In these uncertain times we must appreciate the small advantages of having time on our hands. We should use this time wisely to pause and reflect on what we deem to be important in our lives.

One of the things we tend to avoid, especially when we are still fairly young, is to think about our own mortality. By trying to shelter our loved ones from the reality and finality of it by not dealing with the subject, we are more than likely just adding to the trauma by not having all our ducks in a row when we leave this earth.

A valid Will is the most important legacy you can leave. It not only shortens the period in which your estate is wound up but, if properly planned and structured, it may lead to substantial estate duty savings. The Wills Act, Act 7 of 1953, sets out strict guidelines pertaining to the validity of Wills by determining who may execute a Will, who may sign as a witness, how a Will should be amended and the formal requirements that need to be adhered to. It is thus important to seek professional guidance when drafting and executing your Will.

As part of our holistic approach to client affairs, we urge you to review your Will at least once a year. Our specialised Fiduciary Department will gladly assist you with the planning and drafting thereof.

Make sure you and your family members have valid, well planned Wills in line with your personal needs and that you have appointed an Executor that will give effect thereto in a timeous and professional manner.

How to go about amendments and signing of Wills during Lockdown?

You may contact your Trust Officer or me as per normal via email or telephone and we will send you your amended Will via email or courier. If you are happy with the contents thereof you may sign it in the presence of two independent witnesses (your nearest Police Office will assist if need be) and keep the original signed document in a safe place until you are able to return the original to us for safekeeping. We have staff in the office who will be able to assist you in arranging a courier or who will receive the document if you wish to personally deliver it to our offices.

Renette Hendriks, Director and head of Personal Trust’s Fiduciary Department, reminds us of the importance of having a valid Will and reviewing this regularly.