

WYTYCHAK ELDER LAW NEWS

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Spring Greetings from Wytychak Elder Law!

News:

- Kate will be speaking at the National Association of Retired Federal Employees Seminar on May 19, 2011.
- Wytychak Elder Law will be closed Monday, **May 30, 2011** for Memorial Day.



Thoughts on Loss and Legacy- By Mike Wytychak

Our perception of ourselves and the world changes as we grow older (i.e. over 50). If we and our loved ones understand those changes, we'll make wiser choices.

Loss becomes a larger and larger factor in our life as we grow older. Loss usually starts with noticing we can't physically do the things we used to do. We can't walk as far, we're not as limber as we used to be, or we don't see/hear as well. The doctor isn't able to cure these losses. At the same time, the media (e.g. t.v., magazines) tries to sell us all kinds of "cures" which only mask the symptoms. Loss also extends into our social circles. Our friends aren't as available as they used to be. Spouses aren't the person s/he used to be. One by one, our spouse and friends become incapacitated or pass away. It's easy to become isolated by loss because everything that we've created is either changing or disappearing.

Last week a person scheduled an interview with me for legal advice. Her husband had died shortly after being diagnosed with a disease. The home of their dreams was worth about the same as the mortgage against it. Her Social Security check increased to the amount her husband received, but she lost the check that she used to receive from Social Security. As I have been often told, the "Golden Years" aren't so "golden".

Another major factor as we grow older is developing our legacy. Usually "legacy" means the inheritance we pass to others. It also means figuring out what value our life had and how it affected (and will affect) others. You've heard it said in many ways: "What's it all about?" "Why did I (or she, or he) do that (or didn't do that)?" "I (or she, or he) missed the boat." "I (or she, or he) was at the right place at the right time." "Make hay while the sun shines." We often look at our children as a mirror of our legacy. We're proud/ashamed of them. We help/shun them. A part of us is part of our children. As we grow older, we grapple with how our lives will transition to other lives. We treasure pictures

that tell stories. We recount past episodes that are important to us. We don't want to leave the house/community where important events took place.

My Uncle Joe was an electrician in New York. He worked like a horse in construction for 30 years. When he retired, he moved to Florida. In the trailer park that he lived in, he developed a reputation for working like a horse helping people make additions to their trailers. He convinced one of his children (who still lived in New York) to buy a place near him. As you might have guessed, he helped his son remodel the newly purchased house. For my Uncle, his hard work was what he gave to others.

Loss and legacy are a natural part of growing older. Problems develop when seniors and/or their families/friends don't cope in a healthy way to loss and legacy. The usual trouble makers are denial, deception, and interference. Actions often take place at an unconscious level. Growing old isn't for sissies! It takes a great deal of courage to adjust to the changes. You've all heard the phrase "His/her time has come." Loss and legacy have been resolved for people whose "time has come". They, and us, can therefore rest in peace.



*"Tis like the birthday of the world,
When earth was born in bloom;
The light is made of many dyes,
The air is all perfume:
There's crimson buds, and white and blue,
The very rainbow showers
Have turned to blossoms where they fell,
And sown the earth with flowers."
- Thomas Hood*



If you haven't already done so, please take a look at our website at:

www.wytychakelderlaw.com