

## What to do after a loved one passes away

Take action during an overwhelming time with this quick guide

When someone close to you dies, the whirlwind of emotions and planning can be paralyzing. And if you're the heir in charge or executor of your loved one's will, decision-making and to-dos are a heavy weight on your shoulders.

You'll need to be up for this huge undertaking, often described as a second job. Don't be afraid to share concerns if you aren't the best fit for the job. Even if you're ready, find helpers such as your loved one's financial advisor and attorney to guide you and put the estate plan into action.

If you accept the role, check in with yourself. What support will you need? Support could look like grief counseling through a therapist or having meals delivered. You may need to include more free time in your schedule for space to cope. Prioritize sleep, healthy foods, and movement to make sure your physical self can keep up with the extra stress you're putting on your body, mind, and soul.



### ONE STEP AT A TIME

**Breaking down to-dos into steps can help you move forward.** First, you'll want to get multiple copies of the

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death certificate. Typically, the funeral home will order this. You'll need the certificates to notify various institutions, such as insurance companies, of your loved one's death.

**Locate the will to determine if probate is necessary.** If there's a will, file a petition for probate. If there isn't a will, the court will select an administrator (You can reach out to family and friends to gauge interest) to manage the estate.

**Notify beneficiaries and interested parties of the death as soon as possible.** Executors need to let family, friends, heirs, beneficiaries, and any others know. When you find pockets of time, cancel subscriptions and services – phone plans, internet and utilities, car insurance, credit cards and other accounts and services will need to be canceled.

**CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE**

Consider new ways to create memories with those you're thankful for

# SLOW DOWN THIS THANKSGIVING

Whether you're cooking up savory dishes in the kitchen, sitting around the TV watching the Thanksgiving Day Parade or catching up with visiting family, Thanksgiving is about spending time with the ones we cherish.

If you're looking for new ways to create memories with those you're thankful for, you might want to add these to your list of yearly holiday traditions:

**Work up an appetite:** Want an excuse to spend time enjoying the crisp fall weather before staying in with your loved ones? Consider signing up for a turkey trot with your family. These footraces often range from 5K to 10K and can be a fun way to work up an appetite. And if you're worried about not having the athletic chops for it, don't be. These races are usually about enjoying the experience at your own pace.

**Create a pumpkin decoration station:** Sure to be a hit with kids and anyone who enjoys arts and crafts, consider

setting up an area with a spacious table to serve as a pumpkin decoration station. You can supply it with miniature pumpkins, a variety of paints, googly eyes and other fun accessories. Family and friends can pull up a chair and catch up as they create their own customized masterpieces. You can also set aside a large pumpkin to serve as a centerpiece and hand out pens and markers for everyone to write on it the blessings for which they're grateful.

No matter how you prefer to spend time with your loved ones on this holiday, I hope you take a moment to reflect on all you have to be thankful for while making memories you'll cherish for years to come.

Thank you for continuing to allow me to serve you and your family. I appreciate your confidence.

- Timothy A. Phillips

## After a loved one passes

### FROM FRONT PAGE

You'll want to gather estate asset records such as bank accounts, vehicle information, retirement accounts, life insurance, investments and stocks, trusts, property titles, business interests, and personal belongings. Recent tax returns can help. Debts and taxes of the estate will need to be paid, including funeral expenses. Once debts are paid, the executor can distribute assets to the beneficiaries according to the will or the laws of the state.

Even the strongest person may need a helping hand. The passing of a loved one is emotional, and executing an estate plan is highly administrative. The help of financial advisors, accountants, insurance agents, attorneys and supportive family and friends can make the process smoother and less stressful.

### NEXT STEPS

#### Action items for those first few weeks.

- Notify beneficiaries and gather important documents such as the will, death certificate, and financial statements.
- File death certificates with the Social Security Administration, other government agencies, and financial institutions as required by the state. Apply for veteran benefits, if applicable.
- Open a bank account for the estate. Contact creditors and other debtors. Begin paying the deceased's final expenses, such as funeral costs and medical bills.

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