

Script for: Parents/Owners

Purpose: Parents talking to heirs about inheritance & business succession

Audience: Your heirs

As you prepare to review your will with your heirs, tell each of them that you would like to ask them the following questions. (First review the questions and edit them to be comfortable for you.) Be clear that you are not giving them authority over your decisions and wishes, but you wish to hear their perspectives and are asking them to step into your shoes to consider the factors at play. Most often, asking each heir individually is best. Email the questions ahead of time so they have time to consider their responses. Then discuss them with each heir, consider their perspectives, and correct their assumptions if they are unreasonable.

- Do you have any expectations for your inheritance from me?
- Are there any specific items that are meaningful to you, and you would like to inherit?
- [Successor name] has committed to being the operating successor for our family business. How do you feel about that? The business assets (real estate/equipment) are valuable but are not cash. They are necessary for operating the business. The business also has a high level of risk. In order to be successful in business, the successor(s) will need access to those assets that are tools of the business. How do you feel about them purchasing and/or inheriting business assets?

Note for the parent: Ultimately, you'll recognize that inheritances may not be the same for each person. This is an opportunity to explain why your will is balanced, from your perspective, for the business and family. This should be a conversation you revisit over time as you use your resources to live in your retirement and as you initiate asset transfers/sales.