

## WRITING AN ETHICAL WILL

### ***What is an ethical will?***

Leaving a Last Will & Testament that distributes assets to beneficiaries can't express how you feel about them or about your life. An **ethical or legacy will** is an opportunity to share stories so they can continue to benefit future generations. It expresses your feelings about how you lived your life and your experiences (i.e. life lessons, values, wisdom, blessings, hopes, dreams). It may be communicated orally, in writing, as a video, etc. It is perhaps the most valuable intangible asset you will leave behind. An ethical will is **NOT** a legal document.

Take the time to think carefully about the words you use and the impression you want to convey. The impact of your words can last a very long time. You may want to include:

- ◆ Your greatest achievements and what gave you the greatest satisfaction and joy
- ◆ Your beliefs and philosophy
- ◆ Mistakes I have learned from
- ◆ Stories of how you acted on your values, ethics and morals
- ◆ Stories of what you learned (wisdom) from your parents, grandparents, siblings, spouse or children and that you wish to share with someone else
- ◆ Things you are grateful for
- ◆ Your hopes for the future of people who survive you, as well as your hopes for humanity
- ◆ Important events in your life and how they made you feel
- ◆ Do you have any regrets?
- ◆ Use quotes, cartoons and things that made an impression on you or made you laugh

Example of an Ethical Will

To My Beloved Family:

The most valuable asset I can leave you is the wisdom I have gained from my experiences. I hope that they will serve you well and be shared for generations to come. I give you the following:

*My greatest joys and achievements:*

*Mistakes I learned from:*

*I am grateful for:*

*Life events that made an impression on me:*

*My hopes for my family:*

*My philosophy of life and my purpose for being here:*

Always remember that no matter how serious things may appear always look for the humor in the situation. Remember to keep things in perspective. It's ok to laugh at yourself as well as at life!

Love,

Mom

Courtesy of

*Law Office of*

**Stephanie L. Schneider, P.A.**

*Board Certified Elder Law Attorney*

**1776 N. Pine Island Rd., Suite 208**

**Plantation, FL 33322**

**Phone: 954-382-1997 Fax: 954-382-9997**

**[www.fl-elderlaw.com](http://www.fl-elderlaw.com)**