

## QUICK TIPS TO STEER CLEAR OF LAST TESTAMENT TROUBLE

Will these mistakes away with tips from lawyer Les Kotzer:

■ Do not think that once you make a will you can put it away and never think about it again! "A will should be a

living, breathing document that reflects your current life situation, not your life situation in 1965 or 1979 or even last year. If things have changed, review your will."

■ Not having a special clause in

your will to protect the growth on your adult child's inheritance in case they separate or divorce after you die.

■ Not realizing that under the law, marriage revokes a will. Separation does not revoke

your will so it is wise to make a new will if you are separated.

■ Homemade wills are a recipe for disaster, including the wrong wording which then results in a court interpretation after you die. Also, these wills might

not be signed and witnessed properly. "Homemade Internet wills downloaded from other countries may not use language we use in our jurisdiction and this can lead to real messes."

— Joanne Richard



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# Plan now to avoid will war

Lawyer says finalizing the details early will avoid horror stories like the ones in his new book

**JOANNE RICHARD**  
Special to QMI Agency

Where there's a will, there's a ... family fight.

Well, not always, but lawyer Les Kotzer has seen his fair share of greed, bitter warfare and estrangement, where people are valued more dead than alive.

Kotzer has documented the good, the bad and the ugly of wills — and be assured, there's a lot of ugly — in *The Wills Lawyers: Their Stories of Money, Inheritance, Greed, Family and Betrayal*.

It's shocking just how low

someone will go when there's an inheritance involved.

They'll throw their mother, sister and brother under the bus to get what they feel they're entitled to, leaving relationships in tatters.

"Everyone thinks, 'This can't happen to me!' Oh, yes it can and it may!" stresses Kotzer, of thewillslawyers.com.

Just how low?

Bullying, entitled children circling like vultures, waiting for the end when it isn't even

near; disgruntled siblings taking revenge on one another over who got what; and unfulfilled promises to a dying parent.

His advice: Plan now to avoid a family war later. Well-intentioned parents may think it's all spelled out and their children will live happily ever after once the will is read, but it can be the beginning of the end for a once-close family.

Wills are not optional, nor is using a lawyer, says Kotzer, who along with Barry Fish,

both wills and estates lawyers, wrote the easy-to-read book to expose "a world of fighting, hatred, betrayal so that people could see what really goes on behind closed doors in the world of wills, estates and inheritance."

The duo want to wake people up to the nightmare of not planning properly, and to shed light on common mistakes and problems often found in wills.

Kotzer actually offers people a free review of their will at his Thornhill practice.

This is Kotzer's fourth book on inheritance fights and he

has even written a song called *The Family Fight Song*, which can be heard at [touchyourheart.com](http://touchyourheart.com).

The lyrics include: "Can't split a painting on the wall or share a table in the hall. I never dreamt that we could fall apart. It would break our mother's heart."

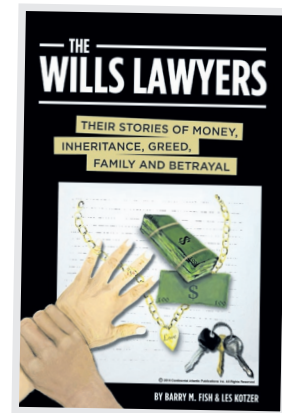
The bottom line: Never assume your children will exercise good will and settle things amicably.

And kids — never assume you'll get a dime.

Revenge is sometimes a dish best served from the grave.



**KOTZER**  
Wills lawyer



Kotzer's book details the worst in wills.