

Something I Can Do for the Ones I Love

Notes for Lesson Leader

(One copy per Club)

Prior to presenting this lesson, prepare copies for each member:

1. Lesson Objectives
2. Action Plan
3. Survey Builder

Familiarize yourself with the notes. Depending upon available time, select topics to discuss. You might choose to focus on just a few of the topics. If appropriate, you might obtain examples in the different topics.

Introduction – You love your family. You have spent your life doing things to make their lives easier. You have a will. You have planned your estate. However, there are many decisions that have to be made in the hours before and after the end of life. What can you do now that will help your family as they make these decisions?

We typically won't have the privilege of knowing when, and sometimes where, the end of life will occur. We might be our "fourscore and seven" or we might be very young. It might happen with our family at our bedside or we might be on our own, away from family.

We are going to discuss decisions that do not require outside legal/financial help. They are decisions that you can make, and communicate with the ones who will be faced with them at the necessary time. We will discuss these from the point of view of the person whose life is ending. They can also be addressed from the point of view of the person remaining who would like your input in making these decisions. It is not always adult children who will be faced with these decisions. It might be parents of adult children, siblings, neighbors, friends. These notes will just provide discussion points under each topic.

I. Emergency Contact Information

Whether you are at home, about town or traveling, do you have emergency contact information available for whomever might need it? If a First Responder had to find this info in your house, where would they find it and what would they find? Who would they be able to contact? What if they needed to look in your car? Is there information in your glove box? What would they find if they look in your purse or on your phone? If you are out of state, do you have local contact information as well as home information? Is your information up to date?

- List of names & numbers close to driver's license – whom do you want contacted if you are found unconscious?
- Cell Phone – have the number you want contacted first listed under ICE – In Case of Emergency
- Vial of Life – emergency information in a small container, similar to a pill bottle. It can be placed in the refrigerator door, glove box, etc. Be sure that the bottle is identified. Sometimes, stickers are available to put on the front of the refrigerator or at the front door that a Vial of Life is available.

Having this information available makes it possible that those that need to be contacted can be reached in a timely manner.

II. Organ Donation

If the circumstances are such that this is an option, please make sure that your family knows exactly how you feel, and can answer confidently. This is not a decision to make under stress.

Information can be found at <http://donatelifeindiana.org/get-the-facts/>

III. Funeral Arrangements

If you have not made official plans with a funeral director, make sure that your family knows of your preferences. The decision concerning a mortuary will need to be made promptly without time to shop around. The choice of cremation or internment is a personal one. These decisions impact the cost involved at this time. Knowing how you feel can reduce your family's stress. If you have made official plans please make sure that your family knows where to find the information. The Funeral Director will need your social security number. Will your family be able to easily find it?

IV. Cemetery

The end of life is not the best time to shop for expensive real estate. If you are not comfortable purchasing a plot in advance, you might do some research and let your family know your preference. If you are planning to use a plot that is already in the family, be sure that your family can confirm ownership. This is not the time to have to document your right to use a plot.

V. Notifying Friends & Extended Family

Are there family members that only you contact? What about your friends? Where will your family find the contact information? Will they be looking for an address book, Christmas card list or is the information online? Remember, it is not always the older generation that passes first. How would you contact your adult child's friends? Who will write your obituary? Do they know the basics about your life? Could you write obituaries for other family members? How do you feel about having your death announced on Facebook and other Social Media platforms? Most newspapers now charge for obituaries. What ones would you like included?

VI. Facebook & Email Accounts

This is a changing area and you may want to check with the current situation. Facebook has ways to delete and memorialize accounts. Passwords might be necessary to make changes. (In my case, I left my sister's page active. She had many friends and co-workers that I did not know. After six years, she still gets an occasional picture or greeting from someone who remembers her. I have found it to be comforting. However, other people might find it disturbing.)

VII. Memorials

This information is typically included in the obituary. Discussing it in advance can lessen the stress of making the decision at the time. Given some time, you might think of more meaningful choices. Our Community Foundations offer some great opportunities for setting up scholarship or memorial funds, but they take time.

VIII. Computer Files and Account PINS

This is an emerging topic. Would you want your children to read your emails and view all of your computer files? Would you want to view the files of your adult child? But what if some information is needed to deal with the estate? What stays private? How do you make sure that password protected files are available to those that need the information? Is the information available in a timely manner? Give some thought to your digital estate. What digital assets do you have? How can they be accessed? What do you want to do with the assets? Check out the Digital Assets Worksheet from Rutgers University, <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/money/pdfs/Digital-Assets-Worksheet.pdf>.

IX. Photos

Will your family want pictures/videos at your service? Will they want pictures that you have for their own heritage? Do you have boxes of prints? Are they identified? Where are your digital pictures? Are they identified? Are your pictures on your phone/Facebook? Technology is constantly changing in this area, but only you can date & identify a lot of your pictures.

X. Personal/Household Finances/Important information

Do you have a method to your finances so someone else can easily take care of what is needed? This may fall to the executor, but there may be bills that need to be paid in a timely manner. Be alert for automatic withdrawals. Do you do online banking?

XI. Family History

If you try to share this information now and they are not interested, you can at least let them know where to find it.

XII. Children and Pets

Legal guardianships should be established for all minor children. This should be reviewed periodically as situations change. Unless you are establishing a legal trust for your pets, an informal arrangement of planning who will care and love your pets can be comforting.

1. Conclude your lesson by reminding the participants of the Extension resources that might help in these areas:
 - *Code Red*, a program developed by the Purdue Women in Ag team, can help in organizing financial and other information, www.extension.purdue.edu/wia.
 - *Organize Your Important Household Papers*, from eXtension.org, <https://articles.extension.org/pages/11023/organize-your-important-household-papers:-print-this-lesson>
 - *Roadmap for Important Papers* from the University of Minnesota Extension, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i9s_9RV0zwBboFOPzy4N2d8_ZTSA0X0E/view
 - *Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate* from the University of Minnesota Extension, www.yellowpieplate.umn.edu
 - *Without a Will in Indiana*, Purdue Extension Health & Human Sciences, <https://extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/HHS/HHS-789-W.pdf>.
2. Have the participants complete the Action Plan including the dates by which they want to complete each task. This is theirs to keep. Ask how they can use the Action Plan?
3. Finally, ask each participant to complete the evaluation. This is voluntary. Collect the completed surveys and return to me within 30 days. Purdue Extension greatly appreciates your feedback. Your input helps educators to provide impact from the programming we provide.

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