

LEGACY

Young students: This is what people remember about us!

Older students/teens/adults: A gift, lesson, or reputation handed down from one person or group to another.

Dear Dr. Robyn,

There seems to be such a lack of connection these days with all these cell phones and text messages. Who really knows anyone anymore? I really want to preserve my family history and help my children see where they come from. Any suggestions?

- KatieAnn D, Durham, NC

Dear KatieAnn,

What a beautiful idea! I think it's wonderful that you want to help preserve your family history and use your family's story to teach your children.

People often think of the "treasures" someone leaves behind in terms of money, jewelry and other assets. But as Mark Hayes Daniell writes in *Family Legacy and Leadership*: "Family legacy encompasses all that a family holds dear and wants to preserve for the future – the histories, values, knowledge and experience that are just as essential as a family's financial assets."

I agree, don't you? So what should we think about when we are trying to preserve our family's legacy?

(1) Tell stories: Whenever your family gathers, be sure to tell family stories. How did your great, great grandparents meet? What business were your great

grandparents in and what were their struggles? What did your Great Aunt always say? Notable skills? Jobs? Possessions? The more people know about their family history, the more likely that family history will be preserved for future generations.

(2) Interview: Don't wait. Interview parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles about their lives, their accomplishments, favorite moments, successes and challenges. What have they learned? What were their dreams? What do they know now that they wish they knew when they were younger? Any advice?

(3) Document: These days there are so many ways to document people's stories. Video taping, of course, allows the story-teller to tell his or her own story. You can also transcribe stories into print. Have your children "illustrate" the stories. They can also help you to gather photos to place next to the stories in a book that you can pass down through the generations.

**POWERFUL
WORDS**
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

<< Paraphrased from an email; with permission

(4) Ask; How do we want to be remembered? We have control over how we live our own lives. Thus we have control over how we will be known by others while living and how we will likely be remembered for generations to come. Ask your children, "how do you want to be remembered?" Then, talk about living your life in accordance with the values for which you want to be known.

Here's to your success!

