

Tips for Leaving a Legacy

As we get older, many of us find ourselves wondering what our purpose is and how the world will remember us. We want to make an impact, we want our lives to mean something, we want to leave a legacy. We may believe that we need to do something grand to leave a legacy for those who come after us, however, leaving a legacy can be as simple as sharing your talents, passing on traditions and gifting in smart ways. As many seniors do not know where to start when it comes to creating their legacy, the following considerations from the [Alzheimer's Association](#)[®] can help them to begin so they can gift their family with the best lessons, experiences and memories.

- **Consider who you are and what is important to you.**
- **Ask yourself what you love and what you are good at.**
- **Is there something that you would like to be remembered for?**
- **What do you want people to know about you and your life?**
- **Are there any causes you would like to give to? What do you believe in?**

The Alzheimer's Association[®] article also provides a few ideas on how a senior's legacy can be shared with loved ones. Try the following ideas or come up with your own based on your answers to the above questions. Be sure to adapt any of these ideas to fit your interests and experiences.

- **Make a family tree or photo album.** By making a family tree, seniors allow their family to see and learn about their pasts and where they come from. Include basic details about each person and add to it as time goes by. If you would like to put pictures and stories with the names, make a family scrapbook or photo album. These allow for more room to write detailed information and history.
- **Leave personal things for grandchildren.** According to the article, a woman had videotaped herself reading stories to one of her grandchildren so that the video could be shared as time went on and other generations could continue to enjoy it. This gift was smart because it could keep being passed down to generations and because her face, spirit and personality were able to be effectively captured through video. Seniors can also write personal letters to their grandchildren to teach them what they have learned and to share their hopes for their grandchildren's lives.
- **Create a recipe book.** Take old family recipes or secret recipes and write them down so they can be recreated. Place them in binders or get them printed as a book so that they can be kept and shared for years to come. This can be taken one step further by teaching family members to cook some of the recipes, that way they get the memories and learn how to make your special recipe.
- **Tell stories and restart family traditions.** If seniors have memories and stories that they want their loved ones to know, tell them. Take your loved ones on a trip to somewhere you used to go and have memories of and tell stories there. If you and your family had traditions that slipped away over time, put some back into place and reminisce of times that you participated in the tradition.

- **Travel and do things with your family.** Taking trips and going on outings with family members may seem like a simple enough thing to do to make sure your legacy lasts, but many do not take advantage of this. Not only can spending more time with your family create a better bond, but it can also help you to create even more memories and stories that are likely to be shared. Take lots of pictures and get some souvenirs. Whether it's a trip far away or somewhere close, the opportunities for memory making and storytelling are endless.
- **Volunteer or make donations.** If you are an avid gardener, reader, artist, musician or truly love some other activity, see if there are volunteer opportunities near you. Teaching children how to play an instrument or spending time doing something you love can not only be beneficial to you, but it can help you to be remembered by others. If you are capable of donations, donate some books to the library, plant some flowers or trees, grow food for the food bank, or gift money to school art and music programs. The opportunities for leaving your legacy and gifting those other than your family are abundant and shouldn't be overlooked. Especially if giving back is important to you.

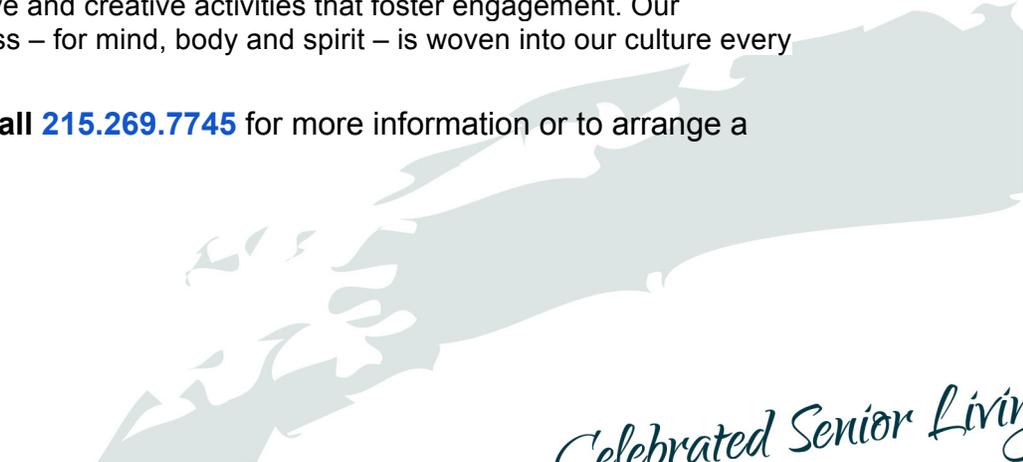
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