

A BEAUTIFUL LEGACY

What carries on after we are gone? Our children? Grandchildren? A work of art? A business? A bank account? Charitable foundations?



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Garning financial wealth to pass down to one's children can be one form of legacy. Traditionally, that has been the case. If that's your goal, you will probably seek out good financial advisors, read investment books and become proficient in saving and investing. Our country boasts plenty of folks who succeed at leaving money to their children.

As you begin a new year, look at other forms of legacy. After retirement, my aunt took painting classes. Her works – mostly flowers and other still life images – evoke many beautiful feelings when I look at them. Her children and grandchildren get to enjoy them all the time. She left a beautiful legacy.

Another form of legacy that I have witnessed flows from doing spiritual work. People who choose to do yoga, pray the rosary, or work a 12-step program to break dysfunctional cycles. Having been raised in high stress families where an unconscious future would have simply perpetrated pain, these people give their children and communities the opportunity for new healthy futures that otherwise would have been impossible.

I admire the man who took his father's small business and built it into multiple businesses, run with integrity, and which provide jobs and generate income for his family. He created a legacy that will generate financial resources for his family and support local charities. My heart sings when I read Facebook posts from friends (some of whom are former clients) celebrating the success of their children – graduations, proms, weddings, new babies.

All of these experiences help me explore – what will be my legacy?

Walking home from a babysitting job in the seventh grade, I thought to myself, "The world needs good people. I want to be the mother of good kids." As an adult, reflecting on that thought, it pointed to a legacy I wanted to create – children nurtured so they could carry on with more good thoughts, words and deeds. Now with two teenagers of my own, I feel that I've done that.

What will your legacy be?