

Life Legacy Love Book

When Tania Howard began working in the funeral industry in her 20s, her healthy and vibrant mother suggested now was a good time for them to have a talk about life and death.

There were many things her mum wanted to share about her life and arrangements for when one day in that very distant future that time came in her life. This conversation was the inspiration for a new book Tania has published to help other families prepare to meet their loved one's final wishes.

As they explored her life and legacy, gathering photos, sharing stories, experiences, wishes and ensuring all documents were in order and easy to find. Together they realised the power of having all this information in one place, removing any additional burdens when the time came.

Little did Tania and her brother realise her end would be sooner rather than later, when just weeks after her 50th birthday, their healthy vibrant mum suddenly died.

"It was out of the blue. One day I was talking to her and then the next she was gone. It was the worst feeling being told there was nothing that could be done, and we made the decision to turn off the machines," Tania said.

"But despite how horrible we felt, because mum and I had spent time talking about her wishes, I knew exactly what to do. I knew how to access her money to fund the beautiful memorial for her, what she wanted to be buried in, what stories to share at her funeral and little bits about her life that I would never have known about if we had not have those conversations."

Realising how hard it is for people to discuss death and the passing of a parent with their children, Tania and her mum, Ceridwen created Life, Legacy and Love – a record of my life and final wishes as a guide and tool to use to gather the important information such as personal details – tax file number, Medicare number, wedding date, occupation, assets list, where important documents are stored but also highlights from their life, bucket list items and the family tree.

"So many think the moment you talk about death, you are being morbid or signing your life away, or all of a sudden if you make arrangements you will suddenly catch "death" but it is more about getting on with life and letting more people know about who you are. Not having these conversations leads to more stress at a time when it is not needed, legal disputes or family arguments over who is doing what," Tania said.

"By taking the time to have these conversations, it can save a lot of pain and confusion.

"When my mum died, I knew she didn't want to be dressed in her best. We have talked about it and she wanted to be buried in her favourite tracksuit and Ugg boots. I would never have known that if we hadn't talked about it."

Stage one of Life, Legacy and Love is in print but Tania has plans to publish the book digitally.

"My children never got a chance to meet my mum, but they can look at the book and see photos of her and read about what she loved doing, things she liked and disliked," Tania said.

"I know we all think parents are invincible, but we are all going to go one day. Being able to help people make informed decisions is in power and this free book is my way of giving back and sharing my mum's legacy."

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