

THE ALLIANZ AMERICAN LEGACIES STUDY

Family talking points

The subject of legacy is a complex and emotional topic that is often difficult to discuss with family members, yet is very important. Communicating with your family about legacy issues helps to ensure that each family member's wishes, hopes, fears, and key issues are discussed, thereby eliminating potential conflicts and pain farther down the road.

Successful legacy planning requires the members of a family to engage in deep and meaningful discussions. Families who have engaged in legacy planning report that the process is fulfilling for everyone involved. There is a sense of relief and comfort in knowing that everyone in the family understands each other's priorities and issues.

A true legacy is much more than just leaving your money behind. Legacy covers all facets of an individual's life, from family traditions, history, values, and wishes, to financial inheritance. To engage in a meaningful legacy conversation with your family that will result in shared outcomes and be representative of each family member's personal point of view, we suggest you begin to discuss each of the four pillars of legacy: (1) Values and life lessons, (2) Instructions and wishes to be fulfilled, (3) Personal possessions of emotional value, and (4) Financial assets or real estate. The following are some recommended guidelines to assist you in starting a conversation with your family about the four pillars of legacy.



Pillar 1: Values and life lessons

Ethics and moral teachings

- What values would you like to see continued throughout your family's generations?
- What are important principles that guide your family?
- Is there a specific lesson or teaching that you would like to impart to future generations?
- Are there contributions to society that you have made for which you would like to be remembered?

Faith and religion

- What religious traditions would you like to see continued throughout the generations?
- Do you have religious convictions that provide guidance for your life and your family's?
- Can you recall religious stories or events from your history or past generations that have had an impact on your life?
- Do you have specific religious items that you would like to see passed down to future generations?
- Do you currently make contributions to a religious institution or organization?

Family traditions and stories

- What family history would you like to see passed down through the generations?
- Are there specific traditions or ways that you currently celebrate holidays and life events?
- Do you have annual family trips, reunions, or gatherings with friends?
- Do you have favorite family stories? Are they documented?



Pillar 2: Instructions and wishes to be fulfilled

Health and well-being directives

- Do you have specific wishes for medical treatment if you become seriously ill?
- Have you named a specific health care advocate who can speak on your behalf?
- Is there a family member you might confide in or want to assist you in medical matters?
- Do you have insurance or a financial plan to cover the cost associated with long term care?
- Do you have directives for life-support measures?

Living arrangements

- How and where do you want to live as you grow older?
- Are you considering a move to be closer to family or friends?
- Is there a specific retirement or assisted living community you have considered?
- Have you designated someone who could help you with maintenance, meals, cleaning, or security at your current residence?
- Do you have a financial plan to cover the costs associated with these living arrangements?

Final wishes and directives

- What are your final wishes and directives to be followed at the time of your passing? Who should be the primary person responsible to ensure that these wishes are followed?
- Do you have instructions for the executor of your will and the trustee of your trust?
- Do you have specific ideas for funeral arrangements, burial, cremation, etc.?



Pillar 3: Personal possessions of emotional value

Belongings of emotional value

- What items of emotional value would you like to see passed on to future generations?
- Do you have collections or memorabilia that hold emotional value to you or your loved ones?
- How would you designate the distribution of these items?
- Are your family members aware of your wishes?

Pictures, journals, and family history

- Are there items that document your life and/or family's life that you would like to see passed on to future generations?
- Where do you keep your family photos – in albums or saved electronically, or other?
- Do you have any journals, diaries, scrapbooks, family history, or other important documents you would like to pass on?
- How would you designate the distribution of these items?

Household items

- Are there items in your household that hold significant emotional value, though they may not have much financial value?
- Do you have toys, books, or mementos that you would like to pass on to your children or grandchildren?
- Are there other household items such as art, crafts, or furniture that evoke fond memories for you and your family?
- Have you planned for the distribution of your household items?



Pillar 4: Financial assets or real estate

Items of financial value

- Are there items of financial value that you would like to see passed on to future generations?
- Do you have antiques, art, china, jewelry, or other items of value?
- Have you had these items appraised recently?
- Do you have a plan for the disbursement or sale of these items?

Residence and other real estate

- What real estate assets would you like to see passed on to future generations?
- Do you have a plan for your current residence?
- Do you have a vacation home or timeshare you would like to see passed on to your heirs?
- Do you own rental property or commercial property?

Financial assets and liabilities

- How would you like to see your financial assets (savings, investment, and retirement accounts) dispersed?
- Do you have insurance policies such as life insurance or long term care insurance?
- How will any business interests be handled?
- Have trusts been created?
- Do you plan on leaving any gifts to charities or other organizations?
- What are your liabilities (mortgage, loans, automatic bill payment, etc.)?



Additional tips for family discussion

- Aim to include all four pillars of legacy in your conversation. Too often families talk about only part of the family legacy they want to carry on.
- Begin the family legacy conversation by talking about values and life lessons. This discussion will help bring the family together about what is important to everyone.
- Have a complete conversation about everyone's legacy priorities. You may be surprised what other family members feel is most important. For example, adult children often place a much higher value on last wishes and instructions than their parents might expect.

- Try not to wait until an illness or health scare occurs to begin your legacy conversation. Emotions and sensitivities run high at these times. Look to make legacy discussions an ongoing event on the day after Thanksgiving or another occasion when all family members are together.
- Include grandchildren in the conversation and process to develop an ongoing tradition of family legacy discussions.
- Be creative in communicating your legacy priorities. For example, you could:
 - Create a video of your parents in which they talk about their life experiences and legacy. Include some of their closest friends and other family members who can talk about your parents' lives and values.
 - Write a journal about the family legacy, describing what you think is most important to carry on from generation to generation.
 - Create a scrapbook or photo album to bring to life all the memories that should be carried on by future generations.

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