

Writing Our Legacy

by Linda Sechrist

In their books *Caring for the Dying* and *Having the Last Say*, authors Henry Fersko-Weiss and Alan Gelb, respectively, advocate reviewing our life and writing a short narrative to explore its value as we approach our final act of Earth's play.

Processing experiences from the past and what they mean at this juncture presents us an opportunity to achieve greater clarity and integrate them in a positive way in our life story. According to Fersko-Weiss, it has the power to reduce depression, increase life satisfaction, promote acceptance of self and enhance integrity of spirit, no matter what phase of life we are in.

The harvesting of life experiences should reflect our true humanity—flaws and all—and what we've learned through mistakes and failures, as well as triumphs. Conveying a compelling mythic family story, values we've lived by and our embrace of meaningful relationships will help the people we know understand that, for all its difficulties and complexities, life is worth living. Our narrative, whether recorded as an essay or scripted video, becomes an act of praise for the gift of the life we've led, imperfect as it may have been. It can also serve as a potential keepsake that passes along life lessons and values from one generation to another.

Gelb suggests that summing up what's most important to us in 500 to 1,000 words can be an experience to savor and enjoy at a reflective time in life, an opportunity to capture our legacy and even serve as our own eulogy. When we want a loved one no longer here to feel near to us and hear them one last time, it's a way for them to literally have the last say, he adds.



Have a nice day Photo/Shutterstock.com