
How to Write Your Heart Will

Form + Function

Your Heart Will is a platform or tool to help you reflect on your life and create lasting messages for those you love, and/or future generations. There's no one way to do this and there are many and varied ways to make this your unique expression. There are endless topics you might choose to address and share. These include your wisdom, wishes, values, beliefs, hopes, dreams, ideals, life lessons, regrets, family history and stories about your journey.

What we're calling a Heart Will is also referred to as an Ethical Will, Spiritual/Spirit Will or Legacy Letter. You may want a copy of your Heart Will to be given to specific people at the end of your life, it may be something you direct others to share at a goodbye ritual or ceremony after you die, and/or it may become an heirloom for passing on within your family or community of friends. For the radicals in the house, you might even choose to share your Heart Will ... before you die!

Instructions

Identify who you would want to have a copy of your Heart Will, when you imagine it being read, by who or to whom. Use the following themes and their juicy questions to inspire or guide your writing or recording. Read the questions below and mark the ones that speak most to you and begin there. Write for 15 minutes a day, and see what you accomplish in one week.

You may craft your Heart Will in handwriting on the first go or you might write many drafts on your computer. If writing is difficult, then use an audio recorder and maybe get someone else to transcribe it later. You may be drawn to capturing your messages in a multimedia file complete with audio and visual components. It all works. Trust yourself and trust your process.

Like any "will", it would be wise to review and update this document as life unfolds and things change for you.

Your Story, Your People

- Where do you come from? Who are your people? Share stories, describe events, special sayings, recipes or rituals that create a sense of who came before you or who and what influenced your life.
- What are your most cherished family (birth or chosen) traditions that have been passed down from others?
- What life events, be they personal, community-wide or socio-political were pivotal in you becoming who you are?
- List your greatest achievements, passions, or most joy-filled moments in life, and why you see them as such.

Values

- List your five most important values and explain how they've served you or impacted your life.
- If the people you love were to remember only three things about you, what would you want them to remember?
- What would you want written on your grave marker (other than names and dates) if you were to have one?
- How would you describe yourself to a future family member (birth or chosen family), who will not have met you in person?

Life Lessons

- When in your life have you felt most alive or the most like yourself? What advice does this make you think about for others?
- If you could change something about the way you've lived so far, what would it be and why? What life lessons does this evoke?
- What are some of the best choices you've made in your life and why?
- On what did you ever feel like you wasted time or energy? How does this inform any wisdom you have to share?

Spiritual Journey

- How would you explain to people you love what will happen to you after you die?
- What ideas or beliefs do you hold about your connection to something bigger than yourself? How has this made a difference in your life?
- What advice would you offer a loved one about the role of community in one's spiritual journey?

Gratitude

- Name the people in your life without whom you would be a different and less authentic you. What was their gift?
- Describe the circumstances that enabled you to be who you are and accomplish what you have.
- What precious possessions do you want to pass onto others and why?
- If you could or intend to leave resources to a charity, which one or more would you choose and what do you hope will be accomplished with those resources?

Seeking Forgiveness

- In what ways do you need to forgive yourself?
- With whom do you need to consider issues of forgiveness: seeking, accepting and bestowing?
- How has the beauty of forgiveness (of self and of others) impacted your life?

Writing your Heart Will is a powerful discovery process that supports you to live fully now and create lasting memories for those you love. Beginnings are acts of courage and the act of reading this guide is a beginning. We celebrate your courage and are cheering you on. For more support around writing your Heart Will, please visit us at www.willowEoL.com and consider signing up for our email list where you'll get more tools, resources, stories and inspiration delivered directly to you.

"You have begun; and to make a real beginning is the most difficult act...

A good beginning is half the work."

John O'Donohue, *Benedictus: A Book of Blessings*