FROM DIAGNOSIS TO GOODBYE

Creating a Legacy

Letters, Videos, Stories, and the Gift of Remembering

A free companion guide for patients and families

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fromdiagnosistogoodbye.com

“One of the greatest gifts we leave behind is not what we owned, but what we intentionally shared.”

Use the ideas that fit your family. The goal is not perfection. The goal is connection.

One of the questions families often ask is, "What can we do while we still have time?" That is one of my favorite questions. Because it shifts the focus from counting the days... to making the days count.

A terminal diagnosis changes many things. It does not erase the opportunity to leave a legacy. In fact, many patients discover that this season becomes one of the most meaningful chapters of their lives.

Legacy is not reserved for famous people. Every person leaves one. The question is whether we leave it intentionally.

This appendix is designed to help patients and families create lasting memories that can be treasured for generations.

Choose the ideas that fit your family. Do not feel pressured to complete every suggestion. The goal is not perfection. The goal is connection.

Write Letters

Letters become treasured gifts because they allow your voice to continue speaking long after the paper has yellowed with age. Consider writing letters to your spouse, each child, each grandchild, close friends, brothers and sisters, or future grandchildren you may never meet.

Ideas of what to include in your writing:

- Things I admire about you.
- My favorite memory with you.
- Lessons I hope you always remember.
- Advice for dif■cult days.
- My hopes and prayers for your future.
- How much I love you.

Record Video Messages

Technology has given us one of the greatest legacy tools in history. A simple phone or tablet can preserve your voice, your smile, your laughter, and your personality. You do not need professional equipment. You only need your heart.

Ideas for what to record:

- Birthday messages.
- Graduation congratulations.
- Wedding blessings.
- Advice for becoming a parent.
- Christmas greetings.
- Family stories.
- Expressions of love.

These recordings often become priceless family treasures.

Record Your Voice

Sometimes hearing someone's voice becomes one of the greatest comforts after they are gone. Voices become memories that photographs alone cannot capture.

Consider recording yourself doing any of the following:

- Reading a favorite Bible passage.
- Singing a favorite hymn.
- Reading a children's book for grandchildren.
- Sharing your testimony.
- Telling family stories.
- Saying "I love you."

Tell Your Story

Every life has a story worth preserving. Your story becomes part of your family's history.

Consider answering questions such as:

- Where did you grow up?
- What are your happiest childhood memories?
- How did you meet your spouse?
- What challenges shaped your life?
- What accomplishments are you most proud of?
- What mistakes taught you the most?
- What do you hope your family never forgets?

Preserve Family Traditions

Some traditions disappear simply because no one wrote them down. Future generations will thank you for taking the time to write these down.

Consider preserving:

- Favorite family recipes.
- Holiday traditions.
- Birthday celebrations.
- Family sayings.
- Vacation traditions.
- Cultural customs.
- Faith practices.
- Songs your family loves.

Share Your Wisdom

Ask yourself: "What do I know now that I wish someone had taught me when I was younger?" Write those lessons down.

Simple wisdom often becomes life's greatest inheritance.

Topics might include:

- Marriage.
- Parenting.
- Faith.

- Forgiveness.
- Work.
- Finances.
- Friendship.
- Character.

Create a Memory Box

A memory box does not need to be expensive. Every single item you place inside tells a distinct part of your story.

Consider including:

- Handwritten letters.
- Photographs.
- Favorite recipes.
- Ticket stubs.
- Military medals.
- Small keepsakes.
- Children's drawings.
- Family heirlooms.
- A favorite devotional or Bible.

Leave a Blessing

Throughout Scripture, blessings were spoken over children and future generations. Consider writing or recording a personal blessing for those you love.

Tell them:

- What you see in them.
- What you admire about their character.
- What you hope for their future.
- How proud you are of them.
- How deeply they are loved.

Words spoken in love often echo for a lifetime.

Derrick's Final Thought

Over the years, I have watched families treasure the smallest things. Not expensive gifts. Not valuable possessions.

A voicemail. A handwritten note. A birthday card. A recipe written in a mother's handwriting. A grandfather's laugh captured on video. A simple recording that begins with, "If you're watching this..." Those ordinary moments become extraordinary treasures.

Do not wait until tomorrow. Write the letter today. Record the story today. Take the family photograph today. Say the words today.

Because one day, someone you love may hold those memories close to their heart and quietly whisper, "I'm so thankful we made the time." That is the gift of a legacy. It is love continuing to speak long after our voices grow quiet.

Your Legacy Notes

What is one story, message, or tradition you would like to preserve?

About this resource

Adapted from Appendix B of From Diagnosis to Goodbye: Restoring the Patient's Voice Through Every Stage of the Journey, by Chaplain Derrick Hall. Shared as a free educational companion resource. You may share this PDF intact without selling or modifying it.

This guide is for education and reflection and is not a substitute for medical, mental-health, legal, or other professional advice.

Never allow the diagnosis to become louder than the patient's voice.