



# KRASA LAW

PLANNING FOR EACH GENERATION

## **Guidelines for Guardians** (Questions to Help Convey Your Values & More)

How would you like your children to be raised if you were not there? "The same way we'd raise them!" But what exactly *is* that way? And how could you express all your values, beliefs, hopes, and dreams ... without being there?

To help you "guide" the guardian you have selected on what matters most to you, following is a series of gentle, yet probing, questions to help you discover – and express for yourself – what you'd say if you were there.

Take your time. Some questions will be easy to answer, some may pose a significant challenge. If you think of additional questions, all the better. The list is not meant to be 100% comprehensive for everyone. But it will get you started on the important road to conveying your wisdom and values to the people you have chosen to raise your children if something happened to you.

You are about to embark on a "voyage of clarity," bringing into focus your core ideas and values about parenting, and even life. The process will give you clarity with respect to your own parenting. You may even experience a renewed connection with your children, having taken the time to consider what is most important to you about parenting. Enjoy yourself.

### **What Are Your Values?**

Can you make a list of the values you want your children to grow up with? What values are *most* important to you? Are there certain books or "must see" movies that embrace those ideals?

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If religion is important to you, what role do you want it to play in your children's lives? What relationship would you *like* your children to have to their religion as they grow older? What spiritual activities do you want them to participate in? If you and your spouse don't share the same religion, is there more than one religion to which you'd like them exposed?

If your family's ethnic or cultural background is important to you, how would you want your guardian to foster your children's experience and knowledge of that heritage?

### **Important People in Your Children's Lives:**

Assuming you approve, who does each of your children look to as mentors or role models? (What about a minister or rabbi, teachers, relatives, family friends, or older children outside your family?)

Are there relatives other than the guardians you've selected with whom any of your children have a special relationship? Would you want your child to be able to spend special time with them? (For example, if they live far away from your guardians, you can specifically instruct your trustee to allow trust funds to be used for visits to those relatives.)

Who are the people who know your child or children better than anyone? How would you like these specific people to *participate* in their upbringing?

Who are the people you would implicitly trust to guide and advise each of your children in making difficult life decisions?

Who are your children's best friends? What continued role would you like them to have in your children's lives? Would you like them to have an *expanded* role? Or perhaps *less* of a role?

### **Your Children's Traits:**

For each of your children, how would you explain, "These are the things that are unique about this child"? For example ...

What are each of your children's special gifts, skills, talents and loves?

What are each of your children's favorite hobbies?

What qualities in your children make you the most proud?

How does each of your children learn best? What's important for their guardians to know in order to help them get the most out of school? (You may have letters you've written for teachers about your children to which you can refer.)

Do any of your children have significant personality traits that are important but may not be obvious? (For example, does Charles take criticism too personally? Or is Anna particularly proud of her athletic prowess?)

What is the most beneficial day-to-day support or advice you give to each of your children? What is the most effective way of giving it?

What do each of your children find particularly comforting if they're having a bad day? What special toys, stuffed animals, music or DVDs comfort them?

What are your children's bedtime routines? What helps them fall asleep peacefully?

Can you think of any other unique needs your children look to a caretaker to meet?

### **Your Family's Traits:**

What does your family do for fun? What hobbies or activities do you all do together?

Is there a special time or day you reserve for "family time?"

How physically affectionate is your family? Is it important that your children be around people who will be physically affectionate with them?

What are some things that are "special" or "unique" about your family that you'd like to preserve?

### **Goals For Your Children:**

Are there particular activities in which you'd like your children to be encouraged to participate or particular skills you'd like your children to be encouraged to develop (e.g. playing a musical instrument, excelling at a particular sport, pursuing a particular hobby)?

What are your feelings about education? Is it important that your children go to college? If so, are there particular schools you'd like your children to consider (for example, your alma mater)? Are there particular courses of study you'd prefer your children avoid?

Finally ...

What are your hopes, dreams, and aspirations for your children? What kind of man or woman do you want each of them to grow up to be? If you were reading a letter that lovingly, yet accurately, described your grown up children ... what exactly would you read?

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