“How to Live Forever”: Leaving a Personal Legacy for Future Generations

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This workshop was inspired by Marc Freedman. When I heard him talk about his book on May 23, 2019, I was reminded how important it is for each of us to consciously focus on the legacy that we leave for future generations.

Freedman, Marc. *How to Live Forever: The Enduring Power of Connecting the Generations*.

New York: Hachette Book Group, 2018.

The follow excerpt probably best summarizes what his book is all about: “The only true way to endure is to accept our mortality and with it the wisdom that we are a species designed to live on . . . just not literally. We do so by passing on, from generation to generation, what we’ve learned from life. By investing in and connecting with the next generation, not actually *trying* to be that generation” (p. 21).

**Some Quotations to Ponder**

“Carve your name on hearts, not tombstones. A legacy is etched into the minds of others and the stories they share about you.” —Shannon Adler (inspirational author)

“All good men and women must take responsibility to create legacies that will take the next generation to a level we could only imagine.” —Jim Rohn (entrepreneur and speaker)

“The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it.” —William James

“Please think about your legacy because you are writing it every day.” —Gary Vaynerchuk (entrepreneur)

“If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead, either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.” —Benjamin Franklin

“It is up to us to live up to the legacy that was left for us, and to leave a legacy that is worthy of our children and of future generations.”—Christine Gregoire (former governor of Washington)

“Are we being good ancestors?”―Jonas Salk (medical researcher)

“No legacy is so rich as honesty.”—William Shakespeare

“I am what survives me.”—Erik Erikson (developmental psychologist)

**Questions for Writing**

None of the following questions come from Freedman’s work. Rather, as I have reflected on his work, I have thought about the ways that we can write about the legacies that we leave for others—family, friends, co-workers, the community.

1. What do you value most in life?
2. Alternatively, what values are most important to you?
3. How have your values (or what you value) guided your journey through life?
4. How will your values shape the memories that friends and family have of you now and when you are gone?
5. What legacy are you leaving for future generations?
6. Why is your legacy important to you? To others?
7. How do you hope that your legacy will make a difference in people’s lives?
8. When did you first realize that you are leaving a legacy for future generations? What caused you to come to that realization?
9. If you were to craft an epitaph to summarize your legacy, what would it say?
10. What is a meaningful legacy that someone else has left for you?
11. How do I want family and friends to remember you?
12. What stories to you tell about your life to communicate what you value?
13. How will your life/your legacy connect you to future generations?