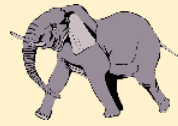


LEGACY PLANNING...



AND THE IN THE ROOM...

Most people generally dislike and avoid the topics of incapacity, death, inheritance and taxes – Estate Planning. Largely because of the overwhelming concern for potential family discord or legal misunderstandings and the uncomfortable fact, we must recognize our own mortality. Many estate plans can simply be too boilerplate and do little more than establish what happens with physical assets upon death. Important, yet they fail to recognize the “emotional assets” and overlook personal sentiments and expressions that could prove to be a source of comfort to a family in moments of grief.

A superfluous collection of commentary is available to inform us on wealth-transfer and rules for gifting money, duties of a trustee and the beauty of ethical wills. All topics focused on one idea, guiding individuals through the process of preparing for eventual death. Conversely, in those compositions, nary a mention of the ‘Elephant in the Room’ – the importance of illuminating one’s legacy by detailing the scope of care and ceremony desired to commemorate a unique life at its end.

Some will dismissively say, “Just roll me in a sheet and throw me in a ditch” - a naïve and foolish statement. Surely, no one expects his or her loved ones to take that proposal at face value. The tragedy of failing to properly plan is not visited upon the dead. It’s the living who remain to suffer unforeseen and exacting consequences. This failure will create complications for family members that did not exist antemortem and, sadly, do not provide the protections or support heirs deserve.

In contrast, deliberate Legacy Planning is a far more hopeful concept and ultimately better received. The idea of leaving a “Legacy” for the coming generations is intriguing, as it captures all facets of an individual’s life, including family traditions and history, life stories, values and wishes. It is a level of planning that imparts wisdom and guides inherited assets. It transforms thinking from money and legal documents to establishing a family narrative and resolving how one would like to affect future generations in positive ways that extend beyond material wealth.

Legacy Planning is not just for the wealthy or noteworthy. We all have a legacy, whether planned or not. The gift of planning allows us to pass on not only a financial legacy but also a legacy of the heart to future generations – make it meaningful, be intentional and purposeful - it all begins with clarity. When you plan your legacy, you expressly influence the way you and your life’s-work will be remembered.

As you would expect, there are multiple partners involved in the Legacy Planning process - Attorneys who create and administer the legal channels through which one lives their legacy and achieves their greatest success; A wealth-advisor team to sustain financial assets, while accountants integrate tax-planning strategies to help preserve as much as one can for future generations. Other counselors may include faith-based or religious leaders, physicians, nutritionists and personal trainers, all who support one’s spiritual and physical well-being.

As professionals, we recognize the imperative for individuals and their entities to have many end-of-life plans in place, from healthcare directives to wills and trusts, wealth preservation strategies and executable succession plans for the rising generations. While approaching legacy-planning conversations let us, too, consider thoughtful funeral and memorial event planning as another essential element of a comprehensive Legacy Plan. Well-defined arrangements are equally a gift to pass on and prove to be indispensable in safeguarding a family at the loss of their loved-one.

Through knowledge, experience and a proven record of accomplishment, the advisors from LHT Consulting Group serve as a catalyst and resource in discussions surrounding death and memorialization. We provide unbiased and objective counsel that will lead to a purposeful solution and a lasting gift - Leave a legacy, not a mess.