



ORIGINS

JILL & EMILY MARGO

When Jill Margo and her daughter Emily wrote a small book in 2007 they could never have anticipated their work would culminate in the groundbreaking new website, myheartwill.com.

The concept for the website was inspired by their book, *Living On*, a manuscript dedicated to helping people create an emotional legacy that will live on after they have gone.

Living On suggested a new kind of will beyond legalities and the bequeathing of material goods. It was about passing on a Heartwill of emotional wealth: feelings, memories, hopes, beliefs and experiences.

When media entrepreneur John Barnett heard about the book he was taken with the concept and raised some valid points. He wondered, "Once an emotional legacy is created, how can it be protected? How can its precious content be kept safe and secure? And how can one be certain it's seen by only those it is intended for?"

Barnett recognised the need for an online mechanism that enables such precious content to endure, whilst providing the ability to send dedicated messages into the future. And from there, myheartwill.com was born.

Reflecting on the evolution of this concept – from the pages of a book to the launch of a new website – Jill and Emily Margo share the story of their journey.

It all began with a favour for a friend, a gesture they never imagined would gather momentum and grow into a book, much less a dedicated website.

"A few years ago, I was asked to help a young mother of three, whom I had never met. She had recently learned she was gravely ill and that her time was limited. In her great distress, her main concern was her children growing up without her," Jill explains.

"All she wanted to do was to make a tape recording for them, to leave them with a sense of herself, her love, faith and memories."

With so much to say and so little time, the woman felt overwhelmed, so Jill drew up a simple plan to help her make the tape, to prompt and guide her through the process.

The plan worked and the young mother showed it to her cancer specialist who made copies for other patients he believed could also benefit from the plan.

For Jill, one of Australia's most respected and highly awarded medical journalists, the task of guiding individuals through this process came naturally. She decided to expand on the idea, writing plans for video recordings and letters too.

Over time, material accumulated and it seemed there was enough to put together a book. For help writing the book, Jill turned to her eldest daughter, Emily.

Emily says, "The website expands the concept introduced in the book. The book was originally written for people who had a life-limiting illness and who wanted to leave some sense of themselves behind.

The website builds on this concept and opens it up to anyone, at any stage of their lives, who wants to begin creating an emotional legacy.”

“While Living On talked to a specific audience, myheartwill.com talks to everyone.

“We are encouraging people at all stages of life to start the process of building their own emotional legacy, something people can embark on for the rest of their lives. From the young and healthy to first-time parents starting a family, the site can grow and evolve over time, just as individuals do.”

“The beautiful thing about myheartwill.com is that it can take any form or shape – the only limitation is imagination. It doesn’t mean making a comprehensive family history – it’s not a personal history of facts and chronology.

“Rather it’s about creating the ‘taste’ of a memory or occasion, recording important moments and events, sharing memories and family stories. And you can create dedicated messages to loved ones for the future. You can start building it at anytime, slowly putting things together.

“You don’t have to worry about it all being in order. It’s not about perfect text, it’s about emotional texture. When you include a photo it’s not about keeping a photographic record, it’s about keeping alive the emotion within the photo. It’s about keeping a feeling alive, and that in essence is what myheartwill.com represents – the preservation of emotion and feeling for those who will have to continue on without you.”