



TEXAS
METHODIST
FOUNDATION
STEWARDSHIP POTENTIAL

YOUR *Generosity* MATTERS:

Passing Your Story on to Your Loved Ones





Your Story of Generosity

Planning your philanthropic giving is a meaningful way to share your personal story and leave a lasting legacy. Through the people, places, ideas, and values that have shaped your life, your charitable contributions weave together the past, present, and future you envision—continuing to inspire and positively affect others, even after you're gone.

Creating a plan for your assets and resources after you pass is essential. Equally important is crafting a plan to share your personal story of generosity and a vision of the future—one

that can inspire and guide your family, friends, and loved ones who wish to help carry that story forward.

The questions and exercises provided here will help you capture your unique story in the best way possible, serving as a valuable resource for your loved ones to honor and continue your philanthropic legacy.

Your Philanthropic Autobiography

**A RESOURCE FROM REV. DR. WILLIAM ENRIGHT FROM
THE LAKE INSTITUTE ON FAITH AND GIVING**

The Philanthropic Autobiography is an opportunity for you to reflect on who you are and to think deeply and consciously about your involvement when it comes to giving and volunteering. It is also an opportunity to reflect on how you came to learn about and experience charitable giving, and what motivates you to volunteer your time, share your expertise, and give your money for the benefit of others. The following questions will help you explore, shape, and highlight your unique and personal philanthropic story.

1. What is your earliest memory of giving or receiving?

2. Did your family talk about money in your home? What did you learn from your family about giving and volunteering?

3. To what people and places do you feel a sense of gratitude?

4. What is the most meaningful or memorable gift you have ever received?

5. What values/things do you hold most dear?

6. How do you want to be remembered by your family and friends?



Your Letter to a Loved One

Many people in life make us better. Writing a letter to them is a way for you to convey your gratitude and love to those who have made an impact and a difference in your life. Do this with as many people as you like and feel free to use the following as a guide:

- Begin your letter with a broad statement of love and admiration. Be very specific and tailor each letter to the individual.
- Be concise. The length of the letter is not what expresses the magnitude of your love, it is the care and thought you put into it that does.
- Include concrete examples of the ways the person impacted your life. This way, they will know they have been seen, heard, and known for the person they are.
- Share stories about how the individual has made your life happier, richer, and more meaningful. Be specific about how they made these impressions on your life.
- Leave judgment out of the equation. Lean into positivity and encouragement.
- If you wish to give direction, put it in the form of your hopes and dreams for the person.
- Think of this letter as a gift to make your loved one's future brighter and their grief more bearable.



Newspaper and/or Digital Notice

A newspaper notice or obituary plays a significant role in preserving your legacy. It notifies the community of your passing and shares details about any funeral or memorial services. This notice serves as a tribute, celebrating your life, achievements, and impact, while offering family and friends a space to connect and begin the healing process. It also provides an opportunity for the community to acknowledge the loss, offering comfort and a sense of solidarity to those who are grieving. In addition to a newspaper notice, you may also want to share this with your friends and family digitally, either on a platform such as Facebook, a personal blog, or in an email.

Other Information I Want Known

When loved ones are grieving, it can be difficult to think about or know how you would like to be remembered—being as specific with your wishes as possible is another act of generosity. To get started, you can speak with your pastor and consider the following:

1. Do you want your remains to be buried, cremated, entombed, or donated? If cremated, should your ashes be buried or scattered?

2. Do you want flowers or memorial gifts sent in your honor? If so, where should they be sent?

3. Where do you want your service and who do you want to be there?

4. Do you have any favorite scripture passages or other readings you would like recited for the funeral or memorial service?

5. Do you have any favorite hymns or songs you would like to be played or sung?

6. Who would you like to be invited to speak/share remembrances at your service?

7. Who would you like to be your pallbearers?





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