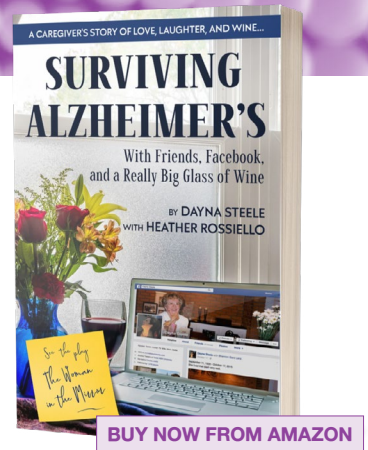


# FAMILY QUESTIONS AND WHY YOU NEED THE ANSWERS

from **Dayna Steele**, author of *Surviving Alzheimer's with Friends, Facebook, and a Really Big Glass of Wine*



**Here are important topics to discuss with your family members and other loved ones concerning health matters, documents, finances, and end-of-life issues. You should know the answers for your loved ones, and you should also have your answers to these questions saved where someone can find them.**

It helps to print a copy of this and give it to a loved one with a personal note on how much it would mean to you to sit down and talk about these questions and get the answers. Or, bring a copy to a family gathering or other pre-planned event and start the conversation. Knowing the answers to these questions will free up an unbelievable amount of time, grief, stress, discord, and/or guilt for everyone involved. Then, you can go about living your life and, when the time comes, you can celebrate a life well lived.

**Note from Dayna:** *We were fortunate we had taken care of most of these questions prior to Mom's Alzheimer's diagnosis. The one question I never asked was, "If you do need care, where do you want to live?" That would have also been the time to initiate the conversation that living with us was not going to be a safe option. Not knowing the answer to that question was the source of great guilt for me throughout the process and probably will be for a long time to come.*

- Do you have a will? If so, where is the original and what is the name and contact information for the person or entity that created the will for you? May I please have a copy?
- Where are your important legal documents located? This includes all information pertaining to your will and estate including executor name or names, Durable Power of Attorney, Medical Power of Attorney, HIPPA, Living Will, DNR directives, etc. This also includes Social Security cards, birth certificates, marriage certificates, divorce papers, real estate documents, car titles, and anything else you can think of.
- What is the contact information for your lawyer(s) and any other important professionals such as financial advisors, business partners, CPA, bookkeeper, etc?
- Are you part of a trust, have a trust, or are a trustee and where are the trust documents located? Who is the Trustee and what is their contact information?
- If former military, what branch did you serve in, what dates, what was your discharge date and status, and where are your discharge papers? If you filed them when you came home from service, let's get a current copy.
- What is the name(s) and contact information for anyone you have been married to and any children you have produced? Please include marriage date, location, and how, where and when it ended (divorce or death).
- Do you have a safe deposit box? If so, where is it located and where is the key to access the box? Who has access to it?
- Do you have a life insurance policy? If so, what is the company, account number, and contact information?
- Do you have medical insurance? If so, what is the account number and contact information?

- Do you have Long Term Health Care Insurance? If yes, what is the company, account number, and contact information?
- Who are your current doctors and what is the contact information?
- What are your current prescriptions, dosage amounts, and pharmacy?
- If you need care, do you prefer a nursing home, private care home, VA facility, or other? Have you already made any arrangements for continued care? If so, what is that information and where is any documentation?
- If your home needs to be sold, do you have any specific instructions?
- If you can no longer take care of your pet(s), what is the vet contact information and where would you like your pet(s) to go?
- How do we gain access to your home including the keys and security alarm code(s)?
- Who are your closest neighbors or friends that can be contacted in case of an emergency and what is their contact information?
- What are your bank account numbers as well as mortgage, credit card, and investment account information? Include company names, account numbers, and contact information.
- Where is a list of user IDs and passwords for all of your online accounts?
- How should we approach taking away your driving privileges and making other transportation arrangements when we feel it is no longer safe for you to drive?
- How would you finish this statement? Stop all the drugs and preventative measures, only giving medication for discomfort or pain, when I can no longer \_\_\_\_\_.
- Do you want a funeral, in a church, a party, a wake? Do you want to be cremated? Do you have written instructions and if so, where are these instructions?
- Where will your final resting place be or where do you want your ashes scattered, if cremated? Do you have any prepaid arrangements made or a funeral plot? If so, where is that information?
- What is your religious affiliation (if applicable) including where you worship and a contact name and number?
- Do you want an obituary in a local and/or out of town paper? Have you written one already? If so, where is it? If not, what do you want in your obituary?
- Do you want flowers for services? Do you want donations made in your name to your favorite charitable organization? If so, what charitable organization? And, have you designated any charities as beneficiaries in any of your accounts or will? Where are they located?
- Are there specific persons you want notified upon your passing and what is their contact information including email addresses and phone numbers?
- If not included in a will, are there special items you wish to go to specific family members such as furniture, photos, keepsakes, memorabilia, and more?

Last, for future family members more than anyone, interview your loved one using the recording capability on your phone. Questions like: where were you born, what's an early memory, where did you go to school, who was your first love, do you have any regrets, what was the best trip you ever took, what was your first job? The more you can ask and record, the more future generations will know about their past and themselves.

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