



**Mind:** Building a Legacy That Goes Beyond Material Wealth

**Body:** Service and Your Health

**Spirit:** A Life of Service

## Building a Legacy That Goes Beyond Material Wealth



Have you ever wondered what lasting legacy you will leave behind for future generations? While accumulating material wealth can be significant, passing on values and characteristics that will stand the test of time is essential. Doing this allows us to create a foundation that encourages growth and advances our family's mission well into the future; something investments alone cannot always provide. This article will discuss how you can build a legacy beyond material wealth by embracing character, ethics, beliefs, culture, core values and more. Read on as we explore ways in which you can ensure your legacy reaches far beyond your assets.

Years ago, I had the privilege of hearing Lee Brower speak about the various assets we can pass on to the next generations. Lee served as a financial advisor to ultra-high net worth families and recognized that material wealth would not survive as a long-term legacy without the gifts of character, education, reputation, and service. This approach is not exclusive to wealthy families and offers excellent opportunities

for everyone interested in defining what legacy really means to them.

### It all starts with 'BEING.'

Ralph Waldo Emerson is credited with the famous quote: "Who you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you are saying." Directly facing me, on the wall in my office, is a post-it note asking me, "Who do I want to be in the face of this?" Provocative question. When I remember (!) to look at the post-it note and reflect on the challenge, I have the opportunity to consider first my 'being' rather than 'doing.' I suspect this is what Lee Brower and Emerson inspired us to consider because an explicit declaration of whom we want to be absolutely informs what we do at that moment.

Think about how you want your children and grandchildren to show up in this world. Whom do you want them to be in their quiet moments alone and times of reflection? What values and character traits do you prefer to inform and guide their actions? What is the image of 'who' you want them to be regarding how they serve their family, friends, local and global community as well as themselves? What education, skills, resources and supports must be in place to contribute to this vision?

### Actions Speak Louder Than Words

You don't have to be Mother Teresa or Mahatma Gandhi. It can be as simple as living the life you

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want to demonstrate to your loved ones. This inspires, educates, and shapes the lives of those who look up to you.

I belong to a small Rotary Club in my community. In this club is a husband-and-wife team who exemplify the Rotary motto of 'service above self.' They are involved in every fundraising event and provide direct service to both local and international projects. They are the first to call a local member who has been absent and offer rides to social and service events to ensure everyone is included. Their adult children assume leadership roles in their careers, children's school, sports, and community events. Their grandchildren help to put up posters, stuff envelopes, volunteer at service projects, and even host lemonade stands to raise money for children at a residential home in Cambodia. All this without fanfare and lecture – just the powerful impact of demonstrating life lessons to navigate young growth, parenthood, professional careers and community service. Their legacy is a living example of enduring throughout multiple generations! By example, the next generations are "living the values."

## Conclusion

Leaving a lasting legacy involves more than just passing down wealth to future generations; it is about infusing moral values and practical wisdom into succeeding lineages to cultivate a responsible and enriching life. Families can adopt several strategies for imparting valuable lessons and knowledge beyond monetary inheritances. Parents and grandparents can initiate open discussions regarding their life experiences, challenges they overcame and critical choices, fostering a culture of

storytelling that intertwines personal philosophy with knowledge. Moreover, investing in one's children's education and supporting their pursuit of personal growth can instill a deep appreciation for continuing expertise and exploration. Encouraging children to engage in charitable and community service activities cultivates empathy and fosters a sense of social responsibility, further enriching their lives. Setting clear expectations about work ethics, financial prudence, and integrity also instills invaluable virtues that empower future generations to make responsible decisions and apply the wisdom gained in various life aspects. Ultimately, nurturing and bequeathing virtues transcend monetary wealth and create a lasting family legacy that endures over time.

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## Service and Your Health

Studies have found that engaging in acts of service and kindness is linked to physiological benefits such as higher levels of oxytocin, serotonin and endorphins, which can lead to improved mental well-being and decreased levels of stress (Zaki & Ochsner, 2009; Post, 2007). Additionally, volunteering activities have been associated with better cardiovascular functioning (Wang et al., 2013).

## A Life of Service

"Everybody can be great because everybody can serve." *Martin Luther King, Jr.*