

KBI 5781:

An
EXTRAORDINARY COMMUNITY in an
EXTRAORDINARY YEAR with
EXTRAORDINARY POSSIBILITIES



Ethical Will Overview

The musical *Hamilton* taught, “you have no control—who lives, who dies, who tells your story.” While the first two are true, the final one isn’t entirely out of your control. After all, the writing of an ethical will enables you to pass down your life lessons, hopes and dreams for the future, and what most inspired you in that way can be one of the most cherished and meaningful gifts you can leave to your family.

An ethical will is your chance to share with your family, friends, and/or community the things you valued most, what you believe defined your life, and what you want to make sure is remembered from your life. During the High Holy Day season, as we face our own mortality, there is no better time to explore the writing of an ethical will. An ethical will can be long or short and can be as personal as you are willing for it to be. To see some examples of ethical wills you can go to:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/opinion/john-lewis-civil-rights-america.html>

<https://www.personallegacyadvisors.com/knowledge-base/ethical-wills/contemporary-examples-of-ethical-wills/>

<http://kariberit.net/files/UCG-Ethical-Wills.pdf>

<http://sholemaleichem.org/ethical-will/>

There is no better time than this High Holy Day season, when we find more time at home, to begin writing our ethical wills. While the next few pages will include some of the questions you might consider answering as part of your ethical will, some of the overarching questions to consider include:

- With whom would you want to share your ethical will?
- When would you want them to receive it?
- Does your ethical will reflect who you are or who you wish you were?
- Does it share what you wanted to share and teach what you wanted to teach?
- How much do you want to share?

And some guiding questions can include:

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/partner 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 Favorite Things

- My favorite place in the world is:
- My favorite artists (musicians, painters, actors) are:
- My favorite books/movies/foods/teams are:
- My hobbies are:
- My favorite sayings are:

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/for:
- I would like to offer forgiveness to:

My Beliefs and Values

- My most fundamental belief is:
- My thoughts on religion and faith are:
- My most valued traditions are:
- The causes that have always been important to me are:
- For me, success means:

My Professional Life

- The best job/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 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: