

The Unique Power Behind Storytelling

Family Legacy. You may hear the phrase often, but have you ever stopped to ask yourself what family legacy means to you? For some, it may be passing on those tightknit family traditions and values. For others, it is redefining those values or embracing new ones for future generations to follow.

However you choose to define it, your legacy is the story you will leave behind in the world. It is never too early or too late to take steps towards shaping your family's narrative. Each day gives you an opportunity to share an inspiring vision for generations to come.

The core of your legacy likely begins with a story that you have carried with you throughout your life journey. For centuries, storytelling has served as an impactful strategy to strengthen and unite old and new generations. In many cases, storytelling is not just about reflecting on the past; it is a way to pass on **financial wisdom, moral values**, and the **growth mindset** needed to sustain generational wealth. Additionally, for some families, storytelling can open conversations that may lead to healing ancestral trauma, helping in reclaiming one's identity and role within the family.

This article outlines three key steps that you can take to explore the opportunities storytelling brings to light. It offers strategic insights and resources on how to preserve and pass on your legacy, one step at a time.

Educating the Younger Generations: A Child's Place in your Family Legacy

Discussions about ancestry and family history not only strengthen family bonds and values, but they can inspire your family to carry the legacy forward. In fact, [research by Dr. Marshall Duke and colleagues](#) found that children who know more about their family history exhibit higher **self-esteem**, a stronger **internal locus of control**, and better **family functioning**. Storytelling helps young people better understand themselves and the world around them, cultivating a sense of personal identity and responsibility among the family. By sharing your stories and engaging younger generations in family conversations, you foster accountability and invite active participation in the future of the family, including multigenerational financial stewardship.

Your heirs are the drivers for preserving family stories, traditions, and the wealth that will sustain them. It is vital to encourage them to build upon the skills, values, and behaviors that have been passed down and learned over the generations. These stories and discussions create a safe space to navigate deep and sensitive topics surrounding money, success and failures, allowing them to learn from their ancestors' experiences and apply that to real life situations.

Successful inheritance is not just about financial gain, but it relies on proper management and preparation. Strong outcomes require a foundation built on emotional stability, value-driven leadership, and the ability to make responsible financial decisions. When young people are given tools and guidance to lead, their purpose becomes more clear, and your legacy can evolve with strength and positive intentions. When considering these conversations, keep the children and young adults of the family in mind and consider ways that you can include them in the conversation. By doing so, you can create opportunities for them to learn, build resilience and gain confidence in their role of paying it forward to future generations in turn.



Step One: Getting the Conversation Started

Where do I start?

One of the greatest challenges that families face is coming together to get the conversation started. But it does not have to be a complex process; what matters most is simply starting. Begin by reflecting on your family's overarching journey. Whether your story is rooted in humble beginnings, migrating to a new country, or the responsibility of continuing the successes of previous generations, you might begin to uncover deeper themes that shape your family's legacy. Keeping those early discoveries in mind, you can then use them to guide you in creating a safe environment for loved ones to listen, share and ask questions. Each step in the process and ensuing conversation may seem small at first, but it may lead to something much more meaningful as you begin to dive deeper.

Asking Foundational Questions

Once you have taken time to reflect, the first step is to jumpstart the process by asking simple yet foundational questions. The goal is to open dialogue, so consider exploring what you and your family already know, and what may be missing from the story. It may take you some time for you (and family members) to develop your thoughts. To spark reflection, below are some questions curated by [21/64](#). LNW advisors can also help guide these conversations using additional tools and strategies. Take this opportunity as a family to recall the stories, events and messages that have been passed down by asking questions such as:

- Who are the characters in my family history?
- What world events constituted the backdrops of their lives?
- What choices did they make in light of those events?
- Did my ancestors leave their native country? How come?
- What did my ancestors value most?
- What is the most important lesson I can learn from their stories?
- How has this family legacy informed my life choices?

Try not to rush to get answers, take some time to digest the information, and be sure to ask follow-up questions. This list of questions can be used as a guide; however, feel free to expand on these based on your family's unique circumstances. It may even be useful to bring your advisor into the conversation to assist you in developing deeper, finance-related questions.

A Note on Genealogy:

With advancements in technology, genealogy has significantly evolved over the years, giving individuals and families access to rich historical information. With online access to this information, genealogy tools can be easily utilized to fill in gaps in your story and add details you may not otherwise be aware of. Whether you are just starting or diving deeper into your roots, many resources are designed to help you reclaim, reserve and pass down your family history. See the resource box to discover more.

Step Two: Record and Preserve Your Story

Once conversations have begun, and key questions have been explored, the second step is to begin preserving your responses. While these questions may be answered on an individual or group basis, the method of collecting and gathering details is crucial for maintaining accuracy and ensuring that stories are kept safe for future access.

Consider recording your responses through interviews, written reports or audio/video recordings. You may also want to explore family archives such as photo albums and journals to fill in the missing pieces with physical memorabilia. Whichever method you decide to use, the collection of data will assist you in curating a timeline of major life events and organizing the narrative to ensure the story is clear and consistent among the collective group.



Important Reminder: Your Story, Your Decision

The environments in which you tell your stories can be just as important as the story itself. Appropriate storytelling settings may be over dinner, at small or large family gatherings, intimate family vacations, or wherever you consider a safe space for your family.

Additionally, some topics are more sensitive than others, requiring care and intentionality in how they are presented. But do not let that interrupt your progress. Every story, no matter how complex, can potentially teach, connect and heal generations.

Remember that it is up to your discretion to include or exclude specific details such as characters, settings, conflicts or themes throughout your family's stories. While not every story will be positive, discussing moments of hardship and understanding how your family responded offers valuable life lessons. You and your family members are in full control of your narrative, and how it continues over generations. Start where you are and trust that your words will plant seeds for the future.

Step Three: Continue the Momentum in Daily Life

The third step is all about consistency. Telling your family story does not necessarily require as much effort as you think. Taking small steps such as sharing stories over dinner or asking a relative about their past can make the process feel more approachable. Your family story already lives within you; you do not need to separate it from your daily life. Below are some ways to shift your mindset and create meaning for your family through everyday actions.

- Develop a family mission statement highlighting significant values
- Keep a digital journal for family members to add to
- Establish short-term and long-term goals that are realistic and tangible for your family (e.g., scan and organize 30 family photos vs. build a digital family archive that includes all the information you've gathered over the years).
- Engage in creative projects (scrapbooks, recipe books, story quilts, [Create a Legacy Book](#), etc.)

As these habits develop, they begin to shape how your family communicates, celebrates and navigates life together. Each small action you take adds depth to your historical archive and lays the foundation for those who come after you.

Do-It-Yourself Research Databases:

Family Search: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/united-states/>

Archive Grid: <https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/>

18 Free Genealogy Websites: <https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/free-resources/websites/>

Utilize Google Books to uncover Historical Publications: <https://books.google.com/>

Guide To Maximizing Google Books Research: <https://www.legacytrees.com/blog/google-books-genealogy-research>

DNA Tests/ Family Tree Building:

Ancestry: <https://www.ancestry.com/>

My Heritage: <https://www.myheritage.com/>

Family Tree DNA: <https://www.familytreedna.com/?srsId=AfmBOorUMP6GI8q5jR0q8RPOUAgpDPgilkOk76Uxpfbh4IKodVySqiI>

Professional Resources for Hire:

Association of Professional Genealogist: <https://www.apgen.org/>

Legacy Tree Genealogist: <https://www.legacytrees.com/>

Tips of Finding Family Researchers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fZzn8zDGb0>

Fun Idea:

Heritage and Ancestry Luxury Tours: <https://www.classicjourneys.com/heritage-ancestry/>



Closing

When wealth is attached to meaning beyond financial gain, it not only sustains itself, but creates a lasting impact on individuals, families and communities. At LNW, our advisors work closely with clients and their families to preserve family legacy and prepare the next generations for inheritance. By leveraging your advisor's expertise, wealth becomes more than what you leave behind, it extends into a story, a guide and a gift. Your story is the blueprint of your legacy, so start telling it now, and build a legacy that not only lasts, but uplifts generations to come.

This article was researched and written by our 2025 summer intern, Songia Goodwin, in collaboration with LNW Wealth Manager Lauren Martin and our team. We are grateful to her for her time and effort and to the Posse Foundation for connecting us.



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