



May the Work of Your Heart be Lasting

October 26, 2017

12:00 – 2:00 PM

Part One: Intentional Giving

1. Describe an experience that influenced how you choose to spend your time and philanthropic dollars

2. Philanthropy Roadmap
 - a. Motivations and values: why do you give?

 - b. Compelling areas: what do you want to achieve?

3. Alignment of values and current giving

Part Two: Forever Letters

1. In this passage, the author describes reading aloud in the living room the letters her father sent every other month from Haiti, at a time when she and her brother were living with other family in New York City.

Along with this task [of reading the letters aloud] came a few minutes of preparation for the reading and thus a few intimate moments with my father's letters, not only the words and phrases, which did not vary from month to month, but the vowels and syllables, their tilts and slants, which did. I would try to guess his thoughts and moods from the dotting of his *i*'s and the crossing of his *t*'s... "I was no writer," he later told me. "What I wanted to tell you and your brother was too big for any piece of paper and small envelope." The regularity and consistency of his correspondence now feels like an act of valor.

- a. What did the author learn about her father from this correspondence?
 - b. How might the author's experience of her father been different if she had spoken to him on the phone or read his words in an email or text?
 - c. What role, if any, have letters played in your life (on the writing or receiving end)?
2. Review your answers to #2 above. On the next page, begin a letter explaining how you came to your answers. Consider:
 - Are your answers connected to a formative experience or person in your life?
 - Are there stories behind your choices?
 - Are there favorite sayings or maxims behind your answers? How did you learn them?

You may write to a family member, to a friend, or to yourself (past, present, or future).

Date

To

RESOURCES

For Reading

General

Baines, Barry K (2006), *Ethical Wills: Putting Your Values on Paper* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

Freed, Rachel (2013), *Your Legacy Matters*. Minneapolis, MN, Minerva Press.

Zaiman, Elana (2017), *The Forever Letter: Writing What We Believe for Those We Love*.

Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications.

In the Jewish Tradition

Abrahams, Israel (2006), *Hebrew Ethical Wills* (3rd ed). Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society.

Reimer, Jack and Stampfer, Nathaniel (2015), *Ethical Wills and How to Prepare Them* (2nd ed.). Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing.

For Exploring

MyLastingLetters.com

“Dear Family and Friends” letter template of the Stanford Letter Project

StoryCorps Legacy Project and “List of Great Questions”

A longer resource list is available by contacting the Jewish Ethical Wills Project at JCCManhattan. Passage on page two is adapted from Brother, I’m Dying by Edwidge Danticat, Knopf (2007).