



LEGACY OF WISDOM

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Wisdom Area: Finance and Legal

Few people have a detailed, planned pathway for their later years. We just try to keep going. One classic, but somehow sad concept has been the one that says you work your whole life to own a house, sell it when you have to go into an old age home and hope you die before the money which you received for the house runs out! We need to review models of aging that will allow us to manage this phase of life better.

Complete with all of the psychological & physical issues that can accompany such a picture, it remains a fact that the majority of older people today are simply living alone.

Question: What kind of financial and legal documentation would be useful to prepare in advance?

Question: What role does Giving play in the use of wealth and finances during the last phase of life?

YouTube Video: Legacy of Wisdom – Rabbi Malka Drucker – Legal and Financial Documentation and the Role of Giving

YouTube URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJAP26tGkEc>

Length: 6:04

Interviewee: RABBI MALKA DRUCKER



MALKA T. DRUCKER (born March 14, 1945) is an American rabbi and author living in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Ordained in 1998 from the Academy for Jewish Religion, a trans-denominational seminary, Malka Drucker is also the founding rabbi of HaMakom: The Place for Passionate and Progressive Judaism, in Santa Fe.

Malka Drucker is the author of 20 books including the award winning *Frida Kahlo, Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust, Grandma's Latkes* and *The Family Treasury of Jewish Holidays*. Malka Drucker's collaboration with photographer Gay Block, *White Fire: A Portrait of Women Spiritual Leaders in America*, received the 2005 Southwest PEN award for non fiction.



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Question: What kind of financial and legal documentation would be useful to prepare in advance?

Rabbi Malka: Well, I think, first of all, being in a lesbian relationship has really required a certain consciousness from the beginning. So we have medical directives, we have always powers of attorney when we leave, to make sure that we are recognized in a non-domestic partner state that we are recognized as having this relationship and the same with having wills, etc.

That being said, I find that every two or three years the question of the will has to be revisited for myself because I come to learn more. Again, going deeper into my core of what the real truth – this is really where it is. This is really where my values are. This is the last reflection in many ways – I mean is it gonna be the metaphysical will, the ethical will? Nice, good. Yeah, this is also very important. Really, what this looks like.

I also find that - I just moved out of a house that had 10,000 sq. ft last year. Almost exactly a year ago. Which makes me think that I want a ritual around the year. It was immensely liberating and profoundly painful to take that step so that when the children came to the house and I could say about the big armoire, will you take it? Surprised that I was offering it. But thinking, what have I kept the damn thing all those years? For the children! Well fine, lighten me. Free me. So I am also finding that at this point of my life I am really aiming at a real de-accessioning – and I'm sure that looking around her you are saying – doesn't look too de-accessioned. But I mean I really got rid of the half of my things, so I feel that's helpful too – again in the matter of the will, to sort of find a way to live. I know that there are some who don't leave anything to the children – they don't think that it does anybody any good. But I don't think that that's true. And I don't have so much that they are waiting for that part. And I've seen so much corruption of values over money in families (6) that I am glad that thank God that's not going to be my problem.

Question: What role does Giving play in the use of wealth and finances during the last phase of life?

Rabbi Malka Drucker: Again, going back to selling this house. I, who always thought of myself as a somewhat non-material person and did not care so much about those things around me, found this experience, looking now for the first time in my life at things that I owned that I knew I would never have space for again. Phew... What a thing.



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Am I ready to let go of them? So I thought how can I do this? And I thought the way I can do this is that we had a team of people to help. And these were more than employed people. These were real heart friends and everyday at lunch Magdalena, our housekeeper, would make some very nourishing meal, you know, and it was like this at time of year – it was a three month project of what would be in an estate sale and what would be going to storage and what would go to the children. And then the children came out. And as much as I could bring ritual into this, acknowledging the loss of this time and seeing at the same time that there was an opportunity to be fully conscious about that which I was letting go of; to not – the only price that I told my daughters-in-law was, everything you have to listen to this story – how I got it, what it's been – now it's yours, you know.

Very, for me, very, very profound. So I mean you say, to get to this time, those material things have helped me tremendously in coming to a time of life where I just feel that, let me continue to find rightful owners,

let me really go to the deepest truth about why this means so much to me that I can't give it to you yet. And let me come to a place, that when I am ready to let go of it, I know I will – and I will. That's....