



I did it! Finally. I prepared our estate papers. Wills, last wishes, directives, etc. We had been putting it off since forever. This is the sort of thing one should take care of the minute one becomes a parent, at least. But who likes to? Stupidly, one tends to think it would be like jinxing life. But, in reality, we take care of these things so our kids don't have to go crazy later. Well, okay, more like a last ditch attempt at forcing them to do things our way. But let's not tell them that, okay?

It wasn't a process we enjoyed, especially when we both sat down to review the papers I had drafted and we read the words that will be told to others when we're no longer here to do it ourselves. It got particularly difficult when the time came to discuss with the kids the documents' provisions. At first it was somewhat morbid. "This is too depressing," said Lauren. But then it helped when we started making light of the matter a bit. We told the kids we had included certain things in the Will that we knew would just piss them off: To our daughter we leave the drum set and lawn mower (what?!); to our son the refrigerator he's constantly checking (really dude?) and Nelly, the cat he's so fond of (yeah right!); to both of them our monthly household bills (no frikin' way!), etc. etc. It got pretty funny as their responses got more and more alarming. At least *WE* thought so. Nothing like laughing at your kids' expense. J

Turns out the conversation overwhelmed them a little — Danny now wants me to draft up a step by step survival manual, which Lauren thought was a great idea, adding that if we were gone tomorrow, they'd "be sooo scr—d." Time to grow up kids! Seriously though, both our children are adults now (newly), but I suppose for them it's one thing to be as independent as they already are in their daily lives at school, at work, and even at home (really making us feel that empty nest effect), but it's another thing, I gather, to see themselves at this point in their lives without mom and dad, at all. Let's pray not. It is sweet, though, to learn we are still needed so.

Anyway, going back to the Will preparation, let me warn you: having tangible evidence in front of you inferring that your days here are counted, makes your face contort. I'm not just saying that. I could almost hear the clock ticking too! Amazing. This whole estate planning

thing was yet another eye-opener. I read recently that “The wealthiest places on earth are not the oil fields of the Middle East nor the diamond mines of South Africa. The wealthiest places are the cemeteries. Buried in the ground are businesses that were never formed, songs that were never sung, books that were never written, potential that was never realized, and dreams that never came to pass.” Allow me to add to that, words that were left unspoken, friendships that were never rekindled, opportunities that were never taken, and good that was left undone.

I would like to leave this earth a better person than this world has seen; having given my best, and having left nothing to bury but bones. Wow.... The preparation of our Will: quite a moment of contorted introspection.

“For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ ““He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’”

~ Matthew 25:42-45

“And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things: But ONE THING is needful: and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

~ Luke 10:41-42

“That it will never come again is what makes life so sweet.”

~ Emily Dickinson

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