



Andrea L. Jakob, PA

*Legal knowledge, human wisdom:
Helping you plan today, so you can
sleep better tonight.*

The Great Wealth Transfer Is Also a Great “Stuff” Transfer

You may have heard of the “Great Wealth Transfer”—the enormous amount of wealth expected to pass from older generations to younger ones over the next couple of decades.

But there is another transfer happening too.

It is not just money, investments, and real estate being passed down.

It is furniture.

China.

Photo albums.

Tools.

Collections.

Holiday decorations.

Boxes in the garage.

Storage units.

Family keepsakes.

And all the mysterious things tucked away in closets, drawers, and attics.

In other words, the Great Wealth Transfer is also becoming the Great “Stuff” Transfer.

When a Lifetime of Belongings Becomes Someone Else’s Job

At some point, many adult children face the difficult task of walking through a parent’s home after they are gone.

The person is no longer there, but a lifetime of belongings remains.

That process can be emotional. A handwritten recipe card, a favorite chair, an old photograph, or a piece of jewelry can bring back memories and provide comfort.

But it can also be overwhelming.

What should be kept?

What should be sold?

What should be donated?

What can be thrown away?

Who gets to decide?

And sometimes the hardest question of all is:



Andrea L. Jakob, PA

*Legal knowledge, human wisdom:
Helping you plan today, so you can
sleep better tonight.*

Who is actually responsible for doing all of this?

Often, one family member ends up doing most of the work. That person may be the trustee, personal representative, local child, or simply the one who steps forward when no one else does. Over time, that can create frustration, resentment, and conflict.

Your Children May Love You, But Not Want Your Stuff

Here is a hard truth many families are facing: your children may love you deeply and still not want all of your belongings.

That does not mean those items were not meaningful. It does not mean your memories do not matter. It simply means younger generations often have different lifestyles, smaller homes, less storage space, or different tastes.

The dining room set that hosted every Thanksgiving may not fit in your child's home.

The china cabinet may not match their lifestyle.

The collection that brought you joy may not carry the same meaning for them.

The problem is not that every item needs to be kept.

The problem is that someone will have to decide what happens to it.

The Hidden Costs of Too Much Stuff

When belongings are not organized or discussed ahead of time, the burden can show up in very practical ways.

Families may face:

- Storage fees
- Cleanout costs
- Junk removal expenses
- Estate sale commissions
- Appraisal fees
- Extra utility, insurance, and property tax costs while a home sits unsold
- Lost value when items are thrown away or donated too quickly



Andrea L. Jakob, PA

*Legal knowledge, human wisdom:
Helping you plan today, so you can
sleep better tonight.*

- Delays in selling real estate

There can also be emotional costs.

Sentimental items may spark disagreements. One person may feel that another took too much. Someone may feel unappreciated for doing most of the work. A family member may struggle with guilt over letting things go.

And when a health crisis or incapacity happens suddenly, the situation can become even more stressful. Family members may need to step in quickly to provide care, locate documents, manage bills, or make decisions—while also trying to navigate a cluttered or disorganized home.

Conversations Now Can Prevent Conflict Later

The best time to talk about belongings is while you are still here and able to give guidance.

That does not mean you need to distribute everything immediately. But you can begin the conversation.

You might ask your loved ones:

- Are there any items that are especially meaningful to you?
- Is there anything you definitely do not want?
- Are there family pieces you would like me to explain or label?
- Would it help if I wrote down the stories behind certain belongings?

These conversations can feel awkward at first, but they are often a gift. They reduce guessing. They lower the chance of conflict. And they help your loved ones understand what matters most to you.

The Bottom Line

The things we leave behind are not just things. They carry memories, stories, and sometimes complicated emotions.

But without a plan, they can also create stress, expense, and conflict for the people we love.

A thoughtful estate plan should address more than money. It should also consider the home, the belongings inside it, and the people who will one day be responsible for sorting through it all.



Andrea L. Jakob, PA

*Legal knowledge, human wisdom:
Helping you plan today, so you can
sleep better tonight.*

If you want to make things easier for your loved ones, we can help you think through not only who receives your assets, but also how to reduce the burden of what gets left behind.