ADOPTION AT ANY AGE

A man, well into his seventies, commented, "We have four children, and we're going to adopt a fifth child. We will divide our estate into five equal parts – 20 percent to each of our natural children and 20 percent to our adopted child. We are calling this child 'Charity'. Actually, she has multiple personalities, and each of those personalities reflects one of our interests: education, healthcare, at-risk children, and religion."

The man was asked, "How do your natural children feel about sharing their inheritance with this interloper?" He replied, "We don't regard her as an interloper at all; we have long cherished her. We have devoted alot of our time nurturing her, and she embodies who we are. It is our hope that our natural children will embrace her and in so doing adopt our values about community service. In fact, we have had conversations with them in which we encourage them to get to know this child and make her part of their lives."

This couple chose to treat the adopted child and their natural children equally, but this need not have been the case. If they had been immensely wealthy, they might have given their adopted child 50 percent of their entire estate. On the other hand, if they had only modest wealth or if some of the natural children were struggling financially, they might have given their adopted child only five or 10 percent of their estate. More important to them than the amount of money they gave the adopted child was the message they sent to their other children about service.

They could also be quite flexible about the type of assets they give this child. She would be perfectly content to receive taxable assets like retirement funds, or listed securities with capital gain that would not be subject to tax. If you would like to adopt such a child, we can show you advantageous ways of providing for her that could benefit your entire family.