

# Creating a Legacy Document

*“Carve your name on hearts, not tombstones. A legacy is etched into the minds of others and the stories they share about you.”*

—Shannon L. Alder

## What is legacy work?

Legacy work is an opportunity to build your legacy and make connections with people in your life. Through legacy work, you can share:

- Your passion, what you love
- What you have learned in your life
- Experiences and how they have changed you
- Your values and how your experiences have shaped them

## Why should I do legacy work now?

An illness offers you a chance to:

- Recall the joys and sorrows of your life
- Think about the lessons you learned
- Pass on those lessons to the people who are important in your life

## How do I pass on my legacy?

- Create or do something that you are passionate about, such as poetry, artwork, music, or jewelry.
- Create an oral history – see below for how to do this:
  - Step 1: Create a list of questions. Visit StoryCorps for ideas: [storycorps.org/participate/great-questions/](https://storycorps.org/participate/great-questions/)
  - Step 2: Record your answers (video, audio only, or written)
    - Download the StoryCorps app for tools to help you prepare interview questions and to record conversations on your cell phone. Ask family, a friend, or a Spiritual Health clinician to help you.

### *How do I pass on my legacy? Continued*

- Create a scrapbook with pictures to go with your stories.
- Create an ethical will or legacy letter. These pieces often include:
  - What is important for you to leave behind
  - Words of love
  - Requests for forgiveness
  - Your values, desires
  - Blessings (either in your life or for others)

### **Where can I learn more?**

Contact Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center’s Spiritual Health team at (206) 606-1099 or [spiritualhealth@seattlecca.org](mailto:spiritualhealth@seattlecca.org) to learn more about legacy work. Our team is eager to partner with you on this important and meaningful project. You can also visit these websites for more information:

- [storycorps.org](http://storycorps.org)
- [seattletimes.com/sponsored/create-an-oral-history-to-share-your-familys-experience](http://seattletimes.com/sponsored/create-an-oral-history-to-share-your-familys-experience)
- [aarp.org/caregiving/financial-legal/info-2018/ethical-will.html](http://aarp.org/caregiving/financial-legal/info-2018/ethical-will.html)
- [sandiegouniontribune.com/news/religion/story/2022-01-09/what-are-ethical-wills-theyre-a-beautiful-gift-for-generations-to-come](http://sandiegouniontribune.com/news/religion/story/2022-01-09/what-are-ethical-wills-theyre-a-beautiful-gift-for-generations-to-come)
- [psychologytoday.com/us/blog/one-true-thing/201709/new-book-how-write-forever-letter](http://psychologytoday.com/us/blog/one-true-thing/201709/new-book-how-write-forever-letter)

**Please contact Spiritual Health if you would like to do legacy work.**

**We are eager to help you.**

**(206) 606-1099**

**[spiritualhealth@seattlecca.org](mailto:spiritualhealth@seattlecca.org)**

*“A legacy is a gift. It comes from our experiences, challenges, and successes in life. We can pass this gift onto future generations by sharing our stories and our wisdom.”*

—Carol Kummet

Reference:

Kummet, Carol. UWMC Palliative Care Social Worker. *The Last Gift: Moving through grief by leaving a legacy*. Retrieved from [slideplayer.com/slide/7742667](http://slideplayer.com/slide/7742667)