

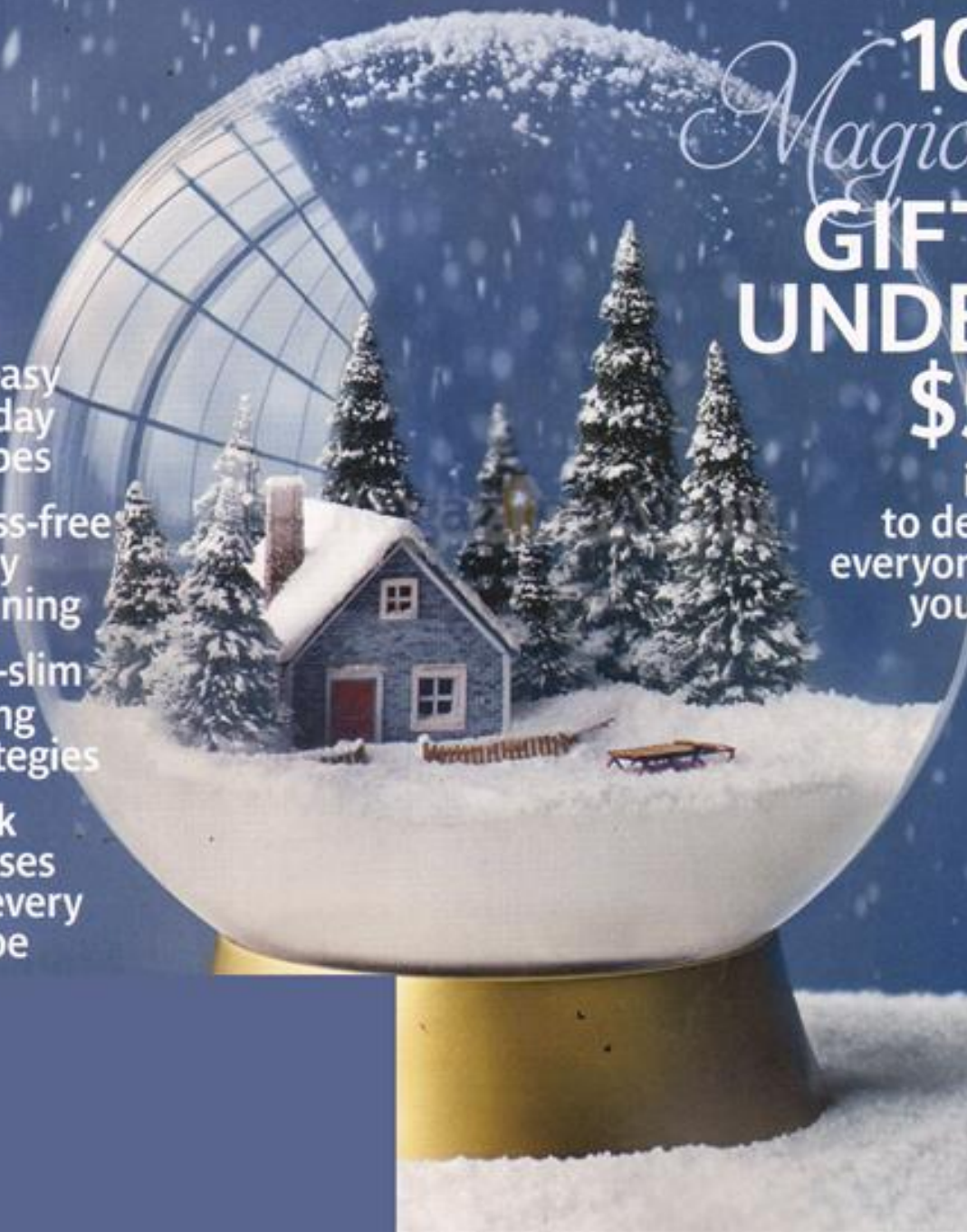
# REAL SIMPLE

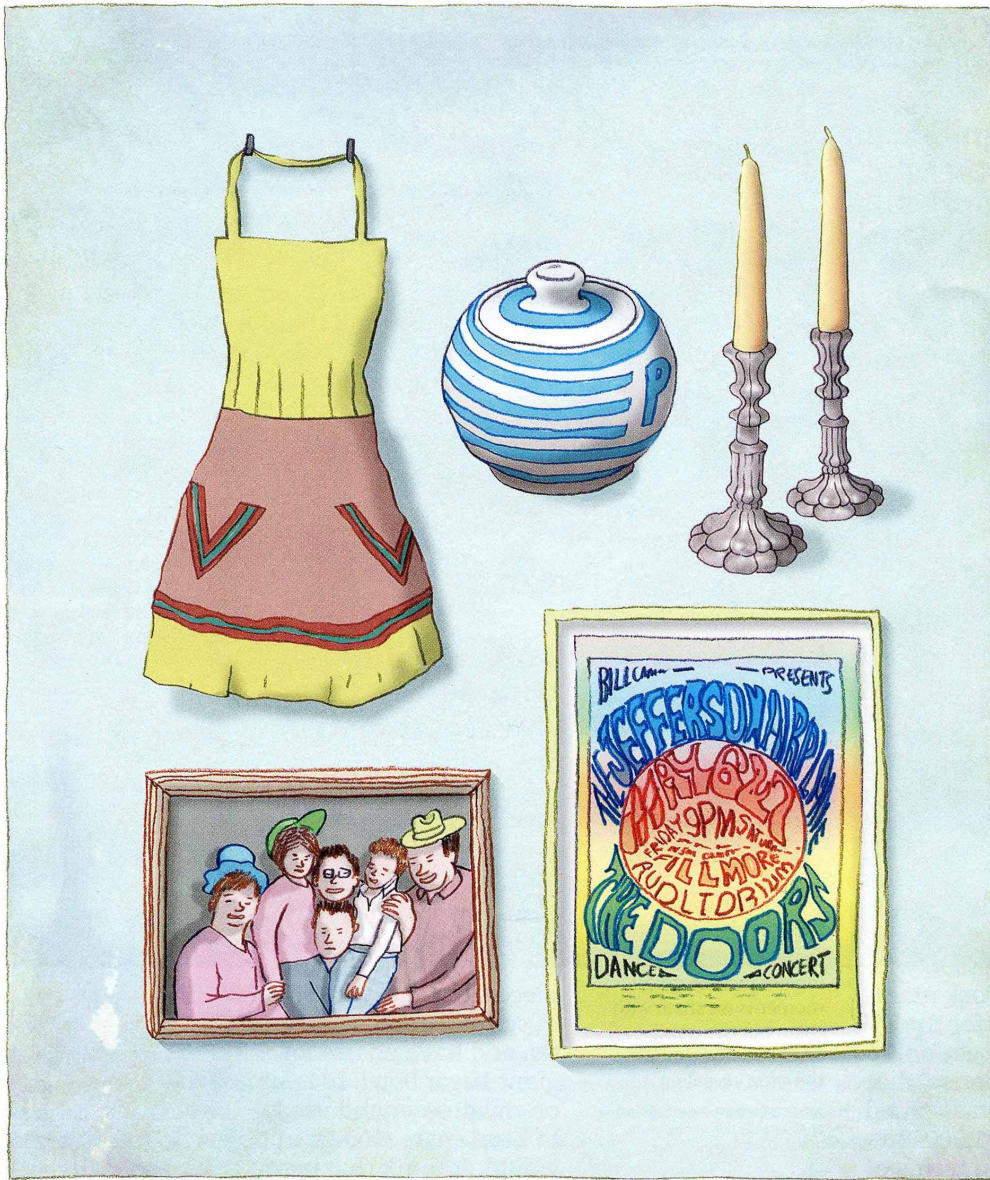
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## 5 things to save for your kids

Your dad's matchbook collection and mom's chiffon apron might not net one red cent on eBay—still, to you their worth is beyond measure. Ever wonder what *you* should pass on to your children someday? Read on for unexpected suggestions from five experts on the art of preserving memories.



### 1 | Insignificant objects from significant occasions

People should pass along the diamonds and the Picassos. Kidding! In all seriousness, focus on keepsakes that represent something you're passionate about, things that will help your kids understand what matters to you. In 1968 I went to a concert in London featuring the Doors and Jefferson Airplane. A handbill was given out, and I held on to it. I kept it in a folder, and each time I moved, I would find it again. I didn't think much about it until I talked to the person who appraises rock memorabilia for the TV show I appear on. To my surprise, that handbill was valued at about \$1,000. But, of course, in terms of nostalgic value, it's worth even more.

**ERIC SILVER** is the director of Lillian Nassau, a New York City-based antiques gallery, and an appraiser on PBS's *Antiques Roadshow*.

### 2 | Something mortifying from your childhood

You should hang on to your most awkward teen memento so your kids know that you can relate to them. I'm thinking of the photo where you and your sisters were forced to wear matching outfits or the one in which you piled on top of your family in a pyramid formation. Mine shows me (at age 14), my brother, and my parents in skis at the top of a mountain, doing a Rockettes kick line. It actually inspired me to create the website [AwkwardFamilyPhotos.com](http://AwkwardFamilyPhotos.com). For many years, I thought the photo was embarrassing; now I see the beauty in it. We all love our families, but there is value in capturing not just the great moments we share with them but the weird ones, too. They're often the most revealing.

**MIKE BENDER** is the cofounder of [AwkwardFamilyPhotos.com](http://AwkwardFamilyPhotos.com).

### 3 | Your practical, high-quality household items

People really love getting stuff they can use: those big soup ladles, or prayer books and Rosary beads, which are functional while helping people feel close to their ancestors. One of my clients was thrilled to find candlesticks that had belonged to her great-grandmother. Now she plans to light them during her weekly Shabbat dinners. Family history doesn't do any good when it's stuck in a drawer.

**RAFAEL GUBER** is a consulting genealogist to the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Museum of Tolerance, in Los Angeles.

### 4 | Something your descendants can repurpose

My family has passed down countless heirlooms, but one in particular plays a role in my daily life. It's a blue-and-white sugar bowl, part of a glazed-clay tea service owned by my grandmother Pat Nixon. In fact, every piece had "Pat" written on it in script. I don't serve much tea and have no use for a giant sugar bowl, so I put it on my dresser and use it to keep spare change in. You wouldn't think that item would be so special, but every time I see it (and throw in a nickel), I think fondly of my grandmother.

**JENNIE EISENHOWER**, an actor and a director, is the descendant of two U.S. presidents. She is the granddaughter of Richard and Pat Nixon and the great-granddaughter of Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower.

### 5 | What you wear to work on Monday

We tend to save baby clothes and wedding dresses, but here's the thing: Wedding dresses are a dime a dozen. Everyone saves them! What truly adds value to an object—whether it's a pencil, a toothbrush, or a piece of clothing—is provenance. Boy, if you can find an apron, a maternity dress, or just a common work dress from the Colonial period, from a historical perspective, that's a wow. Nobody saves the common, ordinary clothing. Just think about it, though: Wouldn't you love to see what your great-grandmother wore on an average day back in 1905? Or your mother's patched blue jeans from the 60s? Since so few of those items survive, they become extremely precious.

**LAUREL THATCHER ULRICH** is a professor of history at Harvard University and the author of *The Age of Homespun* and *A Midwife's Tale*.