



Thoughtfulness – and planning – will create a legacy that celebrates your life.

Everyone's legacy looks different. For some, it's passing down something tangible to be remembered by. For others, it's furthering a cause close to the heart. For all, it should be about sharing your life's passions with the people who matter most.

Heirs may not want your big brown furniture, but they do want to know about you – and what in life excites you most. They want to learn why you love guitars or music in general. They want to understand the reasons you care so deeply about environmental issues. Whatever gives you zest in life can take many different forms and should be shared and honoured.

With some consideration and preparation, you can incorporate the loves of your life into your legacy, allowing you to live on beyond your years.

MAKE IT MEANINGFUL

When most people plan for what they'll pass on to family, they think about money and other tangible assets. But there's more to it than that. Your children and grandchildren want to feel that spark of connection. (That's apparent by the 30 million people who have taken a DNA test and started their own research about their family's history.) You're here now and can share your interests with your family. By sharing the story behind them, you can give them the true sense of appreciating and understanding you.

There are so many aspects of you – the family side, the career side, the civic side – and you can connect the dots through your legacy. There are some very personal things that make you the person you are, and those who call you "grandad" might not know those things about you.

As life caught up to you over the years, some of your hobbies

may not have had your full focus. In retirement, many people revisit old pastimes – so it's a good time to reignite those interests yourself. It may inspire you to incorporate them back into your life with the intention of passing them to family or sharing them with the wider community and younger generations.

LET YOU SHINE THROUGH

Imparting your passions will take some thought and a plan of action. Start by pondering these suggestions.

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Integrate it into everyday life. Just as your passions can be the simple pleasures of life that you enjoy, like painting or gardening, your gestures to share them with others don't always have to be grand. For example, ask your children or grandchildren to come to your art studio for a painting session or plant veggies and herbs in the community garden. Involving your family in regular activities that incorporate your interests exposes them consistently and will become engrained in how they think about you.

In the vein of regular exposure, the appreciation for your hobbies will build among family members as they see your excitement for them. It will conjure good feelings and happy memories. There's a curiosity to learn about your journey with these interests – whether it's creating something with your hands or getting involved in philanthropic causes.

Write it down. Talking about your pursuits probably comes naturally because it's incorporated in your daily life. Don't stop

socializing about your passions, but also consider writing about them and why they're important to you. This is something that can be kept and passed down through generations.

Feeling creative? Create a scrapbook of how your passion has evolved through the years. That would be fun for you to reflect on – and reinforce your enthusiasm – as you put it together.

Gift something special. Gift-giving is probably the first way you think about sharing your interests. But consider getting creative with your gifting. If your passion is woodworking, for example, make each grandchild a puzzle or a playhouse when they're little. Then, as they get older, think about gifting tools to teach them woodworking. Those tools may become prized possessions over time, regardless of how deep they get into the craft. They'll revel in the memories of you teaching them how to plane or bevel with the tools you gave them.

As you consider sharing your craft with those outside your family, think about philanthropic efforts associated with your passion. For instance, you might leave financial gifts to an artists' guild, art studio or gallery that celebrates your woodworking craft, or donate to a local high school to upgrade their woodworking shop as a nod to the teacher who got you into it in the first place.

To pass down your passion in a meaningful way, it will take thoughtfulness, creativity and organisation. But these efforts will be worth it to ensure your legacy will be remembered the way you want. It will give your family warm memories of you that will celebrate the life you lived and offer a glimpse to others of your spirit and generosity.

NEXT STEPS

As you consider:

- Reflect on what you desire your family to know about (the whole) you
- Share stories surrounding your passions in regular interactions with people who matter most
- Talk to your wealth manager about how to best gift assets that align with the vision of your legacy

Sources: [slate.com](https://www.slate.com); [nextavenue.org](https://www.nextavenue.org)