

When I decided to write on the topic for today, difficult as it seemed at the time, I began to think about how many pathways one could travel and explore while composing such an essay. There are so many directions in which to go, I hardly knew where to begin. In spite of our best intentions, our mortality eventually catches up to us. That leaves our legacies in the control of those who follow us. Anything we wish to pass on has to be done on this side of the "final curtain." Some of us leave as a legacy, material things. We accumulate whatever we can with the intent of passing it on to our children. However, financial advisors tell us that financial wealth is often all gone within two generations. Probably the most important inheritance we can pass on would be our lessons about life, and our values: practical, moral and spiritual.

I asked myself what is the most important thing I would want to be remembered for and what am I doing to ensure my descendants know about it. I think I would like to be remembered as the person who tried to preserve all the family pictures and documents so the younger generations would have some idea of who their ancestors were. I would like them to remember me as a kind and caring person who dedicated her life to her family- maybe a little colorful at times, but still lovable!

We can pass on to our children and succeeding generations our brown eyes or our blonde and curly hair. Idiosyncrasies and certain looks or gestures, a proclivity for certain talents are often apparent in our progeny. I believe one of the most important attributes that we can hand down is a sense of humor. Without that, life can be an unhappy and bumpy journey. Remember, laugh and the world laughs with you, cry, and you cry alone,

I read recently read about an African proverb regarding the two stages of dying. The first stage is Sasha. These are people who have passed away physically but the living still remember them and tell their stories. So the Sasha are not dead yet. The other stage is Zamani. They have also passed away physically but the living no longer remember them or tell their stories. Zamani are truly dead. Will you be a Sasha or a Zamani?

An interviewer once asked Woody Allen If he wanted to live on in the hearts of his fans through his work. He replied: "I'd rather live on in my apartment." Clever and witty, but it's not going to happen. Plan now to leave your legacy. Whatever that may be will be enduring, valuable and precious to those to whom you are passing it on.