



# Stuff After Death: How to Identify, Value and Dispose of Inherited Stuff

*Mary Miley Theobald*

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## **Stuff After Death: How to Identify, Value and Dispose of Inherited Stuff** Mary Miley Theobald

It happens to most of us at some point. A loved one dies and we are left with a houseful of Stuff, much of which is unfamiliar and unwanted. How do we decide what is worthless and what is worth saving? How do we know what to keep, sell, donate, or toss? What should we recycle and how? Maybe we find ourselves or our loved ones needing to downsize to a smaller home. Maybe we just want to get out from under all that junk in the attic!

Learn what it is you have--what's valuable and what isn't--and then you can decide its fate with confidence. Knowing what you have lets you divide an inheritance equitably or decide where to donate. Knowing the approximate value of an item or a collection lets you determine whether to sell at an auction, a yard sale, or an Internet site--which will result in more money?--or whether it's better to donate to a nonprofit and take a tax deduction. Before you throw away that ugly painting or give away that dusty piece of porcelain, find out if you are holding trash or treasure.

This book will teach you how to tell the difference between sentimental and intrinsic value, between Stuff and junk. Learn how to distinguish real pearls from faux, glass from crystal, sterling silver from silverplate from coin silver, prints from paintings, vintage clothing from old clothes, porcelain from earthenware. Learn what to do with collections of fine art, coins, stamps, teddy bears, dolls, books, comic books, and Christmas decorations. Learn how to wash old linens and quilts without ruining their value. Learn the plusses and minuses of hiring appraisers, estate salespeople, move managers, auctioneers, and professional organizers, and which ones are right for your circumstances. Learn what to do when you live far away from the house or apartment or farmhouse full of Stuff and can't spend the time or money to handle all the Stuff yourself.

Help keep Stuff out of our landfills by learning how to donate effectively. What items are best given to nonprofits like Goodwill, the Salvation Army, or Habitat for Humanity? Your old papers, diaries, memoirs, photos, and certain objects might be eagerly accepted by a local museum or historical society. Vintage clothing could be donated to a high school or college theater program or sold to a vintage clothing store. Animal shelters might appreciate those old blankets, towels, and bedding.

Downsizing benefits everyone, financially and psychologically. A retired person, unemployed teenager, or someone temporarily between jobs can generate income by sorting through their own attic, basement, garage, and shed and selling off long-forgotten Stuff. Helping an elderly relative or other person downsize is a project that can bring a sense of accomplishment as well as much needed cash.

In clear and entertaining language, Mary Theobald provides shortcuts and solutions to the inevitable problems that arise when dealing with Stuff after the death of a loved one or when a senior downsizes into a congregate care facility. Don't rush out and rent expensive storage! And don't lose sleep wondering whether you've sold a valuable object for a pittance! Maximize your dollars and minimize your worries with STUFF AFTER DEATH.

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