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FACING THE ONE CERTAINTY IN LIFE

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Last month, we talked about how uncertain life can be. So this month, let's talk about something a little more certain: we're all going to die someday.

There it is—said plainly. And if we *know* something is going to happen, most of us would agree it makes sense to prepare for it. Strangely, only **43% of Canadians have a will** in place¹. While a will isn't a complete estate plan, it *is* a starting point. And if you don't have one, chances are your estate isn't prepared.

Here are three common scenarios that show why estate planning matters:

1. Young families with kids

If both parents pass away without a will (dying *intestate*), it's up to the courts to decide who becomes the children's guardian. This process is often slow, expensive, and emotionally harmful. A will allows parents to name a **guardian and trustee** and set guidelines for how and when the kids receive their inheritance. (Let's be honest—if you got a large inheritance at 19, would that money still be around today?)

2. Blended families

Without a will, intestate laws come into play—and those don't favour stepchildren. In fact, unless they're named in the will, stepchildren have no legal right to inherit. So, if a parent leaves everything to a spouse who later changes their own will, the original children could end up with nothing. A proper estate plan can help ensure everyone you care about is looked after.

3. Families with significant real estate assets

Real estate-heavy estates often face large tax bills, especially on assets like vacation homes with big capital gains. These taxes must be paid before the estate can be settled. If the only tool in place is a will, the **probate process** can delay access to funds, force the sale of properties, or cause the family to lose cherished assets. Probate can take months and cost tens of thousands of dollars—money and time that could be saved with proper planning.

1 - <https://narrativeresearch.ca/half-of-canadians-dont-have-a-last-will-and-testament-while-diy-online-providers-are-now-responsible-for-a-quarter-of-existing-wills/>



So, if a will isn't always enough—what is?

Depending on the situation, tools like **trusts, holding companies, or living inheritances** may make sense. But none of those tools come into play before you've had a **conversation**—with yourself and your loved ones—about your values, your goals, and your wishes.

A **family meeting** is a great way to bring everyone together. It creates clarity, minimizes surprises, and helps foster stronger relationships. We've helped facilitate many of these meetings, and we're here to support you through the process.

Once you've established a clear framework—what you want to happen, and why—it becomes much easier to structure things legally and efficiently. That's when we engage trusted legal professionals and begin drafting the details of your estate plan.

If you've ever asked yourself:

- What's the tax bill going to be—and how can we reduce it?
- Should I use a notary or a lawyer to draft a will?
- How can I make things easier for my kids?
- Do the kids even want the cabin? Can they manage it together?
- Where do I start—and who can help?

Then it's time to chat. [Book your time here.](#)

This is your opportunity to develop a plan that builds and maintains **both wealth and family harmony** for generations. And if you've been with us a while, you know:

Family is a big deal at Hillside.

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