

Get It Together: 8th Edition: Organize Your Records So Your Family Won't Have To

Melanie Cullen

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Get It Together is a compassionate guide to end-of-life planning.

Melanie Cullen's eighth edition of *Get It Together* is a detailed guide to getting your end-of-life ducks in a row.

No one wants to think about their own death or what happens once they're gone; the same goes for thinking about the death of a loved one. But without proper planning, this grief-filled inevitability can be fraught with frustration, added pain, and legal issues for those left behind. Aside from the emotional weight, thinking through every element of a death and getting everything organized can be overwhelming. Cullen's clear-eyed guide will help to make the process as smooth as possible.

The book's main focus is on organizing the information and documentation that a loved one would need to honor the wishes and commitments of a departed person. There's space in the second half of the book to fill in answers; information and documentation can be also organized in a binder, available separately. All the mentioned forms can be downloaded and tailored to an individual's needs.

Covered topics include healthcare, finances, dependent care, and funeral planning. From practical considerations, like coordinating care for children, pets, and other dependents, to the nostalgic ones, like a writing a last letter to loved ones, it is easy to understand why this would be regarded as a trusted guide. This edition builds on the seven previous ones, considering every possibility and infusing every recommendation with empathy and wisdom.

Helpful examples arise throughout the book's explanations and are designed to jump start the planning process. There are tips for putting together the recommended binder, lists of additional resources, and advice about when to get professional help, such as for setting up trusts. Practical information, like estimates for burial costs, is also included.

Beyond the book's wealth of wisdom, its most helpful feature is its compassion. Each tip and element of the book's layout reflects care and concern for those completing their binders and their loved ones. It becomes evident that, no matter a person's personal situation, looking ahead and preparing for death is an important and empowering task. By revealing all of the choices that can be made and by making communication regarding death easier, the book imparts a sense of control over what cannot be controlled.

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MELISSA WUSKE (December 20, 2018)

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