

## PRIMER ON ETHICAL WILLS

Ethical wills are a way for you to share who you are with your family and friends.

Ethical wills are written by people who want to leave a written or recorded legacy of their life to their family and friends as a remembrance of who they were. An ethical will is **not** a legal document. Your Last Will and Testament or your Revocable Living Trust will provide what is legally necessary to ensure a smooth administrative transition after your death. But an ethical will leaves part of *you* after your death. Every ethical will is as unique as the person writing it. An ethical will may be one of the most cherished and meaningful gifts you leave your loved ones.

If you are interest in creating your own ethical will, write down your ideas - a few words about things like:

- Your Beliefs, Values and Opinions
- Life Lessons
- Humorous Stories
- Family History
- Turning Points
- Hopes and Dreams
- Family Legacy
- Regrets
- Spiritual Beliefs
- Forgiveness

You may want to write one ethical will for all of your loved ones, or write a separate ethical will for each person who is important to you.

An ethical will can be one page or twenty pages. If you are a good writer, you can write your ethical will by hand or type it on the computer. If it is easier for you, you can tape record your thoughts or even videotape your ethical will. Some people have dictated their ethical wills and had them transcribed. Use whatever method works best for you.

If you want further inspiration, you can go on-line and read samples of ethical wills. One site, [www.ethicalwill.com](http://www.ethicalwill.com), provides several examples of ethical wills written by people of all ages.

If you are truly courageous, you may want to read your ethical will to your loved ones while you are still alive.

Good luck!