

It's Never Too Early to Make Your First Will

**By Matthew Crider, JD
Family Protection Attorney**

We'd like to share with our readers a recent article in Forbes entitled How To Write Your First Estate Plan. This article supports something we've been saying in our blog all along: That everyone needs a will—whether you're a young couple just starting out, an established family with valuable assets to protect, or an entrepreneurial business owner with succession on your mind. The article reminds us that a will “is the cornerstone of an [estate] plan,” and at whatever stage of life you may be is not too early to make your first will.

“There's a lot more to an estate plan than just a will, even for folks who don't need a more complicated estate-tax oriented version. You might have pieces of it already--a living will signed when you had elective surgery or a beneficiary form filled out for a 401(k) when you got your first job. You need to make sure the pieces fit together.”

Many couples or individuals are first motivated to create a will when they have young children, and the primary purpose of their will is to ensure that their minor children will be cared for and provided for should anything happen to the parents. This is certainly one of the best reasons to create your will or estate plan, but it is not the only reason, not by a long shot. If you drafted your will when your children were young and haven't looked at it since—or if you never created a will because you don't have kids and therefore didn't think you needed one—it's time to revisit the subject.

An estate plan not only ensures that minor children will be provided for, but also that:

Older children have the means to continue their education if something happens to you

Your spouse or children are the recipients of your life insurance or retirement proceeds, and not the tax man or (even worse) an ex-spouse or ex-boyfriend or girlfriend.

You have someone trustworthy distributing your assets as you wish after you pass away.

Your business will transfer smoothly if you aren't able to run it anymore.

And much more.

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“Whatever motivates you, fine. The point is--whether you're in estate tax territory or not, if you don't have an estate plan, you need one. (And if you have a really old one, you probably need a whole new one.)” Any opportunity is the perfect opportunity to start planning to protect your loved ones. Call our office (or your own trusted attorney) to learn what steps you can take toward protecting your loved ones right now.

About Matthew Crider, J.D.

Matthew Crider formed [Crider Law PC](#) in 1999 so he could help individuals through the California divorce process by providing creative solutions as their trusted advisor and legal counselor. His divorce and family law practice focuses on assisting people in dissolution matters, including divorce, child custody and visitation, child and spousal support, spousal support and alimony, and parental rights.

