

Luce, Luze & Reck

FUNERAL HOMES

Serving the South Dakota Communities of Gettysburg, Faulkton, Eagle Butte, Highmore, Miller

Mandy Luikens-Spilde & Tiffany Pape Hofer
Owners/Funeral Directors
tiffany@luceluzereck.com

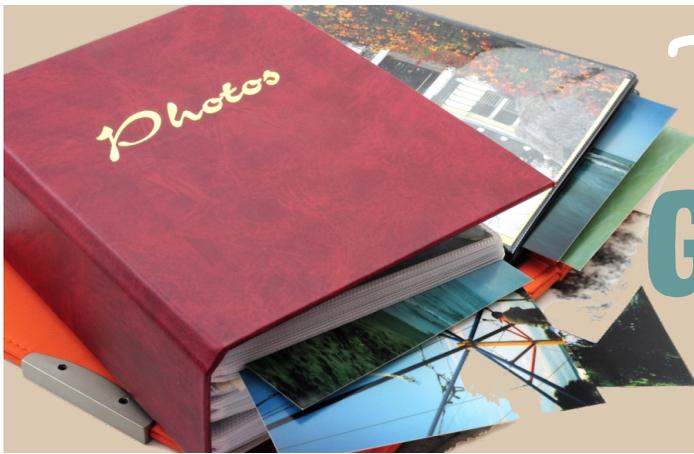
"Providing Comfort To Families"

www.familyfuneralhome.net



Chapters

Turning the Pages through Grief



Too Much of a GOOD THING

By
Eileen
Madsen

...

Eileen Madsen
is an award winning
columnist, editor,
and publisher of
Chapters Newsletter

Stuff. Everywhere. Photos, clothes, furniture, collectibles, and well... just stuff. There may come a time when you have to deal with clearing out your parents, grandparents or other loved ones' homes after they have passed. It won't be a walk in the park. Unless the park has muddy paths, fallen branches, dogs that chase you, and no bathrooms. In other words, it takes some navigation.

I was in that position twice. Once, when my mom moved to assisted living, and we prepared her house for sale. And again, with her assisted living apartment after she died.

Let me tell you, when it comes to nostalgia, you can have too much of a good thing. Sifting through a house full of items that held sentimental value can be fun and meaningful—but also overwhelming and a heck of a lot of work!

Even old photo albums can turn from a stroll down memory lane, to a sprint to the garbage can. In fact

after sorting photos we wanted to keep, the rest, along with the musty, mildewed albums, were tossed into a bonfire. **And it felt... glorious.**

At first, when my siblings and I started the task of going through the stuff in the house we grew up in, it was a challenge to know what we wanted to keep, what to sell, and what to pitch. And time was spent fondly reminiscing over certain pieces of furniture, clothing, and other items. As time went on though, the novelty wore off, and what we thought we wanted to keep either ended up in the sell pile, or the pitch pile, or the "I don't care anymore, I want this over with" pile.

However, in retrospect, had we not been so rushed to get the house on the market, we may have made better decisions. There are things we wish we would have done, not done, or kept. **Although every situation is different, here are some things I've learned from my experience.**

continued...

MARCH
2026



"Edit your life frequently and ruthlessly.
It's your masterpiece after all."
—Nathan W. Morris



...continued from front

1) Take a breath. In most cases one doesn't need to leap into action like a Tasmanian devil. Doing so can lead to rash decisions just to get things done. When I think back on it all now, there actually are some items I wish I would have kept. Simple things, such as the offset spatula I was enamored with as a kid, or the abstract wall plaques I got my parents for Christmas one year. So taking a step back may help with future regret.

2) Don't do it all yourself. Ask for help, and if you are able, hire someone to clean after the house is emptied. My sister and I ran ourselves ragged trying to clean everything ourselves. And let me tell you, after a 99-year-old woman lives in a house for 75 years there are surprises around every corner, on the floors, in the closets, under the sink....

3) If you have an estate sale, hire a professional, and have it in person. Do your research and understand the costs, percentages, and who is doing the work. Get referrals. We made the mistake of having the sale online where people bid on the items. Ultimately, we lost money on the deal so I would not recommend that route. We also had many items left over which led to being stuck with more stuff to sell or dispose of.

4) Talk to your family members prior to when the time comes to clear out the home, to help keep squabbles and misunderstandings at bay. Having a list of items that go to specific people, agreed upon in advance is very helpful.

5) If a parent or other loved one moves to a care facility, or down-sizes to a smaller home or apartment be careful of filling their apartment or room with clutter, either from their original home, or brought in from well-meaning visitors. If you don't keep a watch on it, you'll be back in the same boat as when they moved from their home. I swear my mom's apartment spontaneously bred holiday décor, knick-knacks, and clothing.

6) After hours and days of going through photo albums, slides, and scrapbooks, decisions will have to be made. In our case, if no one knew who was in the photo, or where it was taken, out it went. Steeping oneself in yesterday for too long, I found to be a waste of today. Eventually you'll want, and need, your own life back.

7) Computer files, digital photos and social media footprint. Watch for a future Chapters devoted exclusively to this.

Bottom line is don't rush, but don't dilly dally either. And don't kick yourself after the fact if you have some regrets, or dwell on what could have been done differently. No one, or no family is perfect, nor makes the right decisions all the time. But with some trusted advice, planning, and perhaps an offset spatula, the process can be less stressful.

* * *

Listen Up!

Some of our favorite audio books



The Beauty of What Remains *How Our Greatest Fear Becomes Our Greatest Gift*

As the senior rabbi of one of the largest synagogues in the world, Steve Leder has learned the many ways death teaches us how to live and love more deeply by showing us not only what is gone but also the beauty of what remains. Enriched by Rabbi Leder's irreverence, vulnerability, and wicked sense of humor, this heartfelt narrative is filled with laughter and tears, the wisdom of millennia and modernity, and, most of all, an unfolding of the profound and simple truth that in loss we gain more than we ever imagined.

Benefits of Nostalgia **Builds self-esteem:**

Positive memories can reinforce a person's self-worth, allowing them to feel more confident.

Helps us find meaning: Nostalgia offers a deeper understanding of each of our journeys in life, which can give us purpose and meaning in times of uncertainty.

Encourages authenticity: Most of us experience periods of change in our personal or professional lives. Reflecting on the past helps us remain grounded in our beliefs and stay true to our values.

Makes us happy: Its ability to bring joy to our lives. Reliving some of our favorite memories releases dopamine in our brains, which can give us a quick boost in the mood department.

Drawbacks of Nostalgia

Hindering personal growth: When we become too attached to certain memories, it can be hard to embrace the present, leaving us stagnant in certain areas of our lives.

Increasing anxiety: A study published in the European Journal of Social Psychology determined that "after being exposed to nostalgic stimuli, participants who exhibited a 'strong worry habit' showed 'enhanced symptoms of anxiety and depression' compared to those with the same predisposition in the control group." So, those who experience stress regularly might feel more feelings of sadness or anxiety when they think back on a fond memory rather than feelings of joy.

