



SENIORCARE OPTIONS

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**Candor. Compassion.
Competence.**

Aging Life Care Management
for the Metro Atlanta Area
Assisting medically frail seniors,
disabled adults, & their caregivers

Ethical Wills – The Gift that Keeps on Giving



Often as a new year approaches – we consider resolutions, goals, or changes we wish to make for the upcoming year. Often the exploration of this task will lead to a bit of soul-searching as we think of ways to improve on our lives from years past.

We may question: What is important? How do we define meaning in life? What are our values, hopes, dreams, and life lessons? What has led to our successes or failures – professionally, within our personal selves or families, or financially? We may even think – “I could write a book from all I’ve learned!”

Well, people have been documenting this very thing for thousands of years through an Ethical Will. It originally stemmed from a Jewish tradition called Zava’ah as a way one would outline the ethical, spiritual, and moral things learned throughout one’s lifetime. It was given to heirs to provide a foundation of knowledge and to serve as a memorial following one’s death.

Ethical Wills today have been used by most faiths, in many cultures, and by the general public – and are now shared in many forms from hand-written letters or typed documents to Power-Point presentations and videos. Also, they are used outside of only being a shared end-of-life document to now being presented to “heirs” at a variety of life’s transitions – such as a child’s graduation or the birth of a grandchild.

An Ethical Will is not intended to scold, blame, rehash unsettled events, or cause pain and negativity – as those things are best handled by the use of different methods.

There are true benefits to the author of such a document. It can provide heightened self-awareness and clarity, spiritual healing, new goal-setting, a sense of coming full-circle (or closing the circle), permanence to important stories, and can support one’s desire to be remembered. It can be a supplement to standard legal advance directives such as healthcare advance directives or legal wills – by giving further clarification to one’s natural or chosen families regarding their decisions for desired care, things truly valued, and a greater understanding of both the accumulation and distribution of one’s tangible assets.

For those receiving such a document – it can provide answers, continued connection, and a deeper understanding of not only the author but of who they are as well. It often will allow the same questions to surface in the mind of the reader which may encourage the person to make positive life changes, embrace new experiences, explore risks, etc. It can cause a recentering of values, traditions, and priorities. There is a created and shared meaning and a heightened focus on intentional living.

We challenge you to be intentional in this next year – and to consider creating your own Ethical Will. It’s an amazing opportunity to give back to yourself and to create a specialized gift for your natural or chosen family for generations to come.

Resources Available

Reader’s Digest: How to Write an Ethical Will

<http://www.rd.com/health/wellness/how-to-write-an-ethical-will/>

Celebrations of Life: Ethical Will Examples

<https://celebrationsoflife.net/ethicalwills/examples/>

NPR - This I Believe: Engages listeners in a discussion of core beliefs that guide their daily lives

<http://www.npr.org/series/4538138/this-i-believe>

The Urban School of San Francisco - Telling Their Stories: Read, Watch, and Listen to Student Interviews of Elders Who Witnessed Key Historic Events of the 20th Century

<http://www.tellingstories.org/index.html>

Support Group Information

Lacy Doremus, LMSW, C-ASWCM, facilitates a monthly caregiver support group at 7pm at Presbyterian Village - conference room between Hearthstone and Wellness center. The address is 2000 E West Connector Austell, GA and meetings are held the last Tuesday of each month at 7pm.

About SeniorCare Options

SeniorCare Options provides Certified Aging Life Care Management throughout the Metro-Atlanta area. Our team consists of Master’s level clinicians in the fields of counseling, social work, therapeutic recreation, and registered nursing. Our backgrounds are vast and specific to the current clinical needs of our clients and their families who may be in transition, have chronic or difficult-to-manage conditions, and who require increased guidance. Our interdisciplinary focus, extensive experience, and heightened sensitivity to their specific needs prove to be an invaluable asset to families faced with the maze of options and care needs. **For more information** regarding Aging Life Care Management services, our support groups, or to inquire about requesting services for someone under your care, **please contact us at: 770-579-9177 or brandih@seniorcareopt.com.**