

LEGACY LETTER....SAMPLE, BRIEF

(This Legacy Letter is written by Edna. It is an example of how to tie together your past, your present, and your love for your descendants into a brief piece of writing.)

The events I am remembering take place in the '40's, during WWII. In our Brooklyn home, the lower level of a two-flat, my parents, my sister and I always ate together as a family. My father loved to listen to classical music on WQXR, still in existence today. Many nights we all clustered around the eerie, green-dialed radio, listening to Jack Benny, Burns and Allen, The Shadow, The Inner Sanctum, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, and others. During air raid drills we turned out the lights, closed the Venetian blinds, and continued to listen, huddled together in the darkness, feeling more secure because at least we were all together.

Grown-up and married, I made sure when our daughters were still living at home we too ate together as a family. After-school activities didn't get in the way of our dinners together. I played classical music, just because I enjoyed it. I never thought of it as a legacy, something my parents gave me. But it was. Some of my grown daughters listen to it even now.

Other legacies weren't so rosy. Suffice it to say (one of my father's favorite expressions), some of what was handed down to me was challenging, mainly the fears many had during the Depression---would we have enough money? Enough food? I didn't know these fears were a widespread, cultural phenomenon; I was young and I believed it was just us. Still, I was imprinted. I tried not to pass on these core legacies of fear.

Learning to take risks---to manage my fear in order to stretch past who I was into who I could be---was one way I outgrew the legacy of fear. Over time I created for our daughters a different legacy: Be all you can be. Take risks. Live your possibilities. It took a long time to let go of the legacies that diminished my life, and to form new ones that enriched it.

My blessing for my daughters and grandchildren: May you live your unique talents and bring your gifts to the world; may you be all you can be even if you have to work hard at it. May you love a lot, give and receive much, and be loved by many.