

A Parent's Living Will

In Parshas Vayechi, we read about Yaakov's last words to his children and Yosef's last words to his brothers. In the Haftorah, we read of King David's last words of advice and instruction to his son Shlomo.

From both the Parsha and the Haftorah, we see the importance of advising our children before the day comes.

The thing is, we don't know when that day will come. As for me, Hashem has chosen to give me ALS, and since the diagnosis, the day has been staring me in the face. My wife, Dina, and good friends whose parents have passed on, have been trying to impress upon me the importance of writing a living will. At first, I was being stubborn, not wanting to consider the suggestion that the day might come. But then, a few of my friends suddenly passed, which got me thinking that it is probably a good idea for everyone to do, even those that are healthy.

Now that I have started, it has become so meaningful to me, as it has given me a clarity of what I really want, for my family in general, and for my wife and each of my children specifically. I don't plan to wait for them to find out when my time comes. As soon as I am done, I will share it with them so that they know how I feel about them, what I think they are capable of, and what I wish for them.

A father's and mother's advice is so powerful and cherished by their children. Even if they ignore it now, eventually it will have a tremendous impact.

My suggestion to every parent, and anyone who has been a teacher or mentor to someone they truly care about, is to start the process of writing a living will; you will find it meaningful, it will give you clarity and your family will be grateful that you did it.

May we be a guiding light to our families and merit Hashem's blessing, to see them turn out better than we could have imagined. May they be a nachas to

Hashem, to the Jewish People, and especially to us.