

# Bringing Brothers Together

Although Will Hughes has worked with many individuals and families, there is one experience that stands out for him. Several years ago, he traveled halfway around the world to help a family of five brothers reconnect and move forward in a positive way.

Like many siblings, these brothers had distinctly different personalities, interests, and viewpoints. At the time, two brothers were continuing to run the family business, one had pursued a career in marketing, another went into finance, and the fifth was living and working in a remote area of the country. With diverse backgrounds – from sheep farming to Harvard MBAs – these brothers were in distinctly different places. Over the years, they had drifted further and further apart, rarely communicating. This “disconnect” may have continued indefinitely – until a threat to the family business suddenly brought them together.

“Although there was no underlying conflict, these men lived very separate lives,” recalls Will Hughes. “They didn’t know how to come together after so much time apart. My job was to facilitate productive conversations and reconnect them through the Family Tapestry program.”

Once the threat to the business was thwarted, the brothers found themselves with significant wealth to manage, but decidedly different ideas on what to do with those funds. In the beginning, the conversations focused exclusively on Financial Capital, so it became Hughes’ challenge to move the emphasis to the Qualitative Capitals and how they could exploit those. In fact, the success of the program hinges on the ability to help families see that their resources encompass much more than money. Although it took time and persistence, eventually they discovered the value each member brings to the family and settled on some solid common ground.

“I don’t believe they will ever be a ‘get together for Sunday dinner’ kind of family,” said Will Hughes. “But they’ve strengthened their bonds and opened doors on how to relate to each other in different ways. In the end, they realized that they really wanted to work together and prepare for the future. It was not an easy journey, but it was very fulfilling.”

