

The Soul's Legacy

Writing A Spiritual Will

edited by

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and

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The Soul's Legacy: Writing a Spiritual Will

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PREFACE

My first start at writing something like a spiritual will began when Wellesley College, my alma mater, asked us to write an essay for our reunion yearbook, answering these questions. What were we doing? Who was in our life? What values did we hold important? How had our lives changed in the past five years?

As the five year periods rolled by, I found this very meaningful, a chance to look back and look forward simultaneously. It felt to me that this was sacred work and that it needed to be brought into mainstream Jewish life. In the early '90's, when I was formulating a Spiritual Development program for my doctoral thesis with New York Theological Seminary, I began to design exercises that addressed some of these topics.

But it wasn't until I read Rabbi Zalman Schachter Shalomi's book, *From Aging to Saging*, that I saw the potential power of writing a spiritual will. I decided to offer a mini-course designed for students in the Aleph Ordination Programs. Holly, a friend and poet, asked if she could join, as she also felt called to this work. And so we began. This course, in a revised format, is now part of the curriculum in HASHPA'AH, Aleph's Ordination program for Jewish Spiritual Directors.

This sacred work is also being pioneered through the Aleph Sage-ing Project (<https://www.aleph.org/sageing.htm>), so that anyone, anywhere, who is interested in these processes, may learn how to be a facilitator.

Our collection is a beginning. It is being produced as a pdf file, so that it can be easily accessed, modified, and amplified. I am grateful to Holly for being the driving force in making this manifest, and to YHVH, the Divine Source, for the inspiration and determination to make this possible.

With love and blessings to all who read this,

Shohama

(Rabbi Shohama Harris Wiener)

March 7, 2008/ 29 Adar I, 5768

INTRODUCTION

In my "day job" as a paralegal I assist clients in sorting out the often complex task of crafting an estate plan: drafting Wills and creating a Family Trust. It is the work of the world of *assiyah*, the world of form, where values are expressed in the distribution of material wealth.

Most of the time a Will form is fairly standard and, unless you know what to look for, it is difficult to connect with the heart and mind of the person "writing" the Will. This is partly because an estate plan is usually produced by legal staff and, surprisingly often, in the face of a palpable amount of resistance on the part of the client, who approaches the task as one to be fulfilled by a responsible adult with the joy and inspiration of an annual trip to the dentist.

But even clients who are enthusiastically engaged in the process of planning their estate almost always follow the customary legal formula; and very little in the way of individual personality or spiritual values shines through the formulaic recitation of family tree and bequests.

How enduring a material legacy may be is determined by the size of the fortune and the wisdom with which it is delivered to and managed by the beneficiaries. At best, it is an opportunity for heirs to make something of their own from the fortune left behind. But, as a friend of mine once put it, money is neutral energy: it can be spent to put shoes on needy children, or to buy them drugs on the street. Money can be stewarded or squandered. A material legacy is only as valuable as the heirs make it; and when it's gone, it's gone.

A Spiritual Will is not bound by the world of *assiyah*. It speaks the language of the soul, and can endure long after material wealth has been exhausted. From the ancient deathbed injunctions recorded in the Torah, through Talmudic times and weaving throughout history to the present day, the Ethical Wills of our tradition provide us with a precious and highly personal legacy that has outdistanced material wealth, endured diaspora, and in many cases even transcended family heritage.

So why have we been moved to add this reader to the literature of Ethical/Spiritual Wills?

First, a little history--In 2005, Rabbi Shohama Wiener taught a ground-breaking teleclass sponsored by Reclaiming Judaism: Hashpa'ah and Ethical-Spiritual Wills. The class met over the telephone six times, from February until June. As part of our coursework, we read selections from Riemer & Stampfer's book, *So That Your Lives Live On, Ethical Wills and How to Prepare Them*, met in chevruta (study pairs), wrote our own Spiritual Wills, and mentored at least two other people in writing their own Spiritual Wills.

Although the text we used was historically engaging and emotionally evocative, when it came to mentoring others, most of us found the Spiritual Wills of our classmates were a more relevant source of inspiration. Our fellow writers spoke more like us, and dealt with issues more like now.

Inevitably, an authentic Spiritual Will is a reflection of time and place. Perhaps more than any generation before us, we are acutely aware of the rapidly-evolving world we inhabit, a world in which we are challenged to source the past, live in the present, and maintain relevance for the future. So how do we embody, in the words of the Adon Olam, *v'hu hayah, v'hu hoveh, v'hu yihyeh b'tifarah*? How do we hold in beauty the place of WAS/IS/WILL-BE? How can we speak with insight and relevance to the inhabitants of a world we can barely imagine?

This begs the question: who are we writing for? On the surface, it would seem to be an easier question to answer for someone with a life partner, children, perhaps even grandchildren. Those of us who are childless may feel challenged to speak in a transpersonal voice, to a wider audience, either as an individual or as a spokesperson of a particular collection of voices that might otherwise go unheard.

But, whether or not we know (or think we know) our audience, the written word has a power and endurance which is often surprising. Now, more than ever, we never know where our writings may end up, whose life may be profoundly touched by our perspective.

A good question can take us places the best answer would never lead. Must a "good" Spiritual Will be a compendium of life's accumulated wisdom, or is there room for enduring questions, as well?

There is a teaching that encourages us to write our ideal epitaph and then strive to become the person we would like to "hear about" at our own funeral. If a Spiritual Will is written (as I encourage my legal clients to do) "on a good day," in the prime of life and health, it can become a benchmark, a navigational beacon and code of conduct to live towards.

If nothing else, a Spiritual Will is a sacred mirror we can hold up to ourselves, explicitly identifying personal reference points to key into and make course corrections from time to time; and perhaps to redefine with the evolution of life's goals and core assumptions. As with an estate plan, we can make a practice of revisiting our Spiritual Wills periodically--once a decade, every 18 years, or around life cycle events--and revise, or start from scratch, to reflect the ages and stages over a lifetime.

In preparing to write this piece, I happened upon a quotation from Sigmund Freud:

"Everything new must have its roots in what was before."

Creating in the present a legacy of words or deeds or material wealth prepares a way for the future to build on its past. Somewhere in between, consciously or unconsciously, we are forever writing the pages of our lives for someone else to read, even if that "someone else" is our own future self. The practice of writing a Spiritual Will is, at its core, yet another opportunity to open our hearts to one another, and to engage in sacred dialog with The Divine.

Thank you, Shohama!

b'ahavah, with love,
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Holly Blue Hawkins
March 6, 2008
Corralitos, California

SPIRITUAL WILL OF SHOHAMA HARRIS WIENER

6/17/05, revised 10/23/07

Dearest children, Janet, Lauren, and Bryan, spouses Mark, Michael and Jessica,
and daughter-by-marriage, Alicia
Beloved husband Alan,
Adored grandchildren Maya, Jacob, Benjamin, Stephanie, Olivia, and Addison,
And treasured family, colleagues, students and friends,

My father and mother, and grandmothers and grandfathers are all on the other side now, and I dearly wish that I had more tangible statements of who they were-- what they believed and held most valuable. Although I feel they continue to be with me in spirit and help guide my life, it is not the same as having their words in print before me.

It is my hope that what I write will be of comfort and meaning to you and your children after you. In addition, as I have been privileged to be part of the great chain of rabbinic and spiritual transmission of the Jewish heritage, it may be that these words will help guide those who read this.

UNENDING LOVE: APPRECIATION AND FORGIVENESS

In my life the two most important ethical practices are appreciation and forgiveness. Modah ani l'fanecha, thank you G*d, for this moment, this opportunity for blessings. Thank you for the gift of forgiveness, selichot, of myself and others, so that I may move forward in peace. In this way, I sense Your love, and the love you have built into the universe.

Until I was thirty-six, I felt the love, but only through people and through nature.

I was blessed to have been a much-loved child of parents whose Jewish connection was strong, but cultural and intellectual. My mother was thirty-six and my father thirty-five when I was born, nine years after my sister Rona. My widowed paternal grandmother, Ray Hurwitz Harris, z"l, had come to live with us, at my mother's urging, and that gave my parents the ability to continue to work and have another child.

Grandma Ray lived with us for the rest of her life, and showered me with unending love and attention.

My mother's mother, Mollie Rudachevsky Fread, z"l, lived in the nearby Bronx, and we would see her every weekend. She was my introduction to Yiddishkeit, and I remember her covering her head with a doily and lighting Shabbat candles whenever she visited us for the Sabbath. Grandma Mollie was a model of religious tolerance. Although she was the president of the Sisterhood in her Orthodox synagogue, and kept a strictly Kosher home, she would eat our nonKosher food. Her guiding value, voiced in a Yiddish accent was, "I vant I should be no trouble to my children."

My mother's sister, Stella Fread Rapaport Fuld, lived in nearby New Rochelle, and we would visit frequently. Mother and Stella were best friends all their life, and spoke every day. Every year my mother would gather the extended family for Thanksgiving, and Stella would host the Passover Seder.

This heritage of family bonding has been central to my formation of values, and I have tried to carry it on. For twenty-five years, after Aunt Stella and my parents stopped having Seder, I took it over. Leading the Seder was my first venture into spiritual leadership. It began the spiritual transformation of who I was, wife, mother, and secular teacher.

Janet, Lauren and Bryan, you already have gone beyond the early years of sibling rivalry, and formed close and deep ties to each other. I so admire the growing people you have become, all of you in loving marriages, using your gifts of intellect and heart to create vibrant careers, and showering your own children with love and attention. I am so pleased that all of you are connected to synagogues, and will carry on the Jewish heritage. May G*d bless you with good health, and continued strength and joy in your unfolding lives.

You make me feel that my dedication to mothering, although far from ideal, has born delicious fruit. Your father and I always loved you, and following our "friendly divorce" after twenty-seven years, extended ourselves to support your relationships with both of us, and with both of our extended families. I am honored that your father considered me his rabbi in happy times and sad, at your weddings and baby-namings, and at his funeral and unveiling.

Alicia, my daughter through marriage, you have always welcomed me and given me pleasure and support. I admire the way you follow your unique vision of changing society through the arts, and bless you to find ongoing opportunities for your gifts, as well as personal happiness.

Alan, my basherte, my soul mate, you are the ideal husband and companion for the spiritually-dedicated woman I have become. You understand my very essence, and inspire me to give and grow. You have opened new worlds of learning and adventure to me, and helped me eat and live in a healthier way. I bless you to continue to share your brilliant gifts of healing for all, and to make this new part of your journey one of fulfillment and love. It would please me very much if you would continue to be a loving Saba, grandfather, to our grandchildren.

Relationships are one of life's greatest opportunities for growth. Our tradition teaches us to "dan l'chaf zechut", judge another to their merit. That means to assume the best, not the worst, when someone offends us. It is usually because of their internal problems, and not because of the relationship. My mother often would tell me of a relationship she had kept up, regardless of the thoughtlessness or temper of the other person. She would say, "do the right thing today and tomorrow will follow."

I try to do this. It is not easy, but I have found it has given me lasting relationships with family and colleagues with whom I would have broken off ties. These difficult relationships have led to many wonderful opportunities and emotional riches.

Forgiveness is essential to love. Traditional Jewish prayers call for forgiveness four times a day, and we have our holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur, dedicated to this midah, moral quality. As we forgive others, G*d forgives us.

At the same time, I have learned to protect myself, and to have healthy boundaries. Lovingkindness, chesed, must be balanced by withholding, din. It took me many years to learn to protect myself in a healthy way, to speak out for myself so that I could grow in line with my vision of how I was being called to serve Life. I tend to avoid conflict, but with G*d's help, I have become more articulate.

TZEDAKAH TATZIL MI'MAVET : CHARITY SAVES FROM DEATH.

As I have gotten older, it has become even more clear to me that we are all part of the One, and that my responsibility is to the larger world community and the planet, as well as to future generations. I never go to sleep feeling that my work is finished, but that it is “dayenu,” it is enough. The Jewish wisdom tradition teaches that “Lo alecha ha'mlachah ligmor v'lo l'hibateyl mimenu.” It is not necessary for us to finish the work, but neither are we released from the obligation to continue it.

Our Biblical ancestor Jacob initiated the practice of tithing to G*d in appreciation for all G*d's blessings. I understand this represents the spiritual law of the universe, that we must give away in order to make room to receive. This is as true on the material plane as it is on the emotional plane. I have followed our tradition of giving frequently and bountifully to charity, especially when I have received a gift. As I follow our tradition in believing that charity brings merit to the giver and to the person it is in honor of, I hope that you will make a charitable contribution to some Jewish organization each year for my *yahrzeit*, the anniversary of my passing.

At this time, fully half the world goes to bed hungry. You have been blessed to grow up in abundance, as I was. Although we counted our nickels, I was sent to private camps and colleges, without need of scholarships or loans. My happiest times have not been related to wealth, nor has my greatest learning come from any school or program. That is not to say I regret my fourteen years of higher education, (Wellesley, Harvard, The Academy for Jewish Religion, and New York Theological Seminary) in addition to learning with my main mentors, Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach z”l and Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. They have served me well. But Life itself provides many teachers. Our sages said, *Azehu ashir?* Who is rich? One who is satisfied with what one has. *Azehu chacham?* Who is wise? One who learns from every person.

AGES AND STAGES

Our Creator has implanted within us a plan of unfolding, unique to each, yet with much in common. I have found that each cycle of seven years brings new

surprises, while my core, my soul, remains unchanged. The last half of my life has had the blessing of studying these transitions, and of helping others find a path that is true to the phase they are in.

Pirkei Avot (Wisdom of the Ancestors) 2:4, reads: “Do not be sure of yourself until the day you die.” This year I turned 65, initiating me officially as a Senior Citizen. Already my body and soul are feeling changes. I pray that I may take them with grace, and as opportunities for further emotional and spiritual growth.

There is never a time when we can relax, spiritually speaking, and feel that we have become a tzaddik, an enlightened person. Indeed, to think that of ourselves is to fall into the pitfall of pride. On the other hand, I believe that healthy self-esteem is the core of all ethical behavior, and it is important to acknowledge the many small as well as large contributions we make. Every day, every moment, presents an opportunity to *bacharta bachayyim*—to choose life and goodness.

Don’t be afraid to change your beliefs or your life-style, if you feel called to do so. Part of life is growing beyond who we were. This has happened to me several times in my life. At the same time, honor your past and the people who were part of it.

Every act of *gemilut chesed*, of lovingkindness, sends a ripple of light into the world. Every challenge is also an opportunity for growth. I feel that I can look back on my life, the happy times and the periods of grief and anxiety, and say, with our sages, “*gam zu l’tovah*”—this too was for a good purpose.

LOOKING FORWARD

I hope that I will be among you on earth for many years to come. I would so love to be part of my grandchildren’s lives at least until they are adults. But should that not be, know that I will always be with you. I believe that death is just a passageway to the Life beyond, where I will be reunited with my loved ones who have gone before. Just as I pray for your welfare every day now, so I will continue to do so from the hereafter.

When I leave my body, it will mean a lot to me if you will say Kaddish for me, and pray for my soul.

In separate documents, I have bequeathed my worldly possessions and specified my requests for a traditional Jewish burial. I pray that there will be no conflicts among you, that your love for me and each other will bring you even closer. This has been true for my sister Rona Chayah and me; we have never had a disagreement, but tried to be generous with each other.

May you always feel G*d's blessings, and share them generously. May your lives increasingly be filled with that which brings you joy and fulfillment.

With great love,

Shohama/Mom/Savta

SPIRITUAL WILL OF EDWIN S. HARRIS

To My Children: Nick, Jacob, and Eliana,

When I was studying to become a Rabbinic Pastor, I took a course on Ethical Wills. What's an ethical will? Think of the spiritual equivalent of a traditional will. A traditional will would describe my assets and how I wish to disburse them to each of you. Mom and I decided how to divide what money, stock and real estate there is. It's divided equally. A spiritual or ethical will is a chance for me to leave my blessings, hopes and dreams for you.

It's a way for me to pass on to you what's been important to me in my life--my values and beliefs, views about life, relationships, and God. I struggled some with how to say these words. I want to talk both about me and about you. I don't want my words to feel like "shoulds" to you. There probably have been too many of those already. I'm remembering the blessings I gave each of you at your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In that same spirit, I offer you these words, in no specific order.

I love how all of you are together. You laugh and seem to have such a good time with each other. I remember such moments at Eliana's Bat Mitzvah and when we came back to the hotel after my father's funeral. Your laughter, which made Mom and I laugh, too, was wonderfully loving and healing for me. I didn't have with Howard what the three of you seem to have, and I missed the closeness with him. May you continue to find love and laughter with each other and continue to be there with and for each other as well.

I'm so grateful to have found a community to support me. How wonderful to have CRC in my life and to know that, for all that I have given, I feel as though I've received so much more. I hope each of you can find such a place (maybe even the same place). I feel the same about finding a good therapist and/or spiritual guide. We don't have to walk the path alone.

I came to appreciate my parents and all that they gave me. I realize that I couldn't have known it at the time. I had to grow up and perhaps become a parent myself. "You'll understand when you're a parent," my father would say to me. He was

right. The bigger picture is most important, not each individual experience or conflict. The bigger picture is how much I love all of you.

I am blessed to have found your mother. She is the love of my life, my partner and teacher. She is always there for me in caring, loving ways. I hope and pray that each of you finds the love, support, and deep friendship in your partners that I have with your mother. I'm also blessed with good friends, Ira and Charlie, who have loved me, been there for me, and guided me most of my life. I hope that you, also, surround yourselves with people who love you and care about you.

Find ways to celebrate together. Some of my fondest memories are images of us on the beach in North Carolina, going to Bubba's, hanging out in our living room after a Passover Seder. We could be anywhere together, and it would be joyous just because we were together.

I am so fortunate to have found work that I truly love. Whether I'm doing psychotherapy, training therapists, or rabbinic work, I am mindful of Tikkun Olam. Whatever you choose to do, I hope you do it with passion and determination, and a desire to make the world a better place.

"Slow, slow medium, medium medium, medium fast, fast, loooooooong, scratchy." Do you remember that? It's the way I tickled each of you at night before you would go to sleep. First we would say the Shema together. Then, I would sing, "Go to sleep my little boy/girl, my little baby boy/girl." I'd sing it three times. Always three times. Then the tickles, always in the same order. There was something familiar and comforting about that bedtime ritual. You know, when I was a child, my father did the same thing with me before I would go to sleep each night. L'dor v'dor--I passed it along from my generation to yours. My hope is that you take what is meaningful and special from our family life and pass it on to your children. Maybe it will be the bedtime ritual we had. Maybe not. Whatever it is, may you be filled with as much love in your passing it to your children as I felt when I passed it to you.

And, I encourage you to develop and follow a spiritual path--that you feel connected to that which is greater than yourself. For me that connection is with God, Torah, Israel, and Jewish spiritual practices. I hope you choose this way also. This can take some time to work out. Maybe we're always working on it. It didn't really become

important to me until I was an adult.

Know that what is inside your heart is more important than what you look like.

How you carry yourself is more important than what others think of you. See it through your eyes and God's eyes rather than through the eyes of others.

Know that I have worked to awaken each day with gratitude and end each day with forgiveness.

I wish I had celebrated more with you and worked less hard with others. Most of all, know that I love you all so very much.

Always, Dad

SPIRITUAL WILL OF ED STAFMAN

TO: My dear and beloved wife, Beth; and my most wonderful beloved children, Laura and Logan, all of whom I cherish and love without measure and more than you can possibly know. In accordance with the ancient Hebrew tradition of an ethical will, “a legacy of intangibles,” these are my requests, and my hopes and dreams for you as I contemplate my death, as well as some of the values I have taken from life which I would like to pass on.

I have an ordinary will. It will take care of all of the financial and related matters. But, in the busy pace of our lives, there are rarely times to stand back and reflect upon the big and important things; so, I want to tell you what I consider really important.

First, the mundane matters:

At my funeral, please be guided by two Jewish principles: simplicity and expression of true feelings. I would like it to be a short service. Ask a few people who knew me well to speak about me. Please do not ask a Rabbi who doesn't know me to speak about me. Pick a few songs that I like that you feel are appropriate. They can be raucous, rock and roll, classical, or otherwise, to create whatever mood you think best. I would like to undergo the ritual of tahara and the recitation of psalms between my death and burial, if they are available where we live, and I would like to be dressed in traditional simple tachrichim. Donate as many of my organs as is possible, but not my body. Please do not cremate me. Finally, it would mean a lot to me to be buried next to you, Beth.

If I am sick and near death, and you know that I am on bad terms with anyone, please remind me so that I can forgive them. If anyone is on bad terms with me, please ask them (on my behalf) to forgive me. If possible, I ask that it be announced in synagogue that I forgive any and everyone who may have aggravated me and I ask that everyone whom I may have aggravated to please forgive me.

Each year, on a day near my yartzeit, if it is easily done, please all come together personally, or if you do not live near one another, by telephone, or even instant

message, and discuss anything about my life or that is in this will that you see fitting.

Please also say kaddish for me.

Moving from the mundane to the world of feelings, I leave you this:

I think that Patty Lee was one of the finest human beings that I have ever known and I would like to carry on the tradition that she began in our family. Therefore, I ask that you arrange for Habitat for Humanity, or some similar organization, build a home in my name for someone that otherwise could not afford one. Please ask those who wish to make contributions upon my death to do so to a fund that will go for this purpose, and make up any difference necessary out of the monies I leave behind for you. In addition to this and the tzedukah that I have specified in my will, please give the owner of the house \$318 (the gematria value of my name, Eliezer) to the owner of the Habitat House, or if you deem it more appropriate, to some other charity, and continue to do so each year on my yartzeit for as long as you should wish.

All my life, I have been blessed with gifts of love, far beyond my deserving. I cannot thank enough all who have given me their love.

Beth: remember what has been and weep not. Time is a wondrous healer. If you find a man that you respect and love, marry him and know that I only want you to be happy.

Laura and Logan, you were born out of love. Never has there been a more loving relationship than Beth and me. I have tried to be a good father; only you know how successful I have been. Please always support one another, as you have always done. And visit mom as often as possible. She has set a wonderful example for you in the way she has treated her dad.

These are a few things I have learned along the way; if they speak to you, embrace them :

Little is more important than speaking out against injustice and bigotry.

When I have degraded others, I ended up lessening my own stature.

My work was always meaningful and fulfilling to me. When it stopped being completely fulfilling, I looked for something else that I hoped would be.

I have always tried to actively participate in the Jewish and secular communities, and in political matters, and this has been important to me.

I have always tried to be grateful and joyous. I have not always been able to celebrate together with my family as much as I would have liked.

I was blessed to find real love, not passion, but love. May you be so blessed.

Seek graciousness. It is the lubrication of civilized life. I have never been able to master it, maybe you can.

And in the World of Thoughts and Intellect, I offer you this:

When I graduated from the sixth grade, in accordance with the custom then surrounding elementary school graduation, I had a small “autograph book” and I asked my teachers, friends, and family to sign it. Most would write some wish or hope; often it was in the form of some inane “roses are red, violets are blue” poem. I’ll never forget what my dad wrote. He is not a terribly articulate man nor did he have the resources to compose something. But, perhaps with Hallmark’s help, he spoke from the heart and gave me the greatest wisdom he could muster. He wrote: “Learn, my son, before you grow old; for learning is better than silver or gold. Silver and gold will wither away, but a good education will never decay.” Although you have already exemplified this quality in your early years, I would like to pass on this lesson to you, Laura and Logan, to be applied as adults.

I never fully learned to appreciate my parents and what they gave me.

My dad never had the chance for much learning. He was thrust into his father's business just after high school and he had a family to support by the time he was 19. So, while I have been able to take learning for granted, he understood that it is not something to take for granted, and is greater than any precious material possession. Learning will not only allow you to succeed materially, but much more important, it is a path to enlightenment, and ultimately, to knowing G!d. Mind you, it is not the only path towards these goals, by any means, but it is one path that I have found worthwhile.

On the other hand, an equally important path to happiness is experience, which is a great teacher in its own right.

You both know how to work hard, and this will always stand you in good stead. Neither of you views yourself as a finished product, which is admirable. Don't let learning die as you become engrossed in the routines of living.

If you have the space for them, consider keeping my books, and maybe you will turn to them some day. If not, give them away to a synagogue.

And finally, a Relationship with God:

Laura and Logan, you should have whatever beliefs or convictions honestly come to you. But, please guard your Jewish heritage. The tradition contains sacred memories, not only of me and my parents, but of their parents and their parents, all the way back through the generations. These memories have become traditions and when you carry them on, two things happen: you give your ancestors eternal life, and you become a link in this sacred chain, a link that stretches all the way back to Abraham and Sarah and all the way forward to who knows where. What I have learned is that that link will ground you and give your life meaning in time. That link to the generations is a place to find G!d.

Try to marry a Jew, not because Jews are superior or because there are not many non-Jews with whom you could be happy, but because marriage is complex enough without adding this variable. Also, a Jewish spouse will assure you Jewish children and your link in the chain. Obviously, I did not follow this advice and I don't regret it at all because your mother is so amazing, but I was lucky. If you choose to

marry a non-Jew, that's okay, but keep your own religion and share it with your mate, and try to raise your children within the tradition.

I've spoken of learning and family as paths towards G!d, but I urge you to find G!d for yourself, in the way you deem best. You may find that G!d is found within the process of finding G!d. You may find that G!d can be experienced by contemplation, prayer, or chant. You may find that G!d is really a verb, a way of being. I hope you will find that G!d's love for you is never-ending. You both have incredible souls and they will lead you right: listen to the still small voice within you.

And a Final Blessing:

I pray that your generation will bring more love and peace to the world than has mine. I bestow blessings on you for great and fulfilled life, may you find favor in the eyes of G!d and humankind.

SPIRITUAL WILL OF JUDITH GOLEMAN

First I want to tell my daughter, Rachel Brod, what a treasure you have been to my life. Your presence, your brilliant awareness, your madcap humor, your kindness, your intelligent sense of what's happening - but mainly just that you ARE in my life, has given my life richness and grounding and joy that goes far beyond my ability to express it. Thank you.

I know it hasn't always been an easy path for you. My desire for your happiness is a constant motivator for me to keep growing, to surmount certain negative family patterns so that I can clearly deliver my vast love for you in a way that you can experience it and that it is truly helpful to you. My love for you has been a major, incredibly valuable, constant motivator in my life.

Deborah, I am very happy that you are my sister. Although our early relationship was problematic for me, as the years have gone by your generous spirit and genuine wish for my fulfillment of my life have supported me toward my deepest goals (it helps that you are a psychic healer). You are more of a sister of my heart with each year that goes by. I admire your fierce determination, your warm-hearted bossiness, and your immense personal spiritual growth - and your underlying kindness.

Danny, my "little brother," What a pleasure you are to me. As the years have gone by you more and more give off a warm glow. I am nourished just by being around you. I am in awe of your writing gifts. I appreciate your encouragement and support which you deliver in many, many ways. Your decision to "co-invest" in my Rabbinic studies has made possible SO much happiness for me. You are a blessing in my life. And you DO have eyebrows. I can finally admit it.

Mom, I can't even express how you have been a stalwart backbone for my life. Your example of strength and accomplishment gave me a clear sense that women could have a valuable impact in the world - so that I never have doubted this. Your deeply ethical way of living has taught me that the point of life is to try to "fix the world" as excellently as I can - not for fame or power or money, but for the sake of fixing the world itself. I am especially happy for these last few years we have had together of simple fun and clear love. Thank you for being such a valuable example of how to live

life with integrity.

To everybody else in the family Thank you!!!! It is so fun to be around you all. You are an awesome bunch of high energy, talented, good hearted, goofy, musical, unmusical, good deed-doing people whom I love. I am very grateful for each one of you.

Some details.

If it's possible, I would like to have my death be surrounded by the peaceful, deep and comforting Jewish traditional ways - I would be glad if people sat with my body saying psalms as soon as possible after my death. I would like my body to be washed in the traditional manner by the Chevre Kaddishah. I would like people to sit with my body, reading psalms, until I am buried. I would like a very plain wooden casket. I'd like a funeral run by a Rabbi who knew me and liked me, or a memorial service where my friends might speak out about memories they had of my life. I would like people to truly tune into Rachel's needs after my death to give her real safety and comfort - she tends to try to act as though she is fine when she isn't. Please be with her in the real truth of what she might need. I am hoping for her to experience us as the kind of family that are really there for each other.

Here are some things I have learned in my life, my "ethical will" to you:

I think the best thing I've learned, going along in my life, is that reality is holy. It seems that just plain ordinary life is joyfully resonant with sparks of holiness. Every time I can slow down in my rushing to accomplish my day, or my distractions of various kinds - there it is, the inherent joyful holiness of things (well, not EVERY time, the layers of habits and distractions are pretty thick - but when I can get there, it shines out as the true nature).

My Rabbi Michael Robinson taught me that the holy name of God - the one that is so sacred that we never pronounce it - means the ongoing unfolding of Reality itself. This concept opened up the Jewish liturgy for me. It became a usable spiritual tool.

Praying the Jewish morning prayers every morning has become a beloved practice for me. I have a sense that a discipline of some kind, whether its betrothing yourself to God everyday, as I get to do, or running three miles every morning, as my housemate has done, really makes it possible for excellent things to happen in your life. It seems as if the energy of the discipline itself allows the Universe to express its love for you.

For me, praying the Jewish morning prayer service has taken on a deeper and deeper beauty as I continue to do it. Its familiarity gives me a safe space which I treasure.

I think the other main thing I have learned in my life is that truth is the healer and truth is the basis of sound relationships and the truth is the basis of love. The people with whom I can share the truth of who I am are the people whose support of me has strength for my life. Adonai Elokeichem Emet.

I also learned, through many years of counseling, that all of us are doing the best we are able to all the time. And that reality is the best we've got.

So I hope somehow the joy I feel in the reality of you all, and the knowledge I have that truth is the healer, will allow me to have a beneficial influence on your lives after I have died. May you live in love and truth, and dancing with the sparks of holiness inside of this beautiful Creation.

love, Judith Goleman

SPIRITUAL WILL OF ELI COHEN

As I begin this my seventh pilgrimage to the Land of our ancestors, I reflect on what I might like to leave behind as my "ethical will." I must first, however, reflect on my intended recipients. I leave behind no children of my own. For whom, then, do I write this? I write for those to whom I have been close: for my brother, Aaron, and sister, Janice; for my niece, Jessica, and nephew, Michael; for my dearest friends and confidantes, and for those to whom I have been a teacher and rabbi.

My life has been a path of striving for integrity and wholeness, of integrating the many facets of my being into one beautiful reflection of the Living G-d. While the language has changed, the lesson taught to us as children by our parents is one that has remained throughout my life: "Be what you is, and not what you isn't, 'cuz if you is what you isn't, you just isn't what you is.... Be yourself." Like many of life's lessons, this may be easier said than done. But the saying itself is like prayer; it keeps us aware of a deep value and helps us hold this value in our consciousness, to be drawn upon for guidance. Ultimately, I believe we are asked to follow our inner guide, trusting the place where we interface with G-d.

Judaism is a living and dynamic path which transcends time and place. Engaging with it in a personal way keeps us in connection with our roots and our Root. It is my prayer that we not abandon this path to complacency or oblivion, nor to reactionary forces that would co-opt its light and darken our own. Too often, our Judaism has been laden with only the serious and heavy. It is our task to balance this with joy and celebration. We owe it to our ancestors, and to those who will follow, and we owe it to ourselves.

I cannot say what will speak most to any one of you individually, but I offer you that which has meant the most to me:

- the observance and celebration of the cycle of holidays & Shabbat. It is a gift that gets richer with time as subtleties emerge.
- the practice of the mezuzah. A mezuzah on each door, especially the entrance to one's home, is like an antenna to the sacred.

- staying connected with the community in some way - any way at all.
- remembering to do some deed of kindness.
- always learning a little more about this amazing path.
- being grateful and never forgetting joy.

If there is anyone whom I have hurt by my insensitivity, I ask your forgiveness. It is my prayer that I will leave this life holding no resentments or grudges towards anyone. And perhaps most importantly, please remember that I love you.

SPIRITUAL WILL OF JAN SALZMAN

“No learning is for naught” – Charlene Salzman

This phrase inspires me to maintain an inquisitive mind. My mother has been a model for me, in her endless pursuit of learning. May I and my descendents carry on this tradition of learning ‘lishmah’ for its own sake, not merely for the sake of things more practical.

Face life’s challenges with a bit of humor and an optimism which may be unfounded yet critical; with full candor and frankness; with the belief that just about anything can be resolved where there is a spirit of cooperation and respect for the situation, or for one’s adversaries: all and everything has a spark of the Sacred within, and speaking to that Divine Spark can’t but help to affect the process positively.

I have learned, through many hard lessons, to not avoid the difficult, but to take a deep breath and trust that, in the end, the process of engaging in one’s truth, and being responsible to and honoring of another’s truth, will be edifying and productive.

To always initially approach a situation seeing the good in it; this becomes the ground out of which one can then discern the problems.

When someone is speaking to you, look deeply into their eyes. In this way, they know that they’re being heard, which is one of the great elixirs for our souls.

Clean up your mess, and make a dent in someone else’s, too. Do this without fanfare, but as your gift to the maintenance of the whole.

See yourself as a whole vessel. Take care of your body, your mind, and the Sacred within you. In this way, you will move through your life in an integrated fashion, and not leave any part of you behind.

Know what colors look best on you, and bring beauty to all parts of your world. This includes your home, your gardens, and your environment. However, some parts of ‘nature’ may not appear ‘beautiful’ and it is for this that you must learn that beauty is not limited to appearance, but also expands to the realm of function and a bit of mystery. There is little more beautiful than a working compost pile!

Smile.

Make sure that you make your own music. Hum. Sing. Remember that ‘all notes are equal’ (one of our family’s wisdom phrases) so that there is never, ever, a barrier to sing, dance, drum, or engage in any other art form for which ‘performance anxiety’ is otherwise a factor. Have talent shows with your family and friends. Celebrate what people can do to entertain themselves, and don’t rely exclusively on entertainment created by the corporate culture.

A favorite phrase of my father’s was “The unemployment rate might be 4%, but to the man who doesn’t have a job, it’s 100%” From this I learn that there are real people behind the numbers, and that we must always try to extend understanding and compassion to those individuals, and be engaged in the struggle for social and economic justice in the world. For years, my father donated money to the United Negro College Fund; he did this without anyone knowing about it.

When I discovered this about him, he said that he was trying to do for others what others had done for him: to provide the means for an education so that the poor would have a chance to make a life for themselves. From this I have learned to quietly but unfailingly donate to charity; I hope that you will, too. No matter how much you don’t have, others have even less.

It is my hope that you will continue to identify yourselves as part of the Jewish people, if not for your own sake, but also for the opportunity that it may afford your children, who, even more than you do, may need to find a faith tradition which resonates in their deepest beings. Wrestle with the texts. Remember to gather for Shabbat dinner and Pesach; find communities who will celebrate the other holidays in ways to which you can engage. Better yet, become a leader in those communities, and help to create a Jewish tradition which retains its vitality.

If you find yourself feeling distant from our heritage, try again later; you will change as you grow older, and so will your spiritual needs. Practice reading Hebrew every time you attend a service, or at home, so that you won’t forget your training. Try other paths to spiritual awareness: with Jewish intentionality, chant, dance, drum, study, make love, immerse yourself in the natural world; spend time with the elderly and the

young, and humbly learn all that they can teach you.

Please sit shiva, the traditional mourning period, following my death. Please light a yortzeit candle for me on the anniversary of my death, and attend the Yom Kippur service of Yiskor, to recall all who have died in our lineage, both the family line and in the tribal line. If you would like to, you can arrange a little altar, and light the yortzeit candle in front of your favorite photos of me, with the flame dancing in my eyes once more, so that the flame will re-illuminate my spirit in your imagination. Look deeply in my eyes, and feel my presence in your life. I did this for my father's yortzeit, and I was deeply touched by the practice.

Finally, I charge you with the task to make the world a better place in all that you do. Remember, every dollar that you spend is a vote for a particular economic or agricultural or social system. Vote responsibly with your money. Vote in your electoral systems. Run for election. Serve on committees in your town. My mother taught that, while you can't control directly what goes on in the nation's capital, you can surely control where your town puts a Stop Sign; i.e., you have a say in local politics, so speak up and have a hand in the destiny of your world.

May you be blessed with innumerable opportunities to share love and compassion in the world; may you be kind to each other, take care of each other in times of need, and may you keep your homes and hearts open to those who might be in need of a place to feel safe and loved.

I love you all dearly, and know that you will carry on this love and respect that I have for you into all that you do.

Love,

Mom

(3/28/05)

SPIRITUAL WILL OF "ANONYMOUS"

Dear Ones,

Writing an ethical will is one of Judaism's gifts. And I realize that what I write today is very reflective of me at this moment. So I hope to have many others to revise these words...Mostly what I want to say now, is to trust yourselves; trust your deepest instincts "your belly knowings". What the outer world thinks about you is less important than living your life as closely to your truth as possible. Let life matter and the deep connections with life on all levels--both what we can see and touch, and what are the barest whispers on the wind. Remember it's sunrise somewhere on the planet at any given moment, so turn to face the new sun whenever you need to. Remember to seek comfort. Remember to take time for be-ing, which for me means shabbat. Without this one full day for be-ing, how can you keep refinding yourself? We humans live amidst such a grand array of others "the one legeds (trees), the four-leggeds, swimmers, flyers, and all the unseen ones who keep us alive and embodied. Please remember to reflect on the magnificent complexities of parrot and corn, angel and oak tree, and the Source of it all.

I want to leave some words that are singable refrains from some of my favorite songs (tape accompanies) And the only measure of your words and your deeds is the love you leave behind when you're done (Everything Possible, Fred Small #2 on Rabbi Jonathan's Songs of Love, Hope and Courage CD). Love matters; it's the source and foundation for everything functioning, from the planets staying in their orbit, to a human heart feeling safe enough to blossom. Be blossomers for your selves and for others. Leave judging to God "it's hard enough living on this planet with our own doubts and fears"--don't add to anyone else's difficulties "May nothing that we do mar the holiness of life by causing any fellow creature to lose the joy of living" (Siddur Hadesh Yameinu p. 156, R. Ron Aigen)

Ahava raba ahavtanu "we are loved by an unending love" is true! (Several melodies) In whatever way(s) you can, let yourself know this--live it, breath it, let it fill you. It's easy when you're feeling well--though still really important to remember the

Source of love and joy. Build a strong reservoir in good times, and dip in to remember in those times when the well feels dry. It is not the divine source that has dried up, "only our connection"--it's big, that "only,"--let your holy longing open the ilu /the "if only"--breathe and enter V'nahar yotze me Eden l'hashkote et haGan (Rabbi Shefa Gold website)--enter the river that flows forth from Eden to water the garden--float, be held, be nourished--invite those unseen beings who are part of your life to hold you in the healing waters. You don't need to know them, but we are truly not alone. You are an essential though infinitesimal part of the Oneness--you matter! When you feel alone, remember the footprints story "it's not that you were/are alone in the hardest parts, but you are carried so the one set of footprints is Gods, and when you see 2 sets of footprints, know that you are strong enough to walk alongside the Creator.

Make love that is loving; live in ways that are respectful and caring; listen to those around you. Take time to hear and let them know you've heard them. Be a good friend. With your mate, be a good lover; be generous with yourself, with your loving.

Find every way you can to deepen into compassion-- Rechem, womb, Rachaman, Rachamema, that womb of compassion (it's a masculine noun so everyone gets included) .. Notice there is more space to breathe, to center and relax "soft eyes, soft belly" ...sending your caring out as simple caring, with affection and the desire for the other's well-being.

Caring delivered as judging--caring delivered as worry-- these don't serve very well. Practice soft eyes that look with kindness on all our imperfections. The other thing about operating from compassion is you get to stay quietly in your own body and your own energy space. With judging, you've crossed into operating someone else's life, or trying to. With worry, your energy rushes across their energy space and bombards them in what is usually an uncomfortable way. (Though I'm remembering the old Buddy Hackett story about entering the army and thinking he was dying because he didn't have heartburn from his mother's cooking for the first time in his life.)

death, dying and mourning:

You all know I don't believe death is the end. I have been in contact with too

many people after they have died and over so many years now ... When I say, I will always love you, it's true. When you open to connection, you can feel me with you, supporting you, encouraging you. Remember the love and let it nourish you. And as I grow beyond my human limitations, you can connect with that essence of me that is simply delighted in who you are!

I don't want to be kept alive in a vegetative state and I don't want to be kept alive in a non-functioning state. If you have questions that I am unable to answer, please consult a psychic or medium who can hopefully check with me if I am unable to communicate.

You have the booklet I wrote for the Woodstock Jewish Congregation. Respect and care for my body after death are important to me; and whether it is a funeral home and/or a chevra kadisha, kindness matters and caring touch. If possible, use my version of tahara (my files or WJC). I would like to be buried in my Yom Kippur linen whites (not the tachrichim) with the white on white tallit around me. All other tallitot should go to family and friends as you wish.

Mourning: I am remembering the gift of shiva for me after my mother's death, the subtle changes of each day. And I am remembering Marc and Jennifer talking about being surprised at the wrenching of being back at work the next day. I'm not asking you to sit shiva all week. I am asking to give yourselves enough time. What is enough? Ask inside and let yourself be surprised.

A story- Gevalt, never give up! - a man is deeply depressed, frightened over financial troubles, and going to kill himself. As he hides the means for his suicide on the top shelf in the Study House, he accidentally knocks a book off the shelf that opens to "gevult, never give up!" He studies the book day by day, gaining a little courage and strength and then a check arrives that solves his financial troubles and protects his family. The money was already on its way at the very time he was first going to kill himself. Over time, he changes his life and begins publishing books, beginning with the Never Give Up book. The story is well told on Rabbi David Zeller's "Tree of Life" 6 tape series. I recommend this highly and his chant; Shomreyni ayl, ki hasiti bach Protect me, for I take refuge in You.

Depression runs in the family. Don't make it harder by buying into shame. Seek help.

One of my favorites is the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. This is a great source of healing. Adonai, Adonai, Ayl, Rachum, v'Hanun, Erech apayim, v'Rav chesed, v'Emet, Notzer chesed la-alafim, Nose avon, Vafesha, v'Chata-ah, v'Nakey (accompanying sheet explains & you can hear it on the tape) This is a wonderful practice for yourselves and also to do on behalf of others.

Tikkun olam, mending/healing the world is an important part of life. Judaism prizes it. Find meaningful ways of reaching out to help others. It doesn't need to be flashy and it doesn't need to be money. Let it engage you and draw you closer to tzedek/ justice and rebalancing--become the korban/ the one who is drawn close through offerings.

Adama, ...Love the Earth-- the song says it...check Rabbi David Ingber and Jennifer Berezan's CD "Praises for the World" And if I die tomorrow, may the last words that I know be Praises, Praises for the World.

To each of you, I leave part of my heart and space to grow into your fullest selves. Cherish the earth. Cherish each other. Play fair. You are each so beautiful! May the work of your hands fill you with peace, profit and well being.

I love you!!!!

SPIRITUAL WILL OF RICHARD A. KLEIN

READING SOME RANDOM SWIRLING LEAVES FALLING FROM THE TREE OF LIFE (or Some Thoughts On a Most Satisfying Personal Trip on Earth from a Broken Home to a Garden of Eden On a Hill Embraced By a Magnificent Wife, Great Family, and Good Friends and Surrounded by Fruitful Vines, Giant Redwoods and with Classic Views of Forested Hills and the Monterey Bay).

This is my unabridged, unabashed version of a so-called “Ethical Will,” a real misnomer in my book. I appreciate the Jewish tradition of Ethical Wills and the idea for such a document. But I have trouble with the word “ethical” in this context. All testamentary action must be ethical. I consider this a “Spiritual Will” summing up my life and trying to tell my children and grandchildren and future generations what was important in my life--the ideas, the events and the character traits. This is not necessarily a model for living but, rather, an explanation and an appreciation.

While regular Wills and Trusts dispose of one’s worldly possessions, I like to think that this Spiritual Will hopefully dispenses some wisdom accumulated over an active, even pro-active, lifetime. It is also curious to me, and somewhat serendipitous as with much of life if one dares to explore the larger canvas, that as a Class Officer of my Stanford University Senior Class of 1952, I was elected to prepare the Class of ’52 Will which remains buried in the Inner Quad under our class plaque. When I was so selected, I had no idea of becoming a lawyer, and I certainly had no idea that the last half of my legal career would be devoted primarily to Estate planning and preparing hundreds of Wills and Trusts.

As most friends who have come to know me along the earthly pathway have heard me say repeatedly, I sincerely attribute my success (whatever it may be) and my happiness to that happenstance meeting of Diane Tirza Goldstone, the “Bag Lady,” on the Stanford campus in the winter of 1952. Some say that was chance, but was it? As I like to say, we were both born in the same Los Angeles hospital, old Cedars of Lebanon, and just ten (10) months apart. For many years, our respective parents lived just a few blocks away from each other. We had many mutual friends in high school and university, but did not physically meet until Alan Sieroty stopped to pick up this

strange hitchhiker while I was a passenger in Alan's car. Perhaps we were pre-wired for this ultimate coming together! Others would say we were fortunate, and it was easy because we were so compatible physically, mentally, emotionally and in interests (music, art, architecture, nature, and social/political action) and in purpose and eventually achieving like spirituality. But, believe me, that good fortune and compatibility was shaped and grown with a lot of intention and hard work on both of our parts. Nothing truly meaningful comes easily, and the most esteemed qualities of life come from sincere effort and constant attention. Obviously, the prized fruit of our relationship and that which gives Diane and me the most reward and joy is our amazing family --- three (3) high achieving, highly educated children, Steven Vincent, Marisa Sue, and Tamara Elise, and our daughters' spouses, Darren Ross and Steven Matthew, and their amazing children, our treasured five (5) grandchildren, Harry Isaac, Zachary Reuben, Eli Aaron, Samantha Laura, and Benjamin Richard, who perform wonderful acts and achievements every passing day. To live long enough to see your lineage in action is a pleasure beyond belief, and we are truly grateful and honored by you all.

To give some form and organization to my random thoughts of a sweet life, I shall try to divide these ideas into three (3) categories: events that have shaped my life; people who have had a great impact on me and my lifestyle; and conclude with a synthesis of life values.

Life-altering Events (in somewhat of a chronological time-line):

School buddies, some friendships made as early as the second grade, becoming life-long friends despite, for many, a physical separation consisting of the distance between Los Angeles and the Monterey Bay, and the infinite value of those friendships;

Early interest, perhaps innate, in social action and politics, and later enhanced many-fold by my wife;

Writing and journalism, including writing for and editing newspapers and yearbooks in elementary school, high school and university;

The privilege of attending Stanford University where receiving an excellent education included participation in many extra-curricular activities that have been formative of my adult life and community service;

The legal education provided by Stanford Law School that gave me the mental

tools for successful thinking and work production;

Meeting Diane at Stanford which is obviously the most defining moment of my life;

Getting married to Diane by candlelight on the edge of Swan Lake at the Bel Air Hotel (even though, in the process, I prevented Diane from becoming “truly” bilingual by denying her the opportunity to serve as staff at the Stanford/University of Guadalajara language school and for which deed I have received a lifetime of Diane’s not-so-gentle barbed reminders);

Traveling with DTK to Europe for three (3) months for about \$10.00 per day between the Bar Exam and the Bar results;

Working in the L.A. District Attorney’s office under the tutelage of great trial lawyers;

Designing with Richard Y. Lim, AIA and protégé of Frank Lloyd Wright, and building our first home in Sherman Oaks by flashlight and candle power, and truly enjoying the wonderful living space for our growing family and created by a lot of our own efforts;

Having our children, watching them grow and becoming Family and taking Family trips and vacations;

Learning about real estate development and property management from the Master, Samuel R. Klein;

Diane’s work on the creation of Placerita Canyon Nature Center near Newhall, learning about nature, the environment and ecology, and helping form the PCNC Associates, a non-profit corporation (that still exists after all of these years and failed governmental budgets), and the first of the now many non-profits I have formed and/or worked for and served, including the Santa Cruz Environmental Council, IF, Jewish Learning Center, Capacitar, Friends of Cantera, Chadeish Yameinu (our local Jewish Renewal congregation), and Camphill Communities California;

Studying horticulture and landscape design at Pierce College in Woodland Hills;

The big move to Northern California motivated by the PCNC project and after a long search for property, all of which involved the high risk of lifting up our roots and separating from family and friends;

Moving on the Aptos land with its dilapidated old orchard and magnificent redwoods, ocean view and multi vistas, and planting new lifestyle roots;

Planting 2,200 new semi-dwarf apple trees with an Israeli-inspired drip irrigation system, and learning about farming and farmers the hard way (we ultimately failed as apple farmers), and getting our fingers in the dirt, an experience we will never regret, and failing to organize local apple-growers into a marketing co-op;

Building our beautiful second home and the last home in which we shall personally reside;

Living in the quietude of a most handsome natural setting in harmony with so many birds and animals, such as deer, fox, bobcats and coyotes, hawks, red-tailed and red-shouldered varieties with some of whom I have enjoyed repeated direct communication and recognition through imprinting, and golden eagles and owls;

Receiving a telephone call from future son-in-law Darren asking if the wisteria had grown enough over the arbor to form a chuppah and the ensuing marriage of Marisa to Darren;

The next year building a gazebo on top of the hill for daughter Tami to marry Steven Matthew;

A total of 15 weddings on the land (and no divorces) and other life cycle events;

Engaging in local politics serving on the Democratic Central Committee of Santa Cruz County and being its secretary for several years;

Serving on the Santana-envisioned Central Coast Counties Development Corporation converting stoop-labor farm workers into entrepreneurial strawberry co-op owners;

Engaging in social action projects at Temple Beth El and with IF, the Sanctuary Movement, Capacitar, Habitat for Humanity, and building Habitat homes in Guatemala, visiting IF-sponsored soup kitchens in Peru, and working for Cantera in Nicaragua;

Serving on the Board and as President of Cabrillo Music Festival, and becoming acquainted with Phil Glass and John Adams and other contemporary composers and musicians, and learning to appreciate some of the contemporary music being performed at the Festival;

The moment in time at a guesthouse at Mt. Madonna when our beloved Jyoti Prather whispered to us that she had been cured of her cancer and that she would have

to change her whole approach to living and no longer prepare herself for impending death, and not too much later, honored by participating in Jyoti's memorial service and eulogizing this holy spirit;

The privilege of performing three (3) marriage ceremonies: first, our dear friends, Rene and Stephen Fehrman, at their lovely home in La Selva Beach on Valentine's Day; the marriage of Amanda Marks, the youngest child of Wally and Suzy Marks, to Johnny Rondash at the Bel Air Hotel where Diane and I had married so many prior years; and the union of Jyoti Prather, then terminally ill, to her brave and now surviving suitor, John Robinson, at the Klein Gazebo.

People who have influenced me and shaped me other than Diane, the humming bird lady, and parents and immediate Family members who, of course, were my primary shapers: David Silverstein – learning to write; Don Rose – public speaking, innovative thinking and putting ideas into action; William Linville and George Broadbent – high school teachers and the value of learning; Edgar Robinson, history, Tom Barclay, political science, and Frederic Spiegelberg, religion – amazing university professors; George Osborne, law professor – how to think on your feet and not be fearful of any inquiries or of expressing any idea; Joseph L. Carr, the benevolent godfather, and N. Stanley Leland – how to try a case and how to practice law respectively; Ed Gerard – real estate, fishing, good food, and especially how to be Armenian; Rabbi Leonard Beerman – social action, making peace, and brotherhood for all mankind; Alicia and Manuel Santana – welcoming friendship, social action, CCCDC and CMF; Bill and Pat Cane – Spain, IF, Sanctuary Movement, Capacitar and Central America; Mary Hartman and Anabel Torrez – sisters for the pueblo and founders of Cantera, humility and inner strength; Zalman Schacter-Shalomi – modern Renaissance man, founder of Jewish Renewal movement and preaching the importance of aging and saging; Rabbis Shlomo Carlebach and David Wolfe-Blank, both of whom are now deceased – conducting Shabbatons and services at the Klein Plant Farm and making this a holy place; our fabulous student Reb Eli now turned Rabbi Eli Cohen – takes us and our fellow Chadeish Yameinu congregants to higher and higher spiritual highs; Holly Blue Hawkins – poet, drummer, high priestess of spirituality, confidante, and the best paralegal one

could have; John Robinson – the sweetest friend there is; Coleman Lyles – Camphill leader with the super intellect; and, finally, 3 amazing young angels, 2 of whom were finally conquered by cancer after long courageous battles, Jyoti Prather and Nancy Leventhal, and one who overcame severe traumatic brain injury and who now teaches and lives a most productive life, Libby Roberts, and all who taught me how to live life fully despite the severest of obstacles and all who lived on earth as lightly as a feather.

To sum up, at long last, some of the character traits I believe are important for a meaningful life are:

S – being of service, study, being a sage, and, above all, developing spirituality to soar above the mundane;

H – having a good sense of humor, appreciating good health, and being a caring husband;

A – action, social and political, and aging gracefully;

L – love for a wonderful spouse, for life and for humankind, and lots of laughter;

O – meeting one's obligations full on, practicing tikkun olam (healing the world which, presently, is in great need of healing);

M – a rock-solid, loving marriage and mentoring others.

These traits spell out “SHALOM” --- inner peace and peace in the outside world. Be at peace with yourself and with the earth and others. If you have such Shalom and live each day fully and with meaning and purpose, then there is no reason to fear death. All of us are going to die sooner or later. That is a scientific fact, and it makes no sense to worry about death. Do what you can to live a good and meaningful life so that when death does come to your personal door, you will have no regrets --- you will have had a sweet life.

Amen

SPIRITUAL WILL OF DIANE T. KLEIN

My dearest family,

In 1984 I read about the Jewish tradition of writing ethical wills, and determined that including one with my will and trust and health care directive would be of utmost importance to me and, hopefully, to my children and grandchildren as well.

What do we leave behind us? A sum of money? A painting? A dish? What about expressions of love? Hopes for our family? Hopes for our planet? Life lessons learned?

Suddenly, the task is before me as an assignment for a class on ethical wills that our good friend and associate Holly Blue Hawkins is taking. What I have to say will be to the point. I do not want to sound like a preacher – I have been accused of that enough, and probably with good cause, over the years.

I love each and every one of you with all of that part of our being we call our heart and soul. And since love and “all” are boundless, I wish to add here that I have loved your father and grandfather with all my heart and soul throughout our married life.

I feel immense gratitude for the gift of precious grandchildren. May your lives be blessed with happiness, good health and work that is personally rewarding.

I am somewhat ambivalent about addressing men and women in the middle of their lives as children. But our children you are. We have been blessed by your love, friendship, support, and amazing talents. Our wishes for happy, rewarding and healthy lives remain high for you. Our experience has been that we are always on a learning curve, and, more often than we think, we can seize opportunities (whether work directed or personal) and make changes that are life enhancing. My only request is for you, while separated by distance and lifestyles, to find ways to come together as family – as sisters and brothers – and to be appropriately supportive of one another.

As for myself, I want to ask forgiveness for times I needlessly punished, overreacted, offended, embarrassed, and overstepped boundaries I was not aware of. Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, founder of Jewish Renewal, exhorted us in his book on aging and saging first to forgive ourselves and then to forgive others. And, so, I also

forgive myself for the incidents and times in my life for which I have felt guilt, regret or embarrassment.

I have been, indeed, fortunate – blessed – to be able to share my life with my soul-mate Richard. We have been really lucky. As assertive human beings we have had disagreements, but they are nothing. We are so very grateful for our mutual love, our friendship, and our mutual interests and goals. We are grateful for the laughter – laughing at ourselves and with each other – that provides balance and perspective. We are grateful for having made the decision to move north to this beautiful community and the unfolding of opportunities that otherwise might not or would not have been available.

Finally, on a personal note, I have no fear of dying. Many, many years ago, out of the blue, I experienced an internal feeling of peace and the realization that should I be in the process of dying, I would have none of the regrets that prevent people from being at peace with themselves when facing imminent death.

I am in awe of the universe, and accept the possibility that the answers we seek through science or religion may always be beyond our ken. Richard and I look at the tree-covered hills, the brilliant blue skies or the warm-colored sunrises and sunsets, and we feel gratitude (a word I am repeating but that has become very important to us) for the opportunity to exist on this planet for whatever time is allowed us and to witness so much amazing beauty. These are not just experiences of nature but also spiritual experiences in our lives. And what more spiritual experience than when Richard makes on-going contact with a particular red-tailed or red-shouldered hawk that has imprinted Richard's image and responds to his whistle or presence! Other spiritual highs have resulted from very particular occasions and experiences that were shared with us by our "compadres" in Latin America. The third spiritual dimension in my life is rooted in who I am, that is, a Jewish person. The Shabbat is truly a spiritual day for us when we set aside the weekday activities and nourish our bodies, minds, souls and hearts connecting with community at our nearby farmers' market, a Jewish Renewal service and finally at our local funky spa. Certain Torah readings and portions of the writings of the prophet Isaiah have encouraged and supported the small contributions we have been privileged to make in welcoming the stranger, in feeding the hungry, in standing with the oppressed, in being two of a multitude of voices seeking justice and peace.

I know you, our children, have and continue to contribute to the well-being of many, each in your own way, including reaching out to a friend or a stranger in an emergency situation. I encourage the generations to emulate your caring and good deeds and to seek their own spiritual support for deeds of loving kindness, the pursuit of justice and peace, and the preservation of life on our planet.

All my love always,
your mother, mother-in-law and grandmother
April 17, 2005

SPIRITUAL WILL OF CHANNAH ZIMMERMAN

To my beloved family:

When it comes to writing a will, it's easy to deal with material possessions; each of you has expressed a wish for a specific tangible treasure that I hold dear and I have complied with those desires. But this is an ethical will and in it, I hope to leave you with more than just a sweet memory. I hope to leave you a sense of the intangible.

First however, I have a few details to share with you. I can visualize you rolling your eyes about now and going, "Yup, Mom had to make sure she got in one last set of instructions on her way out of here." Here me out though, because these are important to me. I'd like to have a traditional burial and I'd like to be buried in my white tallis. Plant red rose bushes in my memory. Please don't have a stranger get up and go on about me at my funeral. Have people who knew me share memories of my life. Make a tzedakah donation in any multiple of chai to an Aleph scholarship fund in order that others might be assisted in finding meaning in their lives with study.

Now, I would like to share with you some words from Micah that for me sums up what it means to live a good life. These are the words that I have always tried to live by and they have served me well. "Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8.

What does it mean to do justice? Justice is when we do the right thing, even if it means going against the grain of common thought. Doing justice includes feeding the hungry, caring for the widow and welcoming the stranger. The very phrase, "doing justice" implies social action, getting involved. It doesn't mean to sit back and let someone else do the work for you. For me, doing justice is tightly wrapped up in following the mitzvot in the Torah. Remember how I used to tell you that Torah is God's original little instruction book? I would ask that you remember those words and look to Torah and I would ask that each of you continue to be workers for justice in the world. I can't tell you which path you should take in the future, but I ask that your path be just. Aaron Joseph used to tell me that our tzedakah box should be kept in the car because we meet the hungry on street corners, not in our dining room. How right he was.

What does it mean to love kindness? Not to kick a dog when he's down, but to welcome the dog into our home and care for it. There are many examples of people who do kindness in this world that can be examples for us to follow. Over the years our family has exhibited kindness by welcoming others into our home and caring for them while they were at difficult points in their lives. My children, you have gained many additional siblings, cousins and aunts by this process and even though our home was often crowded and sometimes money was very tight, yet if I had the opportunity to go back in time, I wouldn't change a thing. I believe our lives have been enormously enriched by the people who have shared our home and table and not only those who moved in with us, but also those Jews passing through town looking for a Pesach seder or a High Holiday service. They have also enriched our table. I would ask that you continue this road of kindness, looking out for and welcoming others.

Lastly we come to walking humbly with your God. What does this mean? Showing up in shul every Shabbat? No. There are many who sit sanctimoniously in shul and never walk humbly with their God. For me, walking humbly with my God has meant recognizing the Divine Presence in our world and constantly being amazed by it. I have seen God reflected in baby's faces as well as the faces of the dying. God is larger and more unknown to us than anything else in this world, a fact which has humbled me.

When you read through the siddur, which I hope you do, you will see that many of our prayers are really praises, especially in the psalms. Why praises? Because, sometimes praises are the only response to the awe and magnificence of God and likewise, sometimes praises are the only response to the sorrow and heartbreaks in this world. When I have felt at my lowest, I have found comfort in chanting Modah Ani (Grateful am I), adding my personal litany of all that I have for which I am grateful. The long list astounds me every time and reminds me in the middle of my low places of how much I really have for which I'm grateful.

Walking humbly with our God reminds us of who we are and what our purpose is in this world – to be representatives of the Divine presence; to reflect the divine light into our world. It was God who called me to this path of rabbi and even when I resisted, God insisted. I hope that my future rabbinate will reflect God's light. God has chosen me for

a reason and even though I don't know that reason yet, I'm sure it will be revealed in God's good time.

Yet, even as we live our lives by Micah's words, I want you to understand that there is much brokenness in this world and that sometimes no matter how hard we try, there is no way for us to heal that brokenness. Micah's words speak to us of relationships, first our relationships with each other and finally our relationship to God. Yet not every human relationship can be healed by doing justice and lovingkindness. Sometimes, we simply have no choice but to learn how to let go. Sometimes it seems that it's only the tenacity with which people struggle with life that keeps us going.

There have been moments in my life when I have felt so full of despair that I truly believed I could not continue. Yet I have survived. I learned that God didn't always give me what I wanted, but what I needed and they weren't always the same. Adversity comes to teach us about our extraordinary will to survive. I have bested adversity on many levels and I have learned to love through my pain and sorrow.

I would hope that you, my children, hold each other dear. Call one another, visit each other, and be there for one another. Right at this moment, the one thing I regret most is not having raised you near extended family; I ache to move back east where we have family to lean on in times of distress. I hope that each of you can look out for one another and just be there for each other. I would also like you to remember that other than your dad and me, the ones who know you best are your siblings. I would hope that those sibling bonds never fall away, that you remain loyal to and supportive of each other. Someday when you are all old people sitting in rocking chairs on front porches, you will have the stories of your childhood to share with one another.

You will laugh about how your cousin Reis wanted to know how far down in Lake Erie the salt water went and how your cousin Sean responded, "all the way to the bottom, stupid." You will laugh over how Aaron Joseph used to color Shawna with magic markers when she was napping. You will laugh over how Libby dog once climbed trees and played football with you. You'll remember the times you rode your tricycles off the roof of the house. You'll remember your grandfather who let each of you drive his boat out in the Atlantic when he and Grandma lived down in the Florida Keys.

You'll remember slumber parties and birthdays. You'll remember all the years we schooled at home and how much fun we had. You'll remember the fried chicken and piles of mashed potatoes that I used to cook for you. You'll remember all those camping vacations, jumping off waterfalls and sitting by campfires late into the night eating chili and nachos. You'll remember the "l'chaim's" we drank around the Shabbos table and how as you grew older, we let you have more of them with wine rather than juice. You'll remember how it just wasn't Passover unless someone spilled their wine on the tablecloth. The memories will be abundant and you will have each other to help you remember them.

I have learned through the years not to be complacent in life. Just when I thought I had everything under control, God threw me a curve ball that knocked me for a loop. My greatest challenge was to learn to live with heartbreak. Yet in the process I discovered that none of us can avoid sorrow; it's a part of living and to live fully is to pick up the gauntlet of challenge that God flings at you. To live fully is to take risks. To take risks means you have to be willing to accept failure, because not everything will turn out for the good. But without risk and failure, life becomes dry and filled with dust. Some things will always be devastating, but in the midst of every tragedy there is the potential for goodness.

Life is what each of us makes of it. It's meant to be a challenge and there is no instruction book attached that says on day 52 say this, on day 1984 do this on day 43,987 do this. We each have to write our own book of experience, and even though we all lived in the same house as a family, none of us will look back and see our experience from the same perspective as someone else. We are all different and we all experience life differently. I did the best I could with my life. When we do the best we can, life is good. We don't need perfect, we just need good enough. In fact, the Navajo teach that to make anything perfect is an affront to God, because only God can create perfection. I wish each of you a life that is good enough.

I love you all.

Love, mom
(2005)

SPIRITUAL WILL OF HOLLY BLUE HAWKINS

AGREEMENT

Dear G!D

when comes my time
don't hem and haw around
don't give me lots of tests
and opportunities
to make things right
or say one more farewell

just take me

drop a tree limb
on my head
if You will
so they might say
she died with her boots on
never knew
what hit her
dropped with a plop
like a pebble in a pond
and was no more

and in return
I will do my best
to live a life
with no regret
or obligations
left unmet

I will not be afraid to listen
will not be afraid to speak
no love languishing
unexpressed

each day my last
with soil prepared
for someone else to plant

What can I give you, somewhere out there in time/space, living in a world I can scarcely imagine, and you knowing so little of mine? Who am I to you and what can I possibly say that will have any meaning in your lifetime?

I will tell you, we were here, a clan of country wimmin. Let our story live, for it is true. We grew our own food and built our own houses, fixed our own cars, tended our own livestock, birthed our own babies, buried our dead and planted again every spring. We loved one another well, wrote our own anthems and made us some mighty fine music.

We cherished our right to live as free people, not just by our gender but also our spirituality, politics, preferences and shared code of conduct. We lived in the mist at the edge of the forest and kept our own stories. We knew what we believed in. We had our own pantheon, heritage, legacy and legends.

We were nearly wiped out by domestication and habitat destruction, but we survive, and even in your time, if you know what to look for, you will find free ranging, wild women living on the fringe of civilization, participating in but not part of the dominant paradigm.

Life has taught me to be loyal, generous, honest, humble, authentic and engaged with the rhythms of days, months, years, and life cycles; to live in right relationship with all things and all peoples, to be constantly giving back in a sustainable way and to remember that everything I do, perceive, think, say, consume, emit or transmit comes from somewhere through me and flows out of me like water along a creek bed; and furthermore it continues downstream through and past everybody else until it comes

right back around, through my own life again and onward.

I cannot leave you anything material, for I am a keeper and a maker, even a seller, though not so skillfully. But I am not an owner and my beneficiaries are by heart line only, not by blood. And I will not tell you how to be you, I, who am still so clumsy at living my own life according to my visions.

But what I freely and without limitation or expectation give you are my dearest won lessons:

That each moment must be lived with clarity of purpose and dedication of intent.

That each day is to be lived as a prayer.

Ask, "Is what I am doing serving the children unto seven generations?"

Not for myself alone, but for All Our Relations.

If not now, when?

It's all done with mirrors.

If a person lives long enough, life will polish down everything that sticks up above itself, and eventually you will shine, if you allow life to wear away everything but your own true self.

Above all else, keep an open heart and love The Giver.

BLESSING

Come out from under
the weight of yourself
and fly
into your
lightness
become
wing,
wind, and
water
all at once

Hurl the wave of you
onto your own shoreline
into your own heaven
become
your own stars

Inhale everything
that ever was
and exhale everything
that ever shall be
open your bosom
to the Universe
ignite

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April 28, 2005