

Do You Think It Is Important To Leave A Legacy?

By: Roger M. Ingbretsen

One hundred years from now, will anyone know who you were? Will people remember your name? Will descendants tell stories about you? Will you have left a mark that says, "You were here?"

Many people believe they have nothing of importance to pass on, except possibly an insurance policy for their immediate family. This is fairly close to the truth considering most people can relate very few stories and with the exception of a tattered photograph, have little information about their great-grandparents. Even within the confines of the family, within two short generations a legacy is lost.

The dictionary defines legacy as money or property bequeathed to someone in a will or something handed down from an ancestor or predecessor. I accept this sterile, if not cold, definition of the word legacy, but I also believe it can have a much more rich, vibrant and exciting meaning if you look at it from a more proactive slant.

What if you look at the word legacy as, "The trail you make, the mark you leave, and the impact your life has on others on a daily basis." Your legacy could then be the little things you do, those moments everyday when you touch the lives of others in a positive way. It could be the legacy of a listening ear, of good advice or of compassionate understanding. Yours could be the legacy of mentoring, coaching, and teaching others you come in contact with on a daily basis.

It is both nice and right to receive accolades, win awards, and be presented with trophies for a great performance or accomplishment; however, the moment is quickly over, the nice words soon forgotten and the gleaming trophies left to gather dust. If you are like most people, you will not become famous, wealthy or talented enough to seal a place in world history, but that does not mean that you should not seek to live, love, learn, and leave your legacy for this is what gives your life meaning.

By their actions, ordinary people have made great contributions to humankind. Throughout history, armies of people have secured freedom for the oppressed, grown food for the starving, nursed the sick, and taught others the skills required to care of themselves. I believe the highest forms a legacy can take are those of contribution and of service. What type of legacy are you leaving on a daily basis for those who follow behind you?

Just like the insurance policy you pay into over time, or the tangible wealth you accumulate throughout your life, the legacy of who you are is developed and built

Roger Ingbretsen

www.ingbretsen.com

upon the actions of what you do every day of your life. With this in mind, consider the following questions.

Are you contributing time, money or effort to your community?
Are you offering your talents in service to others?
Are you planting and nurturing an idea that can benefit your family and community?
Are you helping to create positive change for the greater good?
Are you constantly working to build win-win relationships?
Are you encouraging others to be all that they can be?
Are you a teacher, mentor or coach for a family member, friend or coworker?
Are you continually inquiring, reading, learning, growing and applying new knowledge and encouraging others to do the same?
Are you attempting to live an exemplary life at home, work and in your community?
Are you respected more for what you do rather than who you are?

If you are to mark your presence in the ledger of history, why not make your day-to-day life a living legacy. Think about your talents, skills and interests. Where can they best be applied in your home, church, workplace or community? Why not consciously and with purpose, build a legacy rather than leaving it to chance? Why not enjoy building your life story, rich in its awareness of others, full of contributions toward the greater good and content in the accomplishments derived from the passion to live life to the fullest.

If you could play back a video of your day, would it be a positive picture you could be proud of? Ask yourself, what type of legacy do I leave behind every day? Every week? Every year? The question is not are you leaving a legacy, or is it important to leave a legacy, but rather, what is the legacy? If you choose to do nothing, that will be your legacy. If you choose to find a satisfying purpose and direction that will make your life meaningful, that will be the legacy you leave.

Consider these thoughts. If you move or change jobs, will those you leave, miss the impact you had on their lives? Will they tell good stories about you? Will your family, friends, coworkers and community be better off because you were there? Believe that your legacy is worth living and your beliefs will create that fact.