



Advice and suggestions for those writing a Eulogy

Eulogies are the words that are spoken during a gathering that refer specifically to the character and life of the person who has died. In being asked to deliver a eulogy you have been offered the trust of the close friends and family, and as long as you write from the heart your eulogy will be gratefully accepted by everyone present.

With any public speaking, preparation is crucial. As you start to consider what you might say, be sure to write down your thoughts. Remember you are trying to capture a person's experiences, contributions and character. Too often a eulogy is reduced to a collection of dates without evoking many memories of the day to day life that was lived.

Perhaps it will work well to consider the person in the many roles they may have played in our lives - for example as a mother, daughter, wife, friend. Sometimes a chronological order will work well, or often a eulogy will work just as well is focus is given to only a small part of their years, especially if they had a very full life. It can be very powerful to briefly talk of each decade lived, with references to the highlights and challenges.

There are several questions that can help generally is deciding what to say:

- What are the things they will be most remembered for?
- What were they most proud of?
- What hopes and regrets did they share with you?
- What annoyed them? What excited them?
- What was important to them?
- What words, actions, thoughts, situations, philosophies, times of day, foods, places and activities may remind you of them the most?
- How do you think they would like to be remembered?
- What characteristics or actions will live on through the lives of others?

Sometimes there is a short story that can be an excellent way of highlighting many of these aspects together. You may wish to include a little of what you will personally miss about them, or what they have taught or meant to you.

And finally, remember:

- The unusual and highly emotive setting of your talk may bring unexpected feelings or nervousness, even if you are used to public speaking.
- If you find that you are unable to continue, try to see this reaction as an emotional tribute in itself. If you have notes, perhaps the leader of the gathering can continue reading on your behalf.
- It is important that everyone present is able to understand your well-chosen words.
- Speak slowly, speak quite loudly, and breathe! A smile will help enormously.



- Try and use high and low pitch, and don't be afraid to pause for a time. It allows others an important moment to reflect on what you are saying.
- It does not have to be perfect, very few of our relationships and communications ever are.
- Remember, everyone is wishing you well. Relax and take your time. Be positive, have courage, and trust that you know what to say.

For more information on planning a funeral service please ask for a copy of “When we remember” Inspirations & integrity when planning a funeral.

