

Good morning everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht with The Family Business Institute, Digging Deeper.

You know, as construction folks, I think we've always struggled but I've seen this struggle much more recently with downloading knowledge from our retiring construction leaders and our founders and those sorts of folks and trying to get the knowledge from them to the younger staff and all of that. Well today, I want to tell a little story, a personal story, and it's about the gift of story work. So, at Christmas time this year, one of our daughters gave me the gift of Storyworth.

What is Storyworth? Storyworth is an online process for writing your personal story. What they do is they give you a question each week, I guess you can do it monthly as well, over the course of a year and through answering those 52 questions, you really create your life story. And so, I'm about 13, 14 weeks into this, and it's really been one of the most fulfilling things that I've done in my life and I'm so thankful for our daughter for providing us with this gift. But as I was meeting with some folks and talking about the issue of getting the founders' legacy down and getting the founders' story and this knowledge from all of our construction people, I thought, "Well this is really an ideal tool with which to do this." The idea of asking these folks 52 questions over the course of a year that could bring out the company history, the family history, how the legacy got created through this, the stories that made the business and family what it is, the wisdom and how they developed that wisdom, how did the character and the values of the company become the values of the company, what were the lessons learned along the way and where did all of those things come from?

Perhaps even more so, just the experience and the experiences that shaped those leaders and made them the respected folks that they are and trying to capture those so that others can learn from that and then there's the company lore, sort of those consequential stories of the way things happen that created the success of the company and again shaped those leaders and shaped really the culture of the company and who the company is today.

So Storyworth in and of itself by the way is a great tool for that, but one of the things that Storyworth does is it allows you to replace the standard questions, either as the story writer or as the person who gave the gift of writing. You can come up with your own questions. So, thinking of specific questions for your legacy leaders, or your founders, of how the company got shaped and those sorts of things, can add to the life story. And by the way, the final chapter if you will of the gift of Storyworth is at the end of the year, you actually have a written book. And that book could be distributed among your folks at the company, it could be sitting on their coffee table. It can be a gift to the founder of his own story and his legacy that he could show to his children and his grandchildren.

It's just really ... For myself, it's been extremely powerful. I've thought of things in my history that I haven't thought about in 40 and 50 years, things that did definitely shape both the course of my career but also the kind of person who I am and the type of person who I am and whatever success I've achieved, I hadn't really thought about some of those building blocks in a long, long time, so it's really been fulfilling for me to look back and do that and I think it would be fulfilling again for your founders, legacy leaders, retiring superintendents or construction professionals, and for those of you out there on a personal level, for your parents. It's really a gift that every one of you should think about giving to your parents to be able to write that story before it's too late.

So again, today's message, the gift of Storyworth. Certainly, caught me by surprise and I think it could be a valuable tool for telling your company history, your founder history, your construction leaders' history, tell that lore and learn those lessons. Again, thanks for tuning in, Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.