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Perspectives

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Plan For Every Aspect of Life—Including the End of It.

Leave your loved ones with clarity and inspiration.

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By Mark Colgan, CFP | Posted: 12-01-10 | 01:41 PM | E-mail Article

I had a breakthrough recently that I want to share with you. As a financial planning professional, for years I've spoken to clients about their goals. They're dreams. They're vision for the future. And I've done all I can to help them achieve their own goals and provide for future generations. I felt I had helped my clients plan their legacy.

The truth is, a legacy is much more than the things we have and the money it took to buy them.

If you already have a financial advisor, you have surely had many conversations about your financial goals, and that's important. However, there are things beyond material goods that should part of your financial and estate plans. You should also consider talking about the "soft side" of your estate—the personal and practical details that should be shared with your loved ones. It should include such things as your values, memories and final wishes—information that is too valuable to risk being lost.

Let's get more specific. A couple of years ago, a client of mine called and told me that he had terminal cancer. He wanted to proactively document everything he could think of (both personal and practical) that would be beneficial to his wife. He had

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### About the Author

Mark Colgan, CFP® is a nationally recognized legacy planning expert and president of Plan Your Legacy, LLC. Inspired by the challenges he faced as a widower, he authored The Survivor Assistance Handbook and created [www.planyourlegacy.com](http://www.planyourlegacy.com) a powerful program that preserves client's values, memories and final wishes to ensure they leave loved ones with clarity and inspiration. Mark can be reached at 585-419-2324 or [mcolgan@planyourlegacy.com](mailto:mcolgan@planyourlegacy.com).

everything that mattered to him would be passed on to those he loved. Imagine the peace of mind he had, knowing that instead of a tangled web of unanswered questions, his loved ones would have all the information they would need and long for.

**Planning your legacy provides your survivors with clarity and inspiration when they're needed most. Your personal legacy plan will:**

- Safeguard loved ones from the confusion and conflict that plagues families after a death.
- Provide clear guidance about care for your children and/or grandchildren, pets, etc.
- Ensure your values and memories will continue to be preserved for generations.

If you agree there are things beyond material goods that should part of your financial and estate plans, have a quick talk about personal legacy planning with your financial advisor. With a little commitment, you can create a legacy plan that will provide your loved ones with clarity and inspiration rather than confusion and pain.

already taken care of his estate plan and made sure she was okay financially — but he was more concerned about her emotional well-being and her ability to move forward after he died.

When I told him about the concept of personal legacy planning, he was relieved. He was able to document practical information about things such as his funeral arrangements, maintaining the household, his plans for the kids, and the location of important documents. He was also delighted to share important personal messages such as thoughts about how and why he loved his wife, favorite memories about their family vacations to Florida, his views on religion, and other philosophical thoughts that he felt could positively impact future generations. The legacy planning process helped him gain clarity and confidence that

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