

# The Importance of Having a Will



The time of a death can be extremely stressful for those who have to deal with it. Intense emotions, difficulty communicating, confusion and loss of appetite are common. It's natural to feel anxiety when faced with mortality, but planning ahead can lessen the burden. With a plan in place, stress is reduced for those experiencing the loss and time spent searching for documents, getting informed about options and determining a plan can be applied instead to acknowledging the loss, remembering and getting a start on the road to healing.

Having a proper will in place is probably the number one thing you can do to save time, money and stress for those caring for your estate. Without one, your family member may go through a lengthy process to be appointed administrator and delays carrying out funeral arrangements and dealing with the business of your estate could result. This only adds financial strain for those handling things and leaves openings for disagreement among family. Even if your assets are few, having a will in place ensures a smooth process for your executor and saves time, money and stress in the long run.

As far as funeral arrangements go, a little research can make those decisions easier. A prearrangement form is a good place to start. With space to note vital information needed at the time of a death and outline your plan, this is a handy way to get all your important information in one place saving your family time and energy and ensuring government notifications happen promptly. Phone or visit a funeral director and/or cemetery to see what options exist. Ask questions. You may find some things could be simpler or more complicated than you imagined. Knowing what's involved gives you a chance to create a concrete plan that will actually work and ensure that the appropriate funds will be available when needed.

A decision between cremation and burial must be made, but there is more to consider. Do you have special requests that your family/executor should know? Are you wanting the simplest possible arrangements and no service or do you imagine family and friends may have a need to participate? If your wishes include cemetery, is there a plot available you may use? If cemetery is not desired, what should be done with the cremated remains and do you have someone willing to carry out your instructions? Is it important to allow a chance for family that may need to view your body before disposition? Maybe you have cultural traditions to be followed or maybe you want to craft a personalised plan meaningful for those surviving you? Having some of these questions answered will guide you in planning and give your family confidence that they are honouring your wishes.

Communication plays a vital role in this. You will want to discuss options with your family to ensure that their needs are being met. If you have made a plan, your executor and/or family should know about it and know where to find your instructions.

Having a healthy discussion about death relieves anxiety by allowing opportunity for families to express feelings and support one another. In my experience, most people find making a plan for their own arrangements has lifted a big load off their mind. For those handling things at the time of a death when pre-arrangements were made, expressions of relief for how simple everything was are very common.

Knowing as we do now how much stress and anxiety can negatively affect our quality of life, you and your family may even live a longer, happier life by making a plan.

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