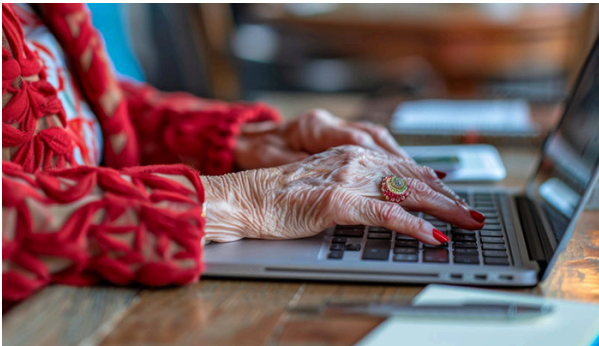


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Writing a memoir, with a twist



Are you reflecting on life and its lessons? With so many options for self-publishing, writing a memoir may appeal. The process generates a new perspective on the meaning of one's life. The end result lets future generations learn about you and their forebears. Find writing kits and courses online, such as Writers.com.

One thought to consider: Creating a chronological review can be unwieldy. It suggests you'll present things with

accuracy. Besides, recounting dates, locations, and events is just not fun or inspirational! Plus, you may have concerns about offending someone in the way you tell your stories. That can leech the joy out of the project.

You may find it more meaningful to tell your story in terms of the lessons you have learned. This is sometimes called an "ethical will." You want to bequeath your wisdom to the next generation. In an ethical will, you tell the stories of how you came to hold the personal values you now cherish.

Using this format, think about major challenges or crossroads in your life. When you ran into trouble or things didn't transpire as expected, how did you resolve the situation? What did you learn? For instance, one chapter might be "How I learned the power of forgiveness." Another could be "The time I got fired, or how I learned to value myself." A third might be "When one door shuts, it allows another to open." There's self-discovery in this process. Sharing your transformations and challenges also reveals your humanity. It enables younger family members to understand that everyone can stumble. Sharing how you picked yourself up shines a light forward for them. Consider a kit from FeetToTheFireWriters.com (tagline: You provide the memories. We help you grow).

You can include apologies, acknowledging regret and describing what you might have done if you had had the maturity and insight you now possess. You can also express gratitude to specific others, like a thank-you note for what you received.

Creating an ethical will is a gift to your family as well as yourself. Noted psychologist Erik Erikson observed that identifying the meaning of one's life is the primary task of the elder. Reflecting on the past within the context of what you have learned can help you get a new perspective on the disparate threads that weave the integrated story of how you became who you are.

And don't feel limited to writing. These days you can create collage books, audiobooks, video memoirs, a PowerPoint. You can write a poem or compose a song. Explore the options!

**As you reflect on the past, consider life plans for your future.
Contact the experts in aging well: 206-456-5155**



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206-456-5155

Aging Wisdom supports individuals and families in King and south Snohomish Counties as they plan for aging.



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