

FairSplit.com Explains Why Dividing Personal Property in-Person is Often a Mistake

Estate Settlement of personal property often disastrously becomes everyone gathering at the house and taking turns choosing everything to be divided.

CAMARILLO, CA, UNITED STATES, October 28, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ --

Families often decide the best way to divide parents' tangible [personal property](#) (furniture, accessories, art, jewelry, sentimental items) is to pick a date and time, then simply meet at the house to take turns choosing. Almost no one has experience doing it, and nearly everyone involved has a varying opinion of how it should be done. It is more often than not, a recipe for a family disaster.



There are many reasons gathering in person for this process is either impractical, or simply a bad idea:

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Usually no one has the experience to understand that meeting to divide the furniture, art, jewelry, etc. can be very emotionally and practically challenging on so many levels.”

David MacMahan

1/ Everyone processes loss differently, so the mood or attitude of one heir may be seen as disturbing or upsetting by another.

2/ It is highly advised by most experts on the topic, not to have spouses or children of heirs involved, but when dividing in person, they may show up or be brought along anyhow, making things awkward, if not outright contentious.

3/ Relationships between siblings, especially during a time of loss can be challenging. Aggressive personalities or even pleasers, may alter their selection decisions based on what they think

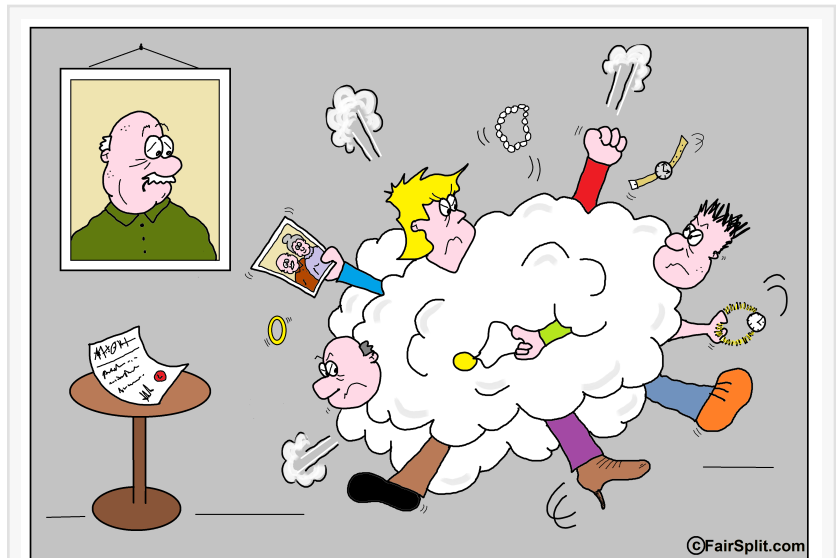
someone else wants, to either prevent them from getting it, or to try to help them get it.

4/ Topics other than dividing personal property are likely to come up, distracting from completing the process, or upending the whole thing into conflict. Old resentments or unresolved previous conflicts are magnified during loss.

5/ Scheduling a time that is convenient for all heirs, and if it is even possible with travel, work, health, etc., can feel like an unreasonable imposition on those challenged to comply with a time set by an executor.

There are other options. If the number of things to divide isn't huge, a spreadsheet of the items to be divided can be created and emailed to heirs to rank their preferences top to bottom. These can then be awarded by taking the top item on each person's list in a "snake" ordering method like 123, 321, 123. If there are things wanted by all (like collectible Christmas ornaments or gold coins), a separate list of those items can be submitted to the executor ranked top to bottom. Names can be drawn from a bowl to determine the order of award and the same processes listed above can be used to ensure everyone gets some portion of the estate and anyone who receives more has gotten it through a blind and fair process.

Whether awarding items in person or some other method, a list of those items, preferably with photos, is usually needed to be sure everything is included and that each person gets the items they've chosen. Spreadsheets or simple lists are often created, but there is an easier, designed for the purpose, free inventory tool that allows photos, descriptions, values, and everything else you need to make the entire process simple. [FairSplit.com](https://www.fairsplit.com) makes this free estate asset inventory tool available to you and all other estate heirs online in your own family account.



Even if it doesn't come to this, conflicts and resentments can be damaging long term



By logging on to a laptop, phone or tablet, heirs no longer need to travel or gather to divide personal property

The FairSplit.com online system was originally created more than ten years ago as a do-it-yourself subscription service to allow families to login to a private account, list all things to be divided and use the system of rounds FairSplit created to do it fairly and peacefully. Transparency and a blind system for all heirs to divide is an advantage when looking at online options. The FairSplit model has expanded to also include guided personal assistance, in addition to its online home inventory and [division](#) system. Now all division accounts get a Zoom or call consultation with David MacMahan, the FairSplit.com founder, to help them plan the best approach, given their unique family situation.

David MacMahan, founder of FairSplit.com says, "Covid restrictions on travel and gathering have only magnified the challenges of meeting in-person. Fortunately for families, it has pushed them to find alternatives that are inherently less confrontational than in-person attempts to divvy things up. I usually suggest the family save in-person gatherings to do something more enjoyable together. Usually no one in the family has the experience to understand that meeting to divide the furniture, art, collectibles and everything else can be very emotionally and practically challenging on so many levels."

Company Information:

FairSplit.com was founded in 2010 to help with peacefully dividing the personal property of estates, in death, divorce or downsizing in an online platform. The listing and sharing is free to use, with upgrades available to divide online. Additionally, they offer mediation, listing assets from photos, valuing and administrative services to assist in estate settlement.

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