



# ORGANICALLY HUMAN

— end of life doula —

## **End-of-Life Planning Tips**

***for you + your supporters***

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Planning for the future is a profound act of care for yourself and your supporters. Here is a basic list of thoughtful end-of-life planning tips – meant to be a helpful starting point, not a comprehensive guide. These suggestions are here to support clarity and peace of mind, helping you begin meaningful conversations and take steps to ensure your wishes are known and honored.

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### **1. Understand and Comply with State Laws**

Each state has specific regulations regarding estate planning documents. In Tennessee, for instance, an Advance Directive must be either notarized or witnessed by two competent adults to be legally valid. Familiarize yourself with your state's requirements to ensure your documents are enforceable.

### **2. Establish a Revocable Living Trust**

Creating and funding a revocable living trust allows your assets to bypass the probate process, facilitating a smoother transfer to your beneficiaries. The approach ensures privacy, expedites the distribution of your estate, and prevents the executor and family from experiencing logistical stress.

### **3. Collaborate with Professionals**

Engage with an estate attorney and financial planner to craft a comprehensive plan tailored to your unique circumstances. Their expertise will help navigate complex decisions and ensure all legal and financial aspects are addressed effectively.

### **4. Organize and Secure Digital Assets**

Maintain a secure list of your online accounts and passwords. Utilizing a password manager can centralize this information, making it accessible to your designated executor when needed. Ensure a trusted and reliable individual knows how to retrieve this information.

### **5. Draft a Clear Last Will and Testament**

Your will should designate an executor – someone capable of handling both emotional and logistical responsibilities. The document outlines the distribution of your assets and can include guardianship decisions if applicable.

### **6. Prepare an Advance Care Directive**

This directive allows you to appoint a medical power of attorney to make healthcare decisions on your behalf if you're unable to communicate. It also clearly defines what quality of life means to you so your support network can honor your wishes. In Tennessee, this document requires either two witnesses or notarization to be legally binding. It is important to think of someone that can carry out your wishes when having to make important decisions for you or that handle doing so.

## **7. Communicate Your End-of-Life Wishes**

Share your Advance Care Directive with family members and healthcare providers to ensure everyone is informed of your preferences. Open, honest, and raw discussions can prevent misunderstandings during critical times as well as bring one another a deeper sense of connection.

## **8. Designate Beneficiaries on Financial Accounts**

Ensure that all insurance policies and financial accounts have up-to-date beneficiary designations. Initiating this step can help certain assets avoid probate and be transferred directly to your chosen individuals.

## **9. Document Funeral and Remembrance Wishes**

Clearly outline your preferences for how you wish to be honored—whether that's a traditional funeral, a quiet remembrance, or a celebration of life. Include instructions about the disposition of your body (e.g., cremation, burial, green/natural burial, human composting), and specify any rituals, music, or readings that hold meaning for you (get as creative as you'd like!).

If you have a specific funeral home in mind, it's helpful to reach out in advance to communicate your wishes and understand their process. Engaging a funeral director ahead of time can support you in navigating options and formalizing plans—especially if you're considering natural or green burial, as many funeral homes are experienced in facilitating these eco-conscious choices. Providing these details ahead of time alleviates the emotional and logistical burden on your supporters and ensures your preferences are honored with care.

## **10. Regularly Review and Update Your Plan**

Life circumstances evolve, and so should your estate plan. Regular reviews ensure that your documents reflect your current wishes and comply with any legal changes.

Approaching end-of-life planning with thoughtful intention and having conversations with your supporters empowers you and provides reassurance to those you care about. By taking these steps, you create a legacy of clarity, love, and respect.

### **Disclaimer:**

**The information provided in this document is intended for general guidance and reflection. Organically Human Doula LLC is not a licensed attorney, financial advisor, or medical professional, and this resource does not constitute legal, financial, or medical advice.**

**For support with specific decisions or to ensure your documents are legally valid in your state, please consult with a qualified estate attorney, financial planner, and healthcare provider. This guide is offered in the spirit of Organically Human—to help you feel more grounded and informed as you make meaningful, personal choices about end-of-life planning. Organically Human can assist with connecting you with local resources.**

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# Sources for End-of-Life Planning

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1. CaringInfo – Advance Directive Forms by State (Tennessee)
  - Downloadable, legally recognized Advance Care Directive for Tennessee.
  - <https://www.caringinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/Tennessee.pdf>
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  - Clear guidance on setting up trusts and other strategies to avoid probate.
  - <https://www.jamesdfosterlaw.com/3-simple-ways-to-avoid-probate-in-tennessee-2>
3. Funeral Basics – Managing Your Digital Estate
  - Tips on organizing and passing on digital account information securely.
  - <https://www.funeralbasics.org/managing-your-digital-estate>
4. Charles Schwab – Are Your Beneficiaries Up to Date?
  - Guide to reviewing and updating beneficiary designations on accounts.
  - <https://www.schwab.com/learn/story/are-your-beneficiaries-up-to-date>
5. Simmons, Sellers & Pittman – How to Make Your Funeral Wishes Known
  - Overview of documenting and communicating your funeral or memorial wishes.
  - <https://www.ssandplaw.com/blog/funeral-arrangements-how-to-make-your-wishes-known>