

INTENTIONAL LIFE PLANNING™

Write Your Obituary



“Mary Ellen (Lowe) Monson, 95, passed away Dec. 29, 2015. Mary Ellen loved a drink and a sad song, preferably together and especially with friends and family. She enjoyed a lifetime of TV (a perk of not having a job), never drove (with a license), did not answer the phone during Jeopardy and grieved Regis Philbin’s retirement daily. She loved her grandchildren, though liked them best when they were young enough to stay on her lap and old enough to run to the liquor store. Mary Ellen always wanted her obituary to say that she was an avid reader because she thought those people sounded smart. Mary Ellen was an avid reader.”

--The Oregonian, May 11-15, 2016

How do you want your obituary – your story – to read when you die?

This is an excellent, and sobering, exercise. It’s useful to check in on where you are on your life’s journey, how you want to live your life and what you value, and what you still have to accomplish.

Take a morning and have your resume or LinkedIn profile nearby for reference. Think about how you want your obituary to sound (your tone/philosophy/life outlook). You might check out a few other obituaries online.

Then start writing:

- Start with your full name, age, date of birth and date of death.
- Where was your last residence?
- How did you die (how would you like to die)?
- Where did you grow up? Where else did you live?
- Did you marry? Whom and where?
- Did you serve in the military?
- Where did you attend school?

- What awards or accolades did you win?
- What brought you your greatest joy?
- What was your greatest disappointment?
- Favorite stories you want people to remember about you? Humor?
- What did you like to do? What hobbies did you have? What did you believe in?
- Where did you work?
- What did you achieve outside of work?
- What did you believe in?
- What about volunteer activities?
- Who were your parents, siblings, spouses? Who are you survived by? Pets?
- Will you have a memorial service? If so where/what? Public or private? What do you want done with your body?
- Do you want people to make donations in your memory? Where?
- Favorite quotations?
- What 3-5 words describe how you lived?