

Gravett &amp; Gravett's

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*Because Your Family Is Worth It!*

# FAMILY

## Wealth

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## The Most Common Estate Planning Myths

**Myth number three:** *Once you have an estate plan, you never have to look at it again.*

In this issue of our newsletter, we would like to talk about another common misconception about estate planning:

The belief that once you have a plan, you can file it away and scratch "Estate Planning" off your to-do list. While choosing an experienced estate planning attorney to design a plan for you and your family - and doing it sooner rather than later - is certainly critically important, it is equally important to have your plan reviewed periodically.

**The reason is simple:** As your family grows and you grow older, your needs and the needs of your beneficiaries will change. After all, life happens. People get divorced, remarry, have children, move, and sometimes suffer from financial difficulties, like bankruptcy. Assets change as people buy and sell real estate



and invest in different markets. Finally, laws change. New laws may take effect that make some options for protecting assets less attractive, while offering other, more effective options for wealth preservation that were not available before. So, having your estate plan reviewed periodically allows you to take the changes that are part of life and the law into account to better protect both you and your loved ones.

How often should you have your plan reviewed? You should certainly have your estate plan reviewed if there has been a major change in your marital status, your financial situation, your health, or the lives of your beneficiaries. Barring that, we recommend a review at least every five years. However, we believe that keeping an estate plan up-to-date is so important that we offer our estate planning clients a complimentary review of their plan every three years - and every year for those clients who participate in our unique membership program.

**The bottom line?** An outdated or inadequate estate plan can be almost as bad as having no plan at all. It pays to have your plan reviewed from time to time.



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"This is just like you, Beverly. We're supposed to meet alone and you bring your attorney."

# You Could



# Be An Angel

## *You could be an angel on 'Be an Angel Day'*

Have you ever been asked, “*Be an angel and...*” followed by a small request like fetching a book or walking the dog? Maybe, you were an angel in a grade school play.

On August 22, you could play that role again by participating in ‘*Be An Angel Day*’. This special day encourages everyone to do a good deed for someone else.

The event was originated in 1993 by Jayne Howard Feldman, who says she was inspired by angels. Participation can be individual or as part of a group. The kindness can be large or small. You may choose to be identified, or you can be anonymous.

Ideas for good deeds range from doing a favor for a friend, to visiting an elderly relative, taking extra cans of food to a local food bank, or extending a helping hand to someone dealing with grief or a personal crisis. Even though you may never know how your contribution made a difference, one small act of kindness may make you a true blessing in someone’s life.



‘*Be An Angel Day*’ is an ideal opportunity to get your children involved in caring for those around them. They could do an anonymous good deed for a friend, or they could collect pet food to donate to the Humane Society or to a pet shelter.

Also, do not forget the great gift of service. Many elderly relatives or neighbors need help maintaining their yards or with small household repairs. Others may appreciate transportation to the grocery store or help in running errands. You could use this day to contribute to their wellbeing.

Whatever way you choose to lift your wings, someone’s day will be better. Come to think of it, maybe every day should be ‘*Be an Angel Day*’.

## *Our Clients Speak . . .*

“*Margaretha proved to be a tough negotiator with opposing counsel. She zealously represented my interests without resorting to dirty tricks. I recommend Margaretha without reservation. She has earned my highest respect.*”

**D.H.**

Direct Marketing Executive,  
Armonk, N.Y.



# *The Divorce Lawyer's Guide to Staying Married*

It may seem ironic that divorce lawyers might offer marriage advice. However, who can be better qualified to tell you what to do and not do in your marriage than a couple of happily married divorce lawyers. In our divorce practice, we have seen all the problems that tend to contribute to the breakdown of a marriage. We use that inside information to make our own marriage stronger by working hard to avoid certain common pitfalls. Maybe you know a couple that could benefit from this valuable information. If so, feel free to pass it on or have them call and ask for their own free subscription to our newsletter.

Here, in our experience, are the top five problems that contribute to divorce:

**Communication Problems.** Communicate deeply and often with your spouse. Many couples have trouble with communication even before they say, "I do." People may not make their expectations clear, or simply fail to bring up important issues for fear of how their beloved will react. It is vitally important to discuss your feelings about things that are personally important to you, but few couples actively practice this habit. There are some couples that will ignore or gloss over little problems and small irritants between them before they get married, only to discover that these issues have grown exponentially to become a major source of friction after marriage.

**Bottom line:** If there is an issue that you feel that you cannot talk to your partner about before you get married, that is a definite red flag for problems after you get married. Now is the time to lay your cards on the table so that the two of you can play with a full deck after the marriage.

**Financial Issues.** It is often said that money is the last thing people talk about before they get married, and the first thing they fight about after they get married. Married couples often quarrel over issues like shared financial responsibility, unequal financial status, undisclosed or hidden assets, overspending, and lack of financial support. Money is not always the sole or primary factor in divorce, but it is often the single most significant factor. The root cause, once again, is the lack of communication between spouses about financial matters. It is best to get on the same page early, be fair about how the money is controlled, and attempt to understand and accommodate your spouse's views on money.

**Forms of Abuse.** All forms of abuse can reap havoc on a marriage, not just physical abuse. Sexual abuse, verbal abuse, and emotional abuse can be equally devastating. Often, one spouse's own demons – in the form of drug or alcohol abuse, or a gambling addiction – can place unbearable strain on a marriage. In those unfortunate situations the best advice is to intervene early and to get professional help.

**Marital Infidelity.** The infidelity of one spouse may irreparably destroy the trust that lies at the core of the marital relationship, and may cause the other to seek a divorce. Generally speaking, infidelity is often a sign of other problems in the marriage, and not necessarily the root cause of the problem.

**Sexual Problems.** If there are unresolved issues of sexual dysfunction or disinterest that persist, it could become a cause for divorce. Once again, seek professional help.



*Sexual Problems*

*Communication Problems*

*Forms of Abuse*

*Financial Issues*

*Marital Infidelity*

# A Personal Note from Willem & Margaretha



*We hope that everyone  
is enjoying the summer.*

It is hard to believe that by the time that you receive this, the children will be on their way back to school.

Here at Gravett & Gravett, we were too busy to take time off this summer. We are not complaining though. We are working on a number of projects that we are very excited about.

First, we recorded an Audio CD called 'The New York Divorce Guide'. It is a step-by-step program containing valuable information pertaining to the divorce process in New York. Free copies of this Audio CD can be ordered from our website at [www.gravettdivorce.com](http://www.gravettdivorce.com).

Second, we recently launched a new divorce blog at [www.westchesterdivorceblog.com](http://www.westchesterdivorceblog.com), providing our local community with more information regarding divorce and custody issues.

The project that we are most excited about, however, is a website for couples facing divorce that can be found at [www.newyorkmarriagehelp.com](http://www.newyorkmarriagehelp.com). We have invited local mental health professionals to participate in creating this powerful resource to help people who want to save their marriages. The response from mental health professionals has been overwhelming. Once complete, the site will contain a directory of local marriage counselors, articles, books and websites to help people to create happy, lasting marriages.

Yes, we are extremely busy. But, we are having a blast and feel that we are doing important work. We will keep you posted on the progress of other projects that we are going to embark on. Check out our websites. We will be grateful if you could let others for whom they may be helpful know about them as well.

Be Well,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Willem".

Willem Gravett

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaretha".

Margaretha Gravett

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