

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

Many of our articles are about planning for death. They focus on making sure that your affairs are in order so that you can enjoy peace of mind. They focus on taking advantage of the element of control, while you have it. No matter how well intentioned our writing is (we do ALWAYS have your best interests at heart), the topic of estate planning strikes some people as inherently morbid. To some degree, that's just part of planning for death, but in this article we wanted to do something a little different, so we're going to focus on a few things you can do today to make life more meaningful!

Do Something Unexpected

Today, take the opportunity to do something that unexpectedly impacts someone you love. It can be your spouse, one (or more) of your children, parents, or grandparents. The idea is to get outside the box and be extraordinary. For example, if you normally cook dinner at home, make the extra effort to present the meal by candlelight and make it extra special. Consider making your spouse a card "just because." Set aside time just to listen and pay attention to her or him in a way that's unusually attentive. Reminding your spouse that you still believe your commitment to one another is the foundation of your family can really make their day, not to mention yours!

If your children are always hounding you for candy, set up a candy scavenger hunt out of the blue. They'll talk about it for days! The point is to find a way to express your love on their terms. Of course you feed, clothe, and teach your children. Those are true expressions of love, but what we're talking about here is expressing your affection on their level and in a way they'll understand.

Take your mother or father out for a special night on the town. As parents age, they tend to get out less and less. A special night on the town can be a real treat, even if it's just for dinner or ice cream. Make an effort to listen to them and give them exactly what they want, which is often just an ear—someone to hear their stories. On the surface that seems simple, but communication is complicated. Take the time to figure out what will really make your parents happy on any given day. It's worth the effort!

Face Fear

We all have fears. We can measure growth and, often times, fulfillment by the frequency with which we expand our comfort zones. Few things deliver feelings of accomplishment more than deliberately facing and overcoming fear. Today, choose one thing that you've been putting off for fear, whether it be fear of trying something

new, fear of failure, or fear of embarrassment. As far as anyone knows, we only get one shot at life on planet Earth. The only real risk, therefore, is not taking enough risk. Face a fear and whether you overcome it or not, whether you succeed or fail in the endeavor, you'll always know that you tried. And make sure you try your absolute best. Life is too short to do things any other way.

Take Time for Yourself

Take some time to do something that makes you feel good. That can mean walking through a park to be alone with your thoughts, getting a massage, or going fishing. The point is to do something you find relaxing. Heck, after all the stress associated with facing your fears, don't you think you deserve it?

About Matthew Crider, J.D.

Matthew Crider formed [Crider Law PC](http://www.criderlaw.net) in 1999 so he could help individuals and business owners by providing creative solutions and be their trusted advisor and legal counselor. He serves his clients by listening closely to their goals, dreams and concerns and working with them to develop superior and comprehensive estate and asset protection plans. His estate planning practice focuses on preserving and growing wealth by providing comprehensive, highly personalized estate planning counsel to couples, families, individuals and businesses.

