

Reflections

By Sarah Hopper, Sound Philanthropy

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Dear Friends,

I want to share a story with you.

Early this year, a dear family friend, Brantley, passed away at the wonderful age of 92. On the way home from the memorial celebration, as we were talking about our friend, my five-year-old son exclaimed “*You know what I want to say to Brantley? ‘Good life, Brantley. We’ll miss you.’*” In the moment, it brought tears to my eyes; as I thought about it over the next week, it got me thinking. What do I want a five-year-old to say about me when I am gone? What does my “good life” look like? For Brantley, it was saving lives as a surgeon, enjoying the gentle sway of his sailboat on the Sound, celebrating incredible women, and swimming in the nude any chance he got. What about you?

As I have pondered this question, and thought about what it means in terms of legacy for me, my loved ones and my clients, I have developed an exercise that I do with clients and advisors that essentially asks the question “*What Do You Want People To Say About You When You’re Old?*” and further, “*What Do You Need To Do To Get There?*” I challenge you to think about these questions for yourself, and I recommend an inspiring book of art and ideas to help you get going: *What Do You Want to Do Before You Die?* written by brothers and buddies, Duncan Penn, Ben Nemtin, Dave Lingwood, and Jonnie Penn. In this book, these four young men (known collectively as “The Buried Life”) travel around the country completing their list of 100 things to do before they die, and with each accomplished activity, they help someone else in the world do something on their list. A description of this fabulous read can be found [here](#).

I can’t believe that it’s been almost a year since I launched my advising practice, *Sound Philanthropy, LLC*. I continue to be grateful for the support and advice of all the wonderful people in my network; and I am at the same time proud and humbled to report that the first ten months of “hanging out my shingle” have been successful. I have the pleasure of working with nine clients on a variety of projects and programs, and these wonderful families, couples and individuals have taught me so much and opened my eyes to new ideas and approaches.

Some of the stories about my work with clients – from a couple with goals to organize, focus and involve their adult children, to a family foundation looking for new energy and a clear vision – can be found on my website at www.soundphilanthropy.com under *Client Work*. Much of what I do involves facilitating conversations and retreats, and synthesizing information and perspectives from family members of all ages into an action plan for philanthropy. My goal is to develop unique programs for each client, that reflect their personality, address their needs and meet their goals, and to chart a philanthropic journey that is fun and inspiring.

I enjoyed meeting you earlier this year, and will look forward to reconnecting later in the year or early next. Perhaps you will be willing to share your response to my challenge?

Happy Summer!

Warm regards,
Sarah