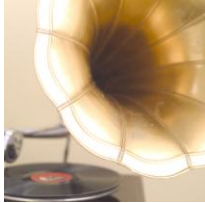




Childhood Memories- Lifetime Treasures



Have you ever given any thought to the old fishing pole hanging in the garage, the cookie jar that sits on the shelf in grandma's kitchen, or the painting Martha gave you with monies earned from baby sitting? Perhaps you've become so accustomed to having these "things" in your midst that you've never stopped to think about their significance to individuals in your family.

The fishing pole has a lot attached to it besides old lures and a half broken bobber. Every spring you and Freddie, your older son, sat together planning and dreaming about the annual fishing trips to Conestoga Lake. Remember the fishing excursion to Box Butte Reservoir in the western part of Nebraska? Once you got to the lake things didn't go exactly as planned and yet you had a great time laughing together, discussing the 'ones' that you would catch the next day and just plain being 'best pals'. Thinking about it results in a silent smile creeping across your face. Who will you pass on the old fishing pole and box of lures to when you can no longer enjoy fishing? Have you indicated your wishes for this 'fishing treasure' to anyone? Better still, if you don't use the fishing gear consider passing it on to Freddie with a handwritten note of your favorite memories of your shared fishing adventures? Doing this would be your special gift for Freddie—a memory of past adventures together that will be treasured for a lifetime!

On the other hand, grandma's cookie jar may hold hidden reminiscences for

another child in the family. For one child the memories of going to Grandma's house several times a year to make cookies stands out. 'Grams' as you called her, dressed you in an oversized apron and stood you on the kitchen chair to reach the work surface so you could 'help' roll out the cookie dough. Actually you got more flour on the floor than the table, but Grams never complained instead she smiled and said, "Don't worry about the mess, you're learning." Think about how much you'd love to have this cookie jar when grandma passes on. Is it wrong to ask grandma if you can have it someday?

Some people think the only important thing is making formal financial arrangements for the transfer of one's monetary assets, however within every family there is what is know as non-titled property that can be meaningful to family and friends. So meaningful, in fact, that a family feud can erupt and result in no one thinking there is a fair or equitable solution to the dilemma. **Family members need to talk to each other about what is important.** Isn't that a novel idea—talking about feelings and things that have deep meaning. Let Grams or grandpa know the things you treasure in your memory bank and then leave it up to them to **consider** your desires. It's easy to make provisions in a one child family but it requires more soul searching when there is more than one sibling 'eyeing' a particular picture, photograph or other article.

How often do families sit and talk about the important things in their lives? Have you ever heard a child say, "Dad likes Bobby more than me?" Do you dismiss

this as untrue or do you realize that this is truly the individual's perception of the situation? One's perception is often stronger than reality and although it may start in childhood it can carry over into

- Do you and your spouse agree on who gets what when?
- How important is birth order or age?
- Should children have items they gave you bequeathed back to them?
- Is equality among siblings important?
 - A second issue here is "what is equality—dollars, number of items, etc.?"
- Should "in-laws" be included in the distribution of items?
- What happens to family members who are not in the 'good graces' of everyone?
- What happens when blended families are involved, such as in the case of a second marriage with children from two different relationships?

Allocation options include gifting, listing items in the family will, labeling objects with the name of the intended recipient, having children choose items in birth order, a lottery system or another method devised by you or the family members.

Before holding a family meeting or discussing your wishes with the individual family members, it is important to have a clear understanding of your beliefs and wishes as well as a definitive plan for how you will communicate face to face with the family. Most families are not totally harmonious even if the surface conversation indicates otherwise; therefore one goal should be to promote harmony. Whether or not harmony occurs it is important to know that you cannot control other people's behaviors and to not feel guilty if everyone is not absolutely happy with the outcomes.



Decisions about the distribution of non-titled property can cause family disharmony; in fact, in some instances it fractures relationships. Therefore, knowing and understanding your individual family circumstances and the

adulthood. When thinking about the distribution of your non-titled property some things to think about personally are:

those involved is important. Holding family meetings and discussing each individual person's values may help alleviate a future battlefield of disagreement.

Finally, it is nice to sit and reflect on what gives true value to your life. Is it the "stuff" we collect or the heartfelt memories no one can steal from you. Finding a way to gift the memories held dear in your heart may be of far greater value than the object itself.

Even in biblical times, there were rules and guidelines for one's inheritance, but everyone knew them. Does your family know your wishes?

"Now suppose they marry men from other Israelite tribes; then their inheritance will be taken from our ancestral inheritance and added to that of the tribe they marry into. And so part of the inheritance allotted to us will be taken away." -Numbers 36:3

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