

# Leaving Your Heart Behind: Sentimental Estate Planning

As Valentine's Day approaches, a time when we celebrate love and connection, it's fitting to explore a different dimension of estate planning—one that transcends financial assets and delves into the sentimental. Love, after all, is not just about the present; it's about the enduring legacy we leave behind. In



this article, we embark on a journey of "Sentimental Estate Planning," where we focus on preserving the treasures of the heart—those cherished items that hold not just financial value but also the stories and memories that define our family histories.

If you don't yet have an estate plan, merely creating a plan is a meaningful gift that you can bestow on those you love. A well planned estate saves your loved ones from uncertainty, delay, conflict, and expense. It is a testament to your love and consideration for your family. And, can make the difficult time surrounding your passing easier on those you leave behind.

For those with an estate plan in place Sentimental Estate Planning is an opportunity to magnify the expression of love your plan already embodies.

## The Heart of Your Estate: Sentimental Assets

Sentimental assets are the heartbeat of your estate, embodying the essence of your family's journey. From heirloom jewelry passed down through generations to handwritten letters that capture the spirit of bygone eras, these items are more than possessions; they are repositories of love, wisdom, and shared experiences. However, passing down these treasures without proper planning can lead to unintended challenges and, in some cases, their loss from the family's narrative.

## Documenting Your Legacy

Preserving the stories behind your sentimental assets is as crucial as safeguarding the items themselves. Consider creating a catalog or record that details the significance of each piece—whether it's a photograph capturing a milestone moment or a cherished recipe written in a beloved family member's hand. Documenting these stories not only enriches the value of the items but also ensures that future generations understand and appreciate their cultural and emotional importance.

## Incorporate Sentimental Assets into Your Estate Plan

Now that you've identified and documented your sentimental treasures, it's time to integrate them into your estate plan. At a minimum, be specific in your will about which family member should inherit particular items, ensuring that your wishes are clearly communicated. Consider creating a memorandum or letter of wishes to accompany your will, providing additional context and guidance. For those looking to go a step further, establishing a trust dedicated to the preservation and responsible distribution of these assets can be a meaningful and legally sound option. My clients are each given the option to personally create a memo that is binding on their will or trust.

## Create an Ethical Will

An ethical will is a heartfelt and meaningful document that allows you to share your values, life lessons, and personal reflections with your loved ones. It is not a legal document but rather a way to communicate the essence of who you are and what you cherish most in life. An ethical will is a personal and intimate expression of your innermost thoughts and feelings. Sharing your values and life lessons is a wonderful gift for those you love. It often becomes a cherished keepsake for your loved ones, providing them with lasting guidance and comfort as they carry on your legacy.

## The Emotional Impact on Future Generations

Passing down sentimental assets and values is not merely a transfer of possessions; it's a continuation of your family's narrative. These items become tangible links to the past, fostering a sense of connection among generations. Often these items are more highly valued than all of the money you are able to leave behind. Picture a grandchild donning a piece of heirloom jewelry on their wedding day or discovering the heartfelt words of a great-grandparent in a handwritten letter. By intentionally incorporating sentimental estate planning, you create a legacy that resonates emotionally, providing comfort and inspiration for your descendants.

## Estate Plans are a Gift for Your Loved Ones

As we celebrate love this Valentine's Day, let us extend our expressions of care beyond the present and into the future. Sentimental estate planning allows us to pass down treasures of the heart, ensuring that the love, wisdom, and shared experiences encapsulated in these items endure for generations to come. Take the time to document, plan, and share the stories behind your cherished possessions. In doing so, you not only preserve your family's unique history but also gift future generations with the enduring power of love—truly a timeless expression of affection on this special day.

And, if you haven't done so yet, creating an estate plan is a profound gift of love that transcends time and circumstance. It's an opportunity to bestow upon your loved ones a legacy of security, clarity, and peace of mind. By crafting a comprehensive estate plan, you can ensure that your wishes are clearly articulated and assets are distributed according to your desires. Moreover, they provide your family members with invaluable guidance during what can be a challenging and emotionally fraught time. Indeed, the act of creating an estate plan is a testament to one's care and consideration for those they hold dear, offering a lasting expression of love that resonates far beyond the confines of the present moment.

As an experienced estate planning attorney, I am here to assist you whether you have a plan in place or not. If you need a plan, or would like to update your plan to incorporate Sentimental Estate Planning, call me at 281-425-1300 to schedule your

planning session today, so you can experience the peace of knowing your loved ones are protected. Happy Valentine's Day to you and those you love.

—By Marc Pinney