

Press Release

Brookline Senior Center
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For Immediate Release

Advice on Drafting an “Ethical” Will

Presented by Dr. Mirian Diamond

Earlier this spring, Brookline seniors attended a senior center program to learn how to draft an “ethical will.”

Miriam Rosalyn Diamond, Ph.D., a knowledgeable researcher on ethical awareness and teacher of adult development, led the program.

Diamond began her Brookline Senior Center presentation and instruction by citing the writings of William Shakespeare and Rudyard Kipling – from “Hamlet” and “If,” respectively – both of whom spoke to the need to strive for an ethical and meaningful life.

Shakespeare’s memorable words about being “true to thineself” and “not false to any man” and Kipling’s phrasing about forcing one’s heart, nerve, and sinew “to serve your turn long after they are gone” set the tone for Diamond presentation.

Diamond began by challenging the audience asking “Why tell our stories, and share our values, and be remembered?” She proceeded to then encourage them to share the past; let others benefit from their experience; and write statements about the wisdom they are leaving behind.

Diamond’s presentation included her compilation of 10 “prompts.” to aid in drafting an ethical will; be it in the form of a letter, essay, bullet points, video, song, or poetry. Her prompts included:

What values are important to me?

What decisions have I made and what are the actions I took to act on my values?

Who are my ethical role models and why did I select them?

What have I learned from others about how to conduct myself?

What are some of the challenges I have faced, what experiences have I had and what have I learned about acting and reacting from these situations?

What rituals have helped me make decisions and deal with and address complex and difficult situations?

What am most proud of?

Taking my values and ethical perspective into account, what would I do differently if given the chance for a do-over?

What are my hopes for other people that I hope to influence/advise?

What items reflect my ideals, e.g., quotes, stories/antidotes, song lines?

Diamond then summarized the program by instructing the audience that when writing an ethical will to focus on “what’s important to you, what you have learned in your life, your hopes and wishes for the future, and with whom you want to share this information.”

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