



The 5 Biggest Mistakes People Make in Their Will

- 1. They think it avoids probate.** This is a huge one! We hear all the time that “I have a will so I can avoid probate.” That could not be further from the truth. A will is basically just a roadmap through probate. Having a will is super important, but if you want to avoid probate, you need to do more than that.
- 2. They think it applies to all of their assets.** Lots of people have a will that leaves a percentage to charity, church, a godchild, etc. Obviously, they feel strongly about those organizations or people or they wouldn’t have included them in their will. Unfortunately, just saying “10% to _____” does not ensure that “_____” actually receives 10% of your estate. If your assets are jointly held or have a beneficiary named on them (like a POD on a bank account), those things take precedence over your will. So if your kids are named as the beneficiary on all of your accounts, your favorite charity won’t get anything, even if your will says otherwise!
- 3. They don’t tell anyone where their will is.** Your will won’t do anyone any good if nobody knows you have one, or if they don’t know where to find it. Most courts require the original will and only accept copies in limited circumstances. It’s important that your family knows you’ve done your planning and where to find it.
- 4. They don’t plan for contingencies.** A good will names backups for the person in charge of your estate. It also says where your assets should go if your primary beneficiaries predecease you. You want your will to last for as long as possible, so don’t forget to plan for “life” happening.
- 5. They do it themselves.** There are a lot of things you can do yourself. There are also many things you shouldn’t do yourself. Sometimes a professional is worth the extra cost. For example: you can find instructions on the internet for how to pull your own tooth. Does that mean you should? No, probably ought to call a dentist. The same goes with your estate planning. Whether you have a little or a lot, the only thing at risk if things go wrong is your family and everything you’ve worked for during your life. Let a professional help!

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