dream and a fresh vision for life.  
They'll be eternally grateful for your precious, meaningful gifts. You'll be blessed, too, even now.



# Creating an Ethical Will

## A Grandparent's Legacy

*Then Jacob called his sons, and said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in days to come. Assemble and hear, O sons of Jacob and hearken to Israel your father." Genesis 49:1*

### What is an Ethical Will?

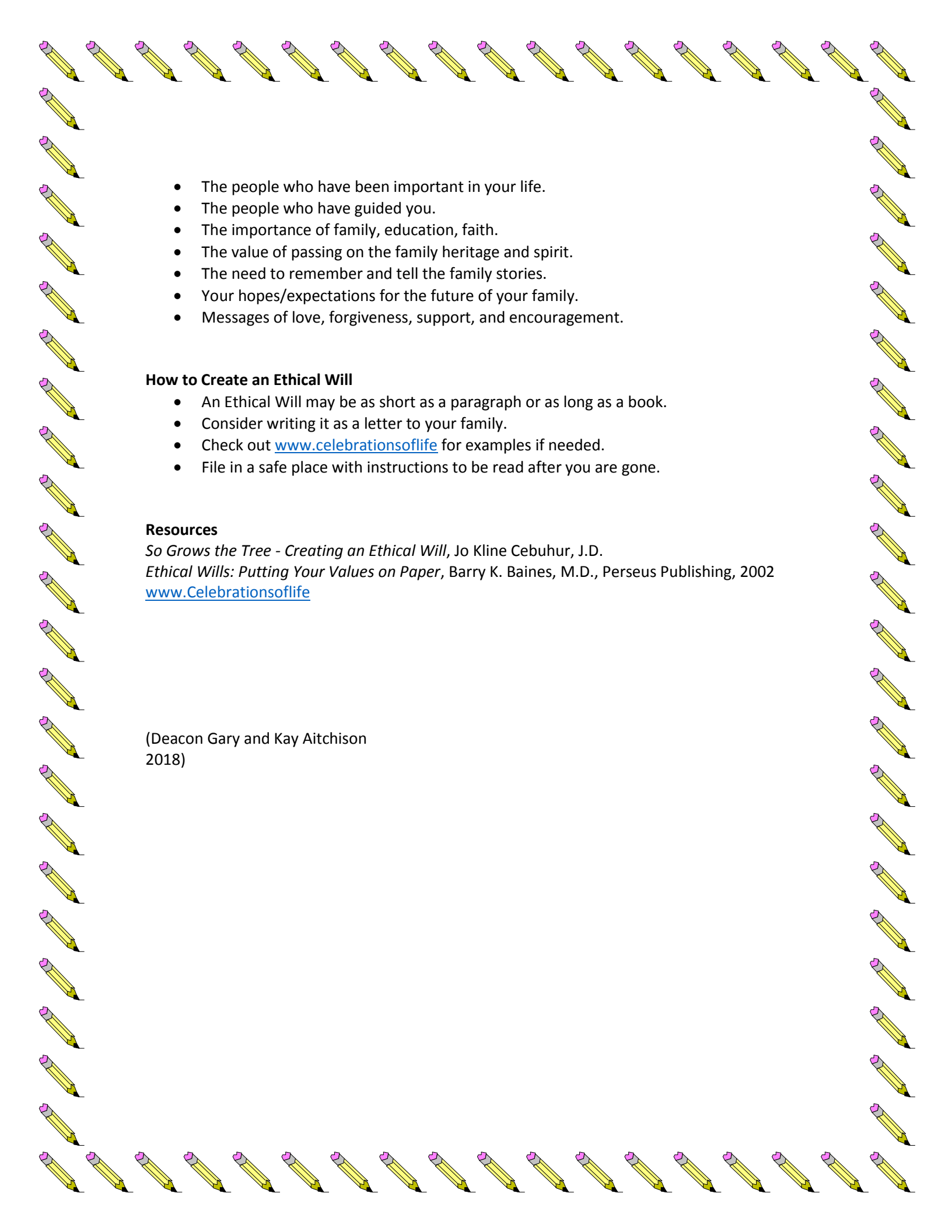
- It is a statement of your values and beliefs.
- It is a personal Mission Statement.
- It attests to what you stand for.
- It may include some of your life story.

### Why would a Grandparent create an Ethical Will?

- To entrust your children, grandchildren, loved ones with your values and beliefs.
- To explain how these values and beliefs influenced your life.
- To invite your family to embrace and pass on your legacy of values and beliefs.
- To share your wisdom, experience and your life journey.

### What might you include in your Ethical Will?

- Portions of your life story.
- Lessons you have learned in life.
- What you stand for and believe in.
- The values and beliefs that have been important to you.
- Your personal mission statement.
- Accomplishments that you are most proud of.
- How you have made the world a better place.
- How you would like to be remembered.
- Any wisdom you would like to share with your children/grandchildren.
- Your hopes and dreams for your grandchildren and future generations of the family.
- How you were influenced by your parents/grandparents/family of origin.
- The influence friends and others had on you.
- How time, place and world events impacted your life journey.
- What you are most thankful/grateful for?

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- The people who have been important in your life.
  - The people who have guided you.
  - The importance of family, education, faith.
  - The value of passing on the family heritage and spirit.
  - The need to remember and tell the family stories.
  - Your hopes/expectations for the future of your family.
  - Messages of love, forgiveness, support, and encouragement.

#### **How to Create an Ethical Will**

- An Ethical Will may be as short as a paragraph or as long as a book.
- Consider writing it as a letter to your family.
- Check out [www.celebrationsoflife](http://www.celebrationsoflife) for examples if needed.
- File in a safe place with instructions to be read after you are gone.

#### **Resources**

*So Grows the Tree - Creating an Ethical Will*, Jo Kline Cebuhur, J.D.

*Ethical Wills: Putting Your Values on Paper*, Barry K. Baines, M.D., Perseus Publishing, 2002

[www.Celebrationsoflife](http://www.Celebrationsoflife)

(Deacon Gary and Kay Aitchison  
2018)

## ETHICAL WILL WORKSHEET

**I am creating my ethical will because:**

**I want to share my ethical will with:**

### **My Favorite Things**

My favorite place in the world is:

My favorite artists (musicians, painters, actors) are:

My favorite books are:

My favorite movies are:

My favorite foods are:

My favorite sports and teams are:

My hobbies are:

My favorite sayings are:

### **My Family**

The most important thing I learned from my parents is:

The most important thing I learned from my grandparents is:

The most important thing I learned from being a husband/wife is:

The most important thing I learned from my children is:

When I was growing up, these were our traditions:

My favorite story about my mother is:

My favorite story about my father is:

Some things I'd like to share with you about my family when I was growing up are:

### **My Professional Life**

The best job I ever had was:

The worst job I ever had was:

The reason I choose my profession/career was:

If I had it to do over again, I would have become a:

### **My Experiences**

Some of my fondest memories are:

Some of the events that had the greatest impact on my life were:

I am most proud of:

I am most grateful for:

One of the happiest moments of my life was:

The people who have influenced me the most are:

My biggest regret is:

The hardest decision I ever made was:

The most difficult time in my life was:  
In difficult times I have found comfort in:

In my life, I was most afraid of:

I would like to ask forgiveness from:

I would like to offer forgiveness to:

### **My Beliefs and Values**

My most fundamental belief is:

My thoughts on religion and faith are:

I believe that God is:

My most valued traditions are:

The causes that have always been important to me are:

For me, success means:

### **My Hopes for the Future**

The values I hope to pass on are:

My wishes for my children are:

My wishes for my grandchildren are:

My wishes for my spouse are:

A mistake in life I hope you can avoid is:

An experience I hope you get an opportunity to have is:

When you encounter hardship, I hope you will remember:

<https://www.everplans.com/articles/ethical-will-worksheet>

## STORYTELLING/LEAVING A LEGACY IN OUR MATURING YEARS RESOURCES

- *Let This Be the Time: Spiritual Essentials for Life's Second Act*, Chapters 6 and 12  
[https://smile.amazon.com/Let-This-Time-Spiritual-Essentials/dp/1627855599/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=let+this+be+the+time&qid=1622146118&sr=8-1](https://smile.amazon.com/Let-This-Time-Spiritual-Essentials/dp/1627855599/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=let+this+be+the+time&qid=1622146118&sr=8-1)
- Spiritual Autobiography: [https://www.janetschaeffler.com/GEMS\\_77.pdf](https://www.janetschaeffler.com/GEMS_77.pdf)
- Gatherings to Explore the Writing of a Spiritual Biography:  
[https://www.janetschaeffler.com/Gatherings to Explore the Writing of a Spiritual Biography.pdf](https://www.janetschaeffler.com/Gatherings%20to%20Explore%20the%20Writing%20of%20a%20Spiritual%20Biography.pdf)
- How to Write a Legacy Statement – The Most Important Gift You Will Leave Behind:  
<https://your-philanthropy.com/write-legacy-statement/>
- Do It Yourself Genealogy: Leaving A Written Legacy:  
<https://www.archives.com/experts/abramson-pamela/write-your-own-obituary.html>
- Tell Me Your Story: How to Write Your Spiritual Memoir:  
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/tell-me-your-story-how-to-write-your-spiritual-memoir>
- How to Write a Spiritual Autobiography: <https://classroom.synonym.com/how-to-write-a-spiritual-autobiography-12078440.html>
- Writing Spiritual Autobiography as It Relates to the Spiritual Exercises, Part 1:  
<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/writing-spiritual-autobiography-as-it-relates-to-the-spiritual-exercises-part-1/>
- Writing Spiritual Autobiography as It Relates to the Spiritual Exercises, Part 2:  
<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/writing-spiritual-autobiography-as-it-relates-to-the-spiritual-exercises-part-2/>
- Imagine your 80th Birthday: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUtPjJDBs6I>
- Writing “My Story” to Leave Your Written Legacy to Loved Ones:  
<https://lifesjourney.us/writing-my-story-to-leave-your-written-legacy-to-loved-ones/>
- Personal Legacy Statement Examples: <https://paragonroad.com/personal-legacy-statement-examples/>
- The New Way to Write Your Life Story: The 10 Themes of Legacy Writing:  
<https://www.writersdigest.com/whats-new/the-new-way-to-write-your-life-story-the-10-themes-of-legacy-writing>

- *All My Days: A Personal Life Review*:  
<https://www.amazon.com/All-My-Days-Personal-Review/dp/0764806432> or  
<https://www.kobo.com/us/en/ebook/all-my-days>
- TED Talk – A Rite of Passage for Late Life:  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/bob\\_stein\\_a\\_rite\\_of\\_passage\\_for\\_late\\_life](https://www.ted.com/talks/bob_stein_a_rite_of_passage_for_late_life)
- Sample Legacy Letters: <http://life-legacies.com/ethicalwills/samples.html>
- Write a Legacy Letter Today!: [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/writing-letters\\_b\\_3831203](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/writing-letters_b_3831203)
- 12 Great Tips on How to Write an Amazing Legacy Letter:  
<https://www.legacyletter.org/12-great-tips-on-how-to-write-an-amazing-legacy-letter/>
- Ethical Wills: <http://www.life-legacies.com/ethicalwills/index.html>
- A Week’s Worth of Journaling Prompts: Writing Legacy Letters:  
<https://writingthroughlife.com/a-weeks-worth-of-journaling-prompts-writing-legacy-letters/>
- What Is Legacy Writing & How To Get Started:  
<https://www.drweil.com/blog/spontaneous-happiness/legacy-writing-what-it-is-and-how-to-get-started/>
- What is a legacy letter?: <https://jaysherwin.com/legacy-letters>
- The Ethical Will: Life Is About More Than Your Possessions:  
<https://www.nextavenue.org/ethical-will/>
- Making an Ethical Will: <https://www.legalzoom.com/knowledge/last-will/topic/making-an-ethical-will>
- Ethical Will: An Ancient Tradition Made New Again: <https://www.millernash.com/firm-news/news/ethical-will-an-ancient-tradition-made-new-again>
- Beyond Possessions and Assets: Creating an ‘Ethical Will’:  
<https://www.neptunesociety.com/resources/beyond-posessions-and-assets-creating-an-ethical-will>