

NEW EDITION!
NOW INCLUDES PLANNING CHECKLIST

Planning a Celebration of Life



A simple guide for turning a memorial service into a celebration of life



Planning a Life Celebration

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Ideas for the celebration

Why should I have a service? Life celebration services are really about love. You are taking the time to express and share the love that you felt for that person. It's important to celebrate but not at the expense of acknowledging that something important has been lost. The best services mix many memories, comfort and encouragement. You need to take this time to share your loss, to laugh and to share your thoughts and feelings with each other.

Where Should the Celebration be Held?

Some funeral homes and cremation societies have rooms for you to use. If you are members of a congregation, you may consider the church's community room. Many people are now choosing a private site such as a country club, university or a relative's garden. Where did your loved one like to go on a Saturday afternoon: the beach, the tennis club, the golf course, fishing by a stream, a football game? If they were a sailor, perhaps the harbor or yacht club would be a good place to gather.

Who can I Get to Lead the Service?

Traditionally, a member of the Clergy or Funeral Director conducts the service. However, Celebrants are becoming more and more popular. A Certified Funeral Celebrant is a person who seeks to meet the needs of families during their time of loss. A Celebrant is trained to help individuals create and present a personalized funeral, memorial or celebration of life service.

A Celebrant will honor a family's wishes and will present either a religious or non-religious gathering. The family is free to participate as much or little as they wish. The service belongs to the family and is conducted to their individual needs.

10 Ideas for Creating a Memorable Celebration

1. CREATE A MEMORY TABLE

Think about your loved ones hobbies and passions. Gather some of the key things that were important to your loved one. At the entrance to the service, have the items displayed on a large table.

For example, if they liked to paint, bring in their artwork, their paints, brushes and smock. You could even bring in their easels and put the artwork on their easels. If they were gardeners you could bring in their gardening tools and



A memory table of a golf lover displaying their favorite club and announcing her hole in one!



Albert Litwin proudly served as a Captain in the Army during WWII. He helped plan the D-Day invasion with General Eisenhower. By the looks of those boots, he wasn't just sitting behind a desk!

pots of flowers. If they liked football, you could bring any logo memorabilia of the team that they supported that you or they may have. Perhaps add a bowl with their favorite candy or treat, and friends and family can help themselves. You may want to take 3x5 cards and label the items and explain the significance.

2. DISPLAY MEMORY BOARDS

Memory boards are great to display around the room where you are holding the celebration of life. The boards will create an area for guest to gather and reminisce. You can purchase the boards at stationary supply stores or you can order them through www.nextgenmemorials.com where everything you need is conveniently located in one kit.



3. HAVE FRIENDS AND FAMILY SHARE THEIR MEMORIES



Listening to eulogies will bring back many memories. Between eulogies take a break and hand out cards and have friends and family share their own memories. You only have this one opportunity where everyone will be together to capture their thoughts and memories of your loved one. These memories can be read at holidays, their

birthday, and just when you want to remember them. The best part is you can hand down the cards to generations to come.

A memory tree is another option. Friends and family write their memories on a dove shaped card and can place them on a tree. Make sure you have pens or pencils for people to write with.



4. HAVE A CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

Have family and friends light a candle as part of the celebration. The candle light is not only symbolic of your loved one's spiritual presence, but it encourages everyone to remember your loved one and think about all of the wonderful moments you spent with them.

You could have a procession and put the candles around the casket or urn and then put the candles in a tray with sand to create a beautiful memorial.



5. GET CREATIVE WITH FLOWERS

Many people are asking for donations instead of flowers because most traditional flowers are impersonal, expensive and unattractive. Additionally, most people just throw out the flowers after the service. I suggest taking a creative approach.

Consider a display of roses where the roses are handed to friends and family as part of the service.



This is nice way to incorporate a favorite photo with a flower arrangement and it can be enjoyed for days and weeks after the service.

If done with some creativity, flowers can add a special and memorable touch to a celebration of life.



6. HELP FRIENDS AND FAMILY CONNECT WITH NAMETAGS

You might not have thought about nametags for a memorial event however, they are becoming very popular. The nametags should have an area where guests can write how they knew the departed, ie: "How I knew Joyce _____"



Then guests have a wonderful conversation starter, "Oh you knew her through the gardening club, I hear Joyce grew some beautiful hydrangeas."

As we age, our memory tends to fade and a nametag will be a lifesaver when you know you know the person but can't remember their name. Also, our vision tends to go, too, so make sure you have people write their names in large print.

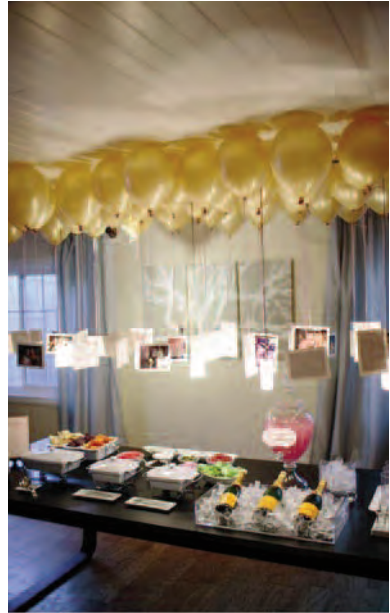
7. PLAN A DOVE RELEASE

At the end of the service, there are few things more powerful than the release of white doves. Doves are symbols of peace, love and purity. You can check and see if there are doves in your area by going to: <http://whitedovespa.org/states.html>



8. COMBINE A BALLOON RELEASE WITH A PHOTO DISPLAY

Collect a photo from each year of your loved one's life. Attach the photo to a helium balloon. Have the ribbon for the balloon at eye level so guests can look at all the photos from the person's life. At the end of the service, hand each guest or family a balloon and go outside for a symbolic balloon release. If the guest wishes, they can untie the photo and keep it as a keepsake. Make sure to take photos and send them to the guests as another keepsake.



9. DISPLAY THEIR BOOKS AND ENCOURAGE GUESTS TO TAKE ONE TO ENJOY

For the person who loved to read, consider placing their books on or next to the memory table. Next to the books create a sign that says, JOHN WAS AN AVID READER. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO TAKE ONE OF HIS BOOKS AND ENJOY IN HIS MEMORY. The books make a great keepsake.



10. HAND OUT A MEMORIAL FAVOR

If the person liked to read, a plantable bookmark would be perfect. When you plant the butterfly, forget-me-not flowers grow in their memory. These bookmarks can be personalized with your loved one's name and a favorite poem or verse.



Tree seedlings are another great option. Plant this tree and then watch the tree grow and remember your loved one. What a great way to celebrate their life now and in years to come as the tree grows.



Consider putting pocket charms on the table that reflect your loved one. Guests are encouraged to take one to put in their pocket or purse. When they come across it, later, they will remember the departed.



Find pocket charms, memorial trees and plantable bookmarks at:
www.nextgenmemorials.com

Memorial Program Folders

A memorial folder can contain pertinent information on the schedule of events to take place during the memorial service. This is also a good place to display a photo of your loved one and perhaps a verse from a favorite song, book or poem. Obituary information can also be included making a lasting keepsake for your guests.



Guest Books

Guest books are not very practical as they require people to wait in line at the service to sign. Unless feelings and memories are shared, what is the long term use of a guest book? If feelings and memories are shared, the wait could become very long and delay the service. If you decide to have a book, I suggest a book where you can remove the pages. Many of the pages can be distributed at the service for people to sign, if you are having people sit down, one page with pens could be at each table.

Here is a sample of a book where you can include photos and the cards with memories that were shared.

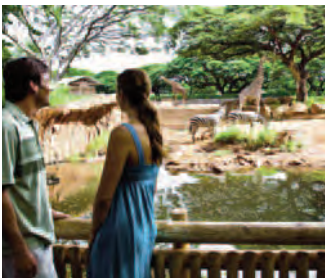


In the the following pages, you will read about some unique examples of what people have done to turn a funeral into a celebration of life.....

unique Life celebrations

Alicia Designed her own Celebration of Life that included her favorite wine, music and a farewell video.

Alicia Johnson, a self proclaimed wine connoisseur, prearranged her service to include three separate wine tasting ceremony stations established in her garden at her suburban home. Her family and friends walked to each of the three stations, tasted wine and experienced the important areas of her life. At the first one, they listened to some of her favorite music while enjoying one particular wine she had invested in and talked amongst themselves about Alicia, her wine and her music. At the second ceremony station, the coordinator provided each attendee with a message card to write words of comfort to the family if they chose, while enjoying a different wine and hearing her husband talk of their life together. At the third ceremony station, beneath an outdoor tent, they tearfully watched Alicia in a video in which she talked to them from her bed just weeks before her death. She expressed heartfelt and loving messages to more than ten members of her family and friends. "Her example lives as an inspiration for all of us to follow."



Dave's Celebration of Life was at his Favorite Place, the Zoo.

Dave had a love for animals and had many safari adventures with his wife Margaret. It seemed appropriate to make animals the focus of his celebration of life. Funeral attendees were invited to greet the family under an outdoor tent outside of the zoo gates where coffee and cocktails were served, and an opportunity for informal social exchange between family and friends was provided. They were given a 10-inch square memorial folder imprinted with the ceremony agenda and pictures of Dave throughout his life. Family and friends boarded one of several waiting zoo trains and began a slow ride to the first "ceremony presentation," this one in front

of the outdoor bear pavilion. At this station, several tripods held enlarged photographs of animals that had been taken by Dave. These were on display next to a podium with a microphone. Dave's wife began a discussion of her husband and, in particular, their safari experiences and devotion and love for animals. At the conclusion of her remarks, she invited others to share memories and recollections of her husband. The group then re-boarded the trains for the short ride to the next "ceremony station". At the second stop, at the lions' pavilion, several more tripods displayed blown-up articles about Dave, his work and his devotion to the animals, and a display table held Dave's PETA awards and PETA donation envelopes. Dave's closest friend, Don, began the presentation, talking about his friendship with Dave and Dave's love for animals. He then introduced Christine, who related her "behind the scenes" experience of Dave's work in PETA, sharing several little known but admirable successes and breakthroughs he had accomplished on behalf of animal rights. The entourage re-boarded the trains and proceeded to the zoo arboretum. Chairs facing a large screen enabled family and friends to sit while viewing an eight-minute slide presentation of his life; photographs taken from the family album depicted Dave from his childhood to present, including several safari scenes. The very last picture was a close-up of Dave's face. While that photograph remained on the screen, attendees heard four rings of a telephone, followed by Dave's voice on his personal home message machine, a message most of the audience was familiar with: "Hi, this is Dave. I'm on safari, leave me a message and I hope to meet you along the trail somewhere someday." Following the slide presentation, each person was given a three-by-five card and pen to write a message to Dave and/or Margaret. As people were leaving the zoo, each person was greeted by his wife who received their message cards, hugs and loving words.

celebrating Jesse Valadez's Passion, A Fitting Send off.

Jesse was the king of lowriders. Not a gang member, but instead the founder of a peaceful, civic minded, lowriding club that he started in 1965. His true love was his 1964 Chevy Impala that he named "Gypsy Rose". Gypsy Rose was hand-painted with multihued roses and has hot-pink interior. The seats swivel in the front



and it has a cocktail bar in the back with two small light fixtures. It was clear that his passion for lowriding cars touched many people. His funeral service was a true tribute. Friends and fans came from far and wide, sporting their lowrider club shirts and over 100 cars participated in a lowrider car procession that began at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church in East Los Angeles and ended at Rose Hills

Memorial Park in Whittier. His prized Gypsy Rose 1964 Impala was at the head of



the parade on a flat bed truck and followed the hearse. His casket was painted in bright pink with the same roses that adorned his car. Fresh cut roses in pink, white and red were placed on top of his casket. Jesse Valadez died at age 64 on January 29, 2011 of colon cancer in his home in East LA. He bequeathed his "Gypsy Rose" dream car to his son. Perhaps his son can carry on his father's passion.

A unique send off for someone who loved to visit the Casinos.

Kimberly's mother loved to gamble, so when it came time to plan her mother's celebration of life it made sense to have it revolve around her favorite place, the casino. She held the service where her mother was a regular, the Ho-Chuck Casino at the Wisconsin Dells. She had the gathering at one of the meeting rooms at the casino. She served a lunch and at everyone's place was a \$1 poker chip as a funeral favor and tribute to her mother. After the lunch and the eulogies, several of the guests got together and had a great time spending the \$1 chip. Others took the chip home as a token of remembrance. Kimberly said her mother would have loved her own life celebration.



A Young woman's unique celebration of Life incorporating her favorite things.



Rachel passed away at age 18 while on vacation in Mexico. She was at her sister's birthday party and fell backward out of a third-story balcony. Back at home in the United States, Rachel and her family were very well known in their community and the entire town seemed to come together to create a unique send off. It began with a beautifully hand built wooden casket that family and friends made within 48 hours. The lining was in a burgundy silken material, her favorite color.

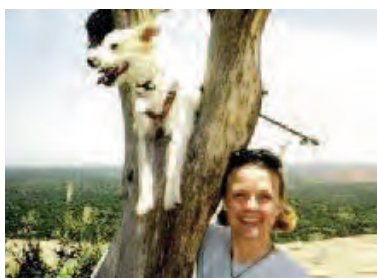


The lid of the casket was lined with her favorite flower, the lavender rose and there were vases of the roses on both sides of the casket. The church was packed with over 500 mourners. Rachel's casket was elevated and the flat lid of the casket was next to the casket and covered with lit candles. As people entered the church, her favorite music was playing

and a presentation with photos of her life was projected on a large screen behind the casket. At the entrance to the church, Rachel's four best friends, accompanied by a bucket of her favorite roses, handed each attendee a lavender rose. Any friend who asked to give flowers was asked to sponsor a bucket of roses instead. Grown men were seen clutching roses to their chests. The service began at 4PM so the burial would be at dusk and located in an orchard owned by her grandparents. Rachel was transported in her brother's 1934 Dodge panel truck that Rachel loved to ride in. The pallbearers carried her through the orchard to the grave with the help of portable lighting that illuminated the field of fruit trees. The family invited all to write a farewell message on the casket with permanent markers. All the while her favorite songs were played from a battery operated boom box. Her friends who had attended camp with her harmonized many of the fireside songs that they had performed as young campers. As her casket was lowered into the grave, friends and family put roses that were in vases around the grave into the grave as a final tribute. Attendees said all the nice touches of candles, her favorite roses and music made Rachel's service so personal, unique and memorable.

Dog Lover and Pet Adoption

Many people (including myself) consider our dogs part of our family. If you are

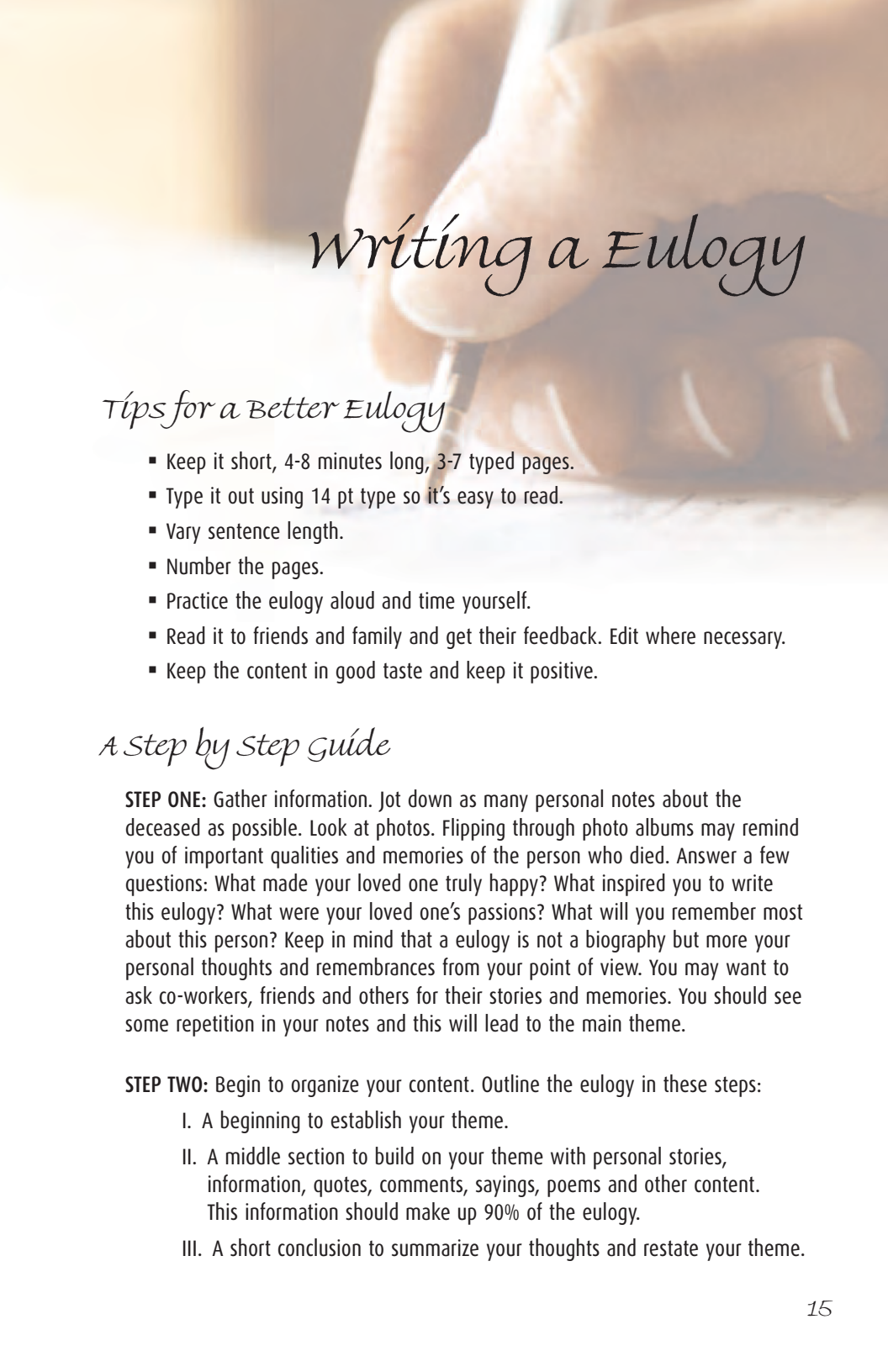


planning a funeral, memorial service or celebration of life, consider bringing the departed's dog to the service. Obviously, it will need to be a well behaved dog(s). Dogs have a great ability to heal and make people feel better - just what friends and family need at a celebration of life.

Dana loved her dog Grit, whom she rescued. She was known for rescuing dogs and about

every other kind of animal. When the family was planning her service and they were looking for ideas to pay tribute to such a wonderful person, her brother said "puppies". Yes, they brought puppies to the service from the local adoption shelter and guess what, every puppy was adopted at the service. What a fabulous tribute to Dana and her legacy lives on.

Also, donations can be collected for local or nationwide animal rescue organizations.



Writing a Eulogy

Tips for a Better Eulogy

- Keep it short, 4-8 minutes long, 3-7 typed pages.
- Type it out using 14 pt type so it's easy to read.
- Vary sentence length.
- Number the pages.
- Practice the eulogy aloud and time yourself.
- Read it to friends and family and get their feedback. Edit where necessary.
- Keep the content in good taste and keep it positive.

A Step by Step Guide

STEP ONE: Gather information. Jot down as many personal notes about the deceased as possible. Look at photos. Flipping through photo albums may remind you of important qualities and memories of the person who died. Answer a few questions: What made your loved one truly happy? What inspired you to write this eulogy? What were your loved one's passions? What will you remember most about this person? Keep in mind that a eulogy is not a biography but more your personal thoughts and remembrances from your point of view. You may want to ask co-workers, friends and others for their stories and memories. You should see some repetition in your notes and this will lead to the main theme.

STEP TWO: Begin to organize your content. Outline the eulogy in these steps:

- I. A beginning to establish your theme.
- II. A middle section to build on your theme with personal stories, information, quotes, comments, sayings, poems and other content. This information should make up 90% of the eulogy.
- III. A short conclusion to summarize your thoughts and restate your theme.

STEP THREE: Work first on the middle section (Part II). Once you have this part the beginning and summary will be easy. Develop the outline by grouping similar themes from your notes from Step 1. For example, you might want to gather all the achievements together. Merge the comments about the deceased's philosophy of life.

STEP FOUR: Organize the conclusion (Part III). A conclusion reminds the listeners of the theme and imprints the strong feeling you have about the loss. The key is to conclude effectively and quickly. Here is an example:

“We will all miss Jackie’s sense of humor, her talent for knowing what is really important in life and her famous chocolate chip cookies” (a little humor doesn’t hurt as long as it’s not offensive to anyone).

“Her example lives as an inspiration for all of us to follow.”

STEP FIVE: Write the beginning of the eulogy (Part I). This usually starts with an attention getter. It will set the theme and can be in the form of a short story, a poem, a saying, lyrics to a song. It will introduce the goal and theme you used when you began the process.

STEP SIX: Polish it up. Your best bet is to walk away from it for a few hours or overnight if possible. Work on it so it sounds like a conversation. You want to talk to the audience as naturally as possible.

STEP SEVEN: Delivering the eulogy.

Normally speakers do not read copy word-for-word. Because you are more than likely going to be emotional, don’t be afraid to read it this way. Then, you won’t leave out any key points you or others wanted said.

If making eye contact with members of the audience will make you emotional, either try and keep your eyes on the page or look just over the top of the audience to the back of the room.

Feel free to pause, take a deep breath and drink some water. Everyone will understand. They share your emotional distress.

Speak as naturally as you can, just as if you were telling someone about your loved one. Speak up. It’s very important that you speak clearly and loudly so that everyone can hear you.

Keep the written eulogy as a memento. You can add it to your memento chest and share it with others who may want a copy.

By following these steps, writing and delivering a eulogy will become less stressful and more of a healing process.

Writing a Thank You Note

Your relatives and friends will convey expressions of sympathy to you following the loss of your loved one. This will be shown through floral arrangements, sympathy cards, telephone calls, emails and other acts of kindness to let you know they understand and share your grief.

Since acknowledgment etiquette is personal and individual, it is not easy to advise how to write your sympathy acknowledgments. Perhaps the best suggestion is to remember to whom you are writing.

On the following pages, suggestions and guidelines are listed to assist you with word choices and styles of sympathy acknowledgments. To express your sincere gratitude and heartfelt thanks, remember to write openly and honestly. Often, a few words will adequately express your personal feelings.

TO CELEBRANT OR CLERGY

A brief, personalized note is appropriate to send to the celebrant or clergy to convey appreciation and thanks for their comforting words and assistance. A separate acknowledgment will need to be sent for memorial contributions to a church or specified memorial fund.

Dear Father Brown,

Jim and I thank you for your support and consolation during this difficult time. The funeral service at which you officiated gave inspiration and comfort to everyone present.

Sincerely,
Lisa Engel

Dear Rev. Rice,

We wish to express our thanks for your words of comfort at the service of our loved one.

Most sincerely,
Susan Sanger

Dear Mr. Lawrence,

Thank you once again for your compassion, sensitivity and kindness. Your efforts have greatly helped me to deal with this loss.

Gratefully,
Sandra Varini

TO MUSICIANS

Traditionally, music is a basic part of the funeral service. It is acceptable to acknowledge the musicians with a special note on the inside of the thank you card.

Dear Liza,
The music which you provided at Dad's service was beautiful and was such a comfort to us during our grief.
Sincerely,
Patty

FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS

It is customary at the time of death, for friends and relatives to express their sympathy to the family by sending floral arrangements. Thank you cards should be sent to each person whose name is on the floral card. When the arrangement is from a group of people or organization, it is acceptable to send the card to the leader of the group.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hausman,
Thank you for the beautiful blue and white arrangement which served as a reminder of the special friends you were to our Dad.
Fondly,
Mary Magnolia

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

In many situations, the family will specify a charitable organization or specific fund for those wishing to make monetary contributions. Acknowledgments written for memorial contributions are similar to those written for floral arrangements.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Shearer,
Your contribution to the Blue Knights Childrens' Fund is an appropriate remembrance to Ron's own charity work. Thank you for such a special memorial.

Sincerely,
Evan Morrison

RELATIVES AND SPECIAL FRIENDS

It is not necessary to send an acknowledgment card to your relatives and special friends. However, when these people have sent floral arrangements, food, or assisted the bereaved family in other ways, a thank you card is the proper manner in which to extend your sincere appreciation for their efforts on your behalf.

Dear Katharine:
I want to convey my deepest appreciation to you for having arranged such a wonderful buffet at our home after returning from the funeral. You have shown us the kindness of a close neighbor and true friend.

Love,
Melanie

CO-WORKERS

Often the efforts of your co-workers go unnoticed during the time of grief. When a co-worker has extended acts of kindness beyond the flowers, food and memorials, it is appropriate to acknowledge that person with a note of sincere appreciation.

Dear Debbie:

I cannot thank you enough for the support shown to me during my recent loss. It helps to know you are putting forth extra effort to do my work in my absence. It will certainly make my return to the office next week much easier.

Love,
Jill

VOLUNTEER SERVICES FROM FRIENDS

Often, friends and neighbors volunteer services including the use of their cars and homes. These acts of kindness should be acknowledged with a personal line inside the thank you card indicating your sincere appreciation of their courtesy.

Dear Patricia:

We really appreciated your helping hand and support at our home after the funeral. It was a comfort to know you were handling everything.

Thanks again,
David

SYMPATHY CARDS

Upon receipt of a sympathy card, it is acceptable to send an acknowledgment card. If a personal note was included in the sympathy card, a brief note should then be written inside the thank you card.

Dear Lauren,

It was very thoughtful of you to remember us at this time.

Austin

LETTERS OF SYMPATHY

A personal sympathy letter should be properly acknowledged with a personal reply. A brief message may be written on the inside of the thank you card.

Dear Seth,

I want to thank you for your comforting words when I needed them most. Friends like you have certainly helped me through this difficult time. Thanks for being there.

Fondly,
Jessica

EMAILS

You may choose to reply via email, however, a hand written note is always appreciated.

Dear George,

Receiving your sympathy by email made me feel much closer to you. Thank you for caring. - Love, Carol



Thoughts on grief

HELPING YOURSELF HEAL WHEN SOMEONE DIES

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. (reprinted with permission)

Someone You Love Has Died

You are now faced with the difficult, but important, need to mourn. Mourning is the open expression of your thoughts and feelings regarding the death and the person who has died. It is an essential part of healing. You are beginning a journey that is often frightening, painful, overwhelming, and sometimes lonely. This article provides practical suggestions to help you move toward healing in your personal grief experience.

Realize Your Grief is Unique

Your grief is unique. No one will grieve in exactly the same way. Your experience will be influenced by a variety of factors: the relationship you had with the person who died; the circumstances surrounding the death; your emotional support system; and your cultural and religious background.

As a result of these factors, you will grieve in your own special way. Don't try to compare your experience with that of other people or to adopt assumptions about just how long your grief should last. Consider taking a "one-day-at-a-time" approach that allows you to grieve at your own pace.

Talk About Your Grief

Express your grief openly. By sharing your grief outside yourself, healing occurs. Ignoring your grief won't make it go away; talking about it often makes you feel better. Allow yourself to speak from your heart, not just your head. Doing so doesn't mean you are losing control, or going "crazy." It is a normal part of your grief journey.

Find caring friends and relatives who will listen without judging. Seek out those persons who will walk with, not in front of, or behind you in your journey through grief. Avoid persons who are critical or who try to steal your grief from you. They may tell you, "Keep your chin up," or "Carry on," or "Be happy." While these comments may be well-intended, you do not have to accept them. You have a right to express your grief; no one has the right to take it away.

Expect to Feel a Multitude of Emotions

Experiencing loss affects your head, heart, and spirit. So you may experience a variety of emotions as part of your grief work. Confusion, disorganization, fear, guilt, relief, or explosive emotions are just a few of the emotions you may feel. Sometimes these emotions will follow each other within a short period of time. Or they may occur simultaneously.

As strange as some of these emotions may seem they are normal and healthy. Allow yourself to learn from these feelings. And don't be surprised if out of nowhere you suddenly experience surges of grief, even at the most unexpected times. These grief attacks can be frightening and leave you feeling overwhelmed. They are, however, a natural response to the death of someone loved. Find someone who understands your feelings and will allow you to talk about them.

Allow for Numbness

Feeling dazed or numb when someone dies is often part of your early grief experience. This numbness serves a valuable purpose: it gives your emotions time to catch up with what your mind has told you. This feeling helps create insulation from the reality of the death until you are more able to tolerate what you don't want to believe.

Be Tolerant of Your Physical and Emotional Limits

Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you fatigued. Your ability to think clearly and make decisions may be impaired. And your low-energy level may naturally slow you down. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Nurture yourself. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. Lighten your schedule as much as possible. Caring for yourself doesn't mean feeling sorry for yourself; it means you are using survival skills.

Develop a Support System

Reaching out to others and accepting support is often difficult, particularly when you hurt so much. But the most compassionate self-action you can do at this difficult time is to find a support system of caring friends and relatives who will provide the understanding you need. Find those people who encourage you to be yourself and acknowledge your feelings—both happy and sad.

Make Use of Ritual

The memorial ritual does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It helps provide you with the support of caring people. Most importantly, the funeral or life celebration is a way for you to express your grief outside yourself. If you eliminate this ritual, you often set yourself up to repress your feelings, and you cheat everyone who cares of a chance to pay tribute to someone who was, and always will be, loved.

Embrace Your Spirituality

If faith is part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you are angry at God because of the death of someone you loved, realize this feeling as a normal part of your grief work. Find someone to talk with who won't be critical of your feelings of hurt and abandonment.

Allow a Search for Meaning

You may find yourself asking, "Why did he die? Why this way? Why now?" This search for meaning is often another normal part of the healing process. Some questions have answers. Some do not. Actually, the healing occurs in the opportunity to pose the questions, not necessarily in answering them. Find a supportive friend who will listen responsively as you search for meaning.

Treasure Your Memories

Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after someone loved dies. Treasure them. Share them with your family and friends. Recognize that your memories may make you laugh or cry. In either case, they are a lasting part of the relationship that you had with a very special person in your life.

Move Toward Your Grief and Heal

The capacity to love requires the necessity to grieve when someone loved dies. You cannot heal unless you openly express your grief. Denying your grief will only make it become more confusing and overwhelming. Embrace your grief and heal.

Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself. Never forget that the death of someone loved changes your life forever. It's not that you won't be happy again. It's simply that you will never be exactly the same as you were before the death.

The experience of grief is powerful. So, too, is your ability to help yourself heal. In doing the work of grieving, you are moving toward a renewed sense of meaning and purpose in your life.

If this has been helpful, you may want to consider reading more of Alan D. Wolfelt's work found at www.centerforloss.com

"We live in a culture where we expect instant results. We want the fastest acting pain relief, the quickest Internet service and the easiest path through hardship. We must all try to remember that there is no drive-thru-window solution for grief."

—Todd Little, Bereavement Service Professional



Books you may want to consider

GRACEFUL PASSAGES —*Gary Malkin*

This small book with music and spoken-word CDs, was created to help people come to terms with death. Used in many hospice situations, patients and family members have found it opens a way for them to talk to each other about life and death, forgiveness and acceptance, and the process of letting go. The words of wisdom from spiritual thinkers such as Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Ram Dass, Arun Ghandi, Thich Nhat Hanh, Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shalomi and others appear in the book and are spoken aloud on CDs as an offering of thoughts, prayers, chants or stories of comfort and reflection.

HEAL YOUR GRIEVING HEART, 100 PRACTICAL IDEAS —*Alan D. Wolfelt PH.D.*

When someone loved dies, we must express our grief if we are to heal. In other words, we must mourn. But knowing how to mourn doesn't always come naturally. This book offers 100 practical ideas to help you practice self-compassion. Some of the ideas teach you the principles of grief and mourning. The remainder offer practical, action-oriented tips for embracing your grief. Each also suggests a *carpe diem*, which will help you seize the day by helping you move toward healing today.

ALISON'S GIFT: SONG OF A THOUSAND HEARTS OPENING —*Pat Hogan*

This is the true story of in-home after-death care that changed the lives of a family and a community. In her book, *Something More*, Sarah Ban Breathnach relates, "I have known many sacred encounters in my life, but the two holiest encounters I have ever been blessed to know and shall ever know were bringing my child into this world and helping another woman's child leave." That other child was Alison and this is the story of her life and death and the unique legacy she left behind. This is a story of courage and compassion, bitterness and beauty, and love and loss. *Alison's Gift* portrays a mother, family, and community coming to grips with the sudden death of a beloved child. More importantly, it demonstrates the value of community and courage in facing death, and handling the details of the loss of a loved one.

Send \$21.00 to: Crossings | P.O. Box 721 | Silver Spring, MD 20901

(includes S & H)

www.crossings.net | crossingcare@earthlink.net | 301-593-5451

AWAKENING FROM GRIEF: FINDING THE WAY BACK TO JOY –*John Welshons*

A compassionate guide to making your way through grief. This book is the perfect companion when death has turned your life upside-down, or when someone near you has lost a loved one.

(Reviewed by Lisa Baertlein, San Francisco, CA)

A CAREGIVER'S CHALLENGE –*Maryann Schacht*

Maryann Schacht was writing a manual on how to care for a terminally ill loved one when her husband Bob was diagnosed with cancer. Suddenly, she was no longer just the sympathetic social worker dispensing useful advice for her clients; she was a woman tending to the man who had been her rock of support for 25 years. After his death, she continued working on the book, pouring into it both her personal ordeal and the practical guidance she'd always offered others.

"A Caregiver's Challenge: Living, Loving, Letting Go" is now available in paper back.

A GRIEF OBSERVED –*C.S. Lewis*

It's an oldie, but it is one of my favorites. It says more about grief than so many other books. The movie "Shadowlands" was inspired by it.

(Reviewed by Todd Little, Bereavement Service Professional)

A TIME TO MOURN, A TIME TO DANCE:

HELP FOR THE LOSSES IN LIFE –*Margaret Metzgar*

I think this book is probably the best grief book I've ever read. It just has almost everything in it that I would try to tell people. First of all, it's got beautiful pictures; it's like a coffee table book that really touches on what grief is and how to understand what you're experiencing. I've told people when I've given it to them, "It's my whole support group in one book." It touches on every loss you can name—pet death, traumatic death, death of a child, loss of health. It's a book about life, really, and it's truly comforting.

(Reviewed by Todd Little, Bereavement Service Professional)

GILI'S BOOK: A JOURNEY INTO BEREAVEMENT FOR PARENTS

AND COUNSELORS –*Henya Kagan Klein*

It's interesting on a number of levels, because she writes not only as someone who helps people deal with their grief, but also from the perspective of a grieving parent. It's the story of her daughter and what she went through in losing her, the feelings she struggled with afterward.

(Reviewed by Todd Little, Bereavement Service Professional)

THE GIFT OF SIGNIFICANCE: WALKING PEOPLE THROUGH A LOSS -*Doug Manning*

This is one of my all-time favorites; it's the real story of grief. It talks about grief, the way people feel, and gives real down-to-earth ideas about how to understand the experience you are going through.

(Reviewed by Todd Little, Bereavement Service Professional)

AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS: USING THE NEW POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY TO REALIZE YOUR POTENTIAL FOR LASTING FULFILLMENT -*Martin Seligman*

This isn't a grief book at all, but it's one I have really taken to heart and found a lot of value in. I think for grieving people this is a great book, because it talks about how to find true happiness, about how you don't necessarily have to have happy circumstances to be able to have a good life or a meaningful life, one richer and better than you would have by looking for "happiness."

(Seligman also wrote "Learned Optimism.")

(Reviewed by Todd Little, Bereavement Service Professional)

THOUGHTS FOR THE LONELY NIGHTS:

A CONVERSATION ABOUT GRIEF -*Doug Manning*

It's a unique book because it comes with a CD and it's more of a journal. You get to hear Doug's very calming, soothing, nice Southern drawl on the CD, and you have room to write down your own thoughts and feelings in the journal. He also reads portions of the book, so when you don't feel like reading, you can simply lie in bed in the dark and listen.

(Reviewed by Todd Little, Bereavement Service Professional)

SURVIVING THE DEATH OF A SIBLING :

LIVING THROUGH GRIEF WHEN AN ADULT BROTHER OR SISTER DIES -*TJ Wray*

I live far away from my family and had no one to share my grief with when my sister died. After reading this book, I no longer felt so alone with my pain. It felt like the author took my hand and helped me understand all that I was feeling. Each page was a hug. The writing style is warm and conversational and the content is amazingly pertinent to every nuance of feeling.

(Reviewed by Kathy Duby Mill Valley, CA)

THE NEXT PLACE -*Warren Hanson*

This nondenominational book reads more like a poem than a book. It is illustrated and is nice for both adults and children. When my father passed away recently, my son read this book out loud to my mother while she was taking a break at the service and it really seemed to help. I would strongly recommend this book.

(Reviewed by Karen Holmes, Jessup, PA)



Below is a list of songs you may find appropriate for your service. You may want to include the lyrics in your memorial program. Play the song at the service and encourage the grieving to join in.

Amazing Grace

Elvis Presley

Angel

Sarah McLachlan

Ave Maria

Perry Como

Baby Mine

Bette Midler

Because You Loved Me

Celine Dion

Blessed

Elton John

Bright Eyes

Art Garfunkle

Butterfly

Mariah Carey

Candle in the Wind

Elton John

Change The World

Eric Clapton

Circle Of Life

Elton John, from The Lion King

Close to You

The Carpenters

Con Te Partiro/Time to Say Goodbye

Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman

Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me

Elton John

Evergreen

Barbra Streisand

Fly

Celine Dion

Have I Told You Lately

Rod Stewart or Van Morrison

Hero

Mariah Carey

I Am Your Child

Barry Manilow

I Can See Clearly Now

Johnny Nash

I Will Always Love You

Dolly Parton or Whitney Houston

If I Had Only Known

Reba McEntire

If

Bread

I'll Remember April

Frank Sinatra

I'll See You Again

Frank Sinatra

In My Life

The Beatles

Lean on Me

Bill Withers

Longer

Dan Fogelberg

Memories

Elvis Presley

Memory

Barbra Streisand

My Way

Frank Sinatra

Over The Rainbow

Judy Garland, from Wizard Of Oz

She's Got A Way

Billy Joel

Somewhere Over the

Rainbow/

What a Wonderful World

Isreal Kamamawiwo'ole

Stand by Me

Ben E. King

Tears in Heaven

Eric Clapton

The Rose

Bette Midler

The Way We Were

Barbra Streisand

Unforgettable

Nat King Cole/Natalie Cole

Up Where We Belong

Joe Cocker, Jennifer Warnes

What A Wonderful World

Louis Armstrong

Wind Beneath My Wings

Bette Midler

Wishing You Were Here

Chicago

You Are So Beautiful To Me

Joe Cocker

You Are The Sunshine of My Life

Stevie Wonder

You're My First, My Last, My Everything

Barry White

You're the Inspiration

Chicago

You've Got a Friend

James Taylor

Angel

Sarah McLachlan

City of Angels Soundtrack

Spend all your time waiting
For that second chance
For a break that would make it ok
There's always some reason
to feel not good enough
and it's hard at the end of the day
I need some distraction
Oh, beautiful release
Memories seep through my veins
and maybe empty and weightless
then maybe I'd find some peace tonight

In the arms of the angel
fly away from here
from this dark cold hotel room
and the endlessness that you feel
you are pulled from the wreckage
of your silent reverie
You're in the arms of the angel
May you find some comfort here

So tired of your straight life
and everywhere you turn
there's vultures and thieves at your back
storm keeps on twisting
keep on building the lies
that you make up for all that you lack
don't make no difference
escaping one last time
it's easier to believe
in this sweet madness
oh this glorious sadness
that brings me to my knees

In the arms of the angel
fly away from here
from this dark cold hotel room
and the endlessness that you feel
you are pulled from the wreckage
of your silent reverie
You're in the arms of the angel
May you find some comfort here
You're in the arms of the angel
May you find some comfort here

Baby Mine

Bette Midler

Beaches Soundtrack

Baby mine, don't you cry
Baby mine, dry your eyes
Rest your head close to my heart
Never to part, baby of mine

Little one when you play
Don't you mind what you say
Let your eyes sparkle and shine
Never a tear, baby of mine

If they knew sweet little you
They'd end up loving you too
All those same people who scold you
What they'd give just for
The right to hold you

From your head to your toes
You're not much, goodness knows
But you're so precious to me
Cute as can be, baby of mine



Fly

Celine Dion

Falling Into You

Fly, fly little wing
Fly beyond imagining
The softest cloud, the whitest dove
Upon the wind of heaven's love
Past the planets and the stars
Leave this lonely world of ours
Escape the sorrow and the pain
And fly again

Fly, fly precious one
Your endless journey has begun
Take your gentle happiness
Far to beautiful for this
Cross over to the other shore
There is peace forever more
But hold this memory bittersweet
Until we meet

Fly, fly do not fear
Don't waste a breath, don't shed a tear
Your heart is pure, your soul is free
Be on your way, don't wait for me
Above the universe you'll climb
On beyond the hands of time
The moon will, rise the sun will set
But I won't forget

Fly, fly little wing
Fly where only angels sing
Fly away, the time is right
Go now, find the light

Bright Eyes

Art Garfunkle

Is it a kind of dream,
floating out on the tide,
following the river of death downstream?
Oh, is it a dream?

There's a fog along the horizon,
a strange glow in the sky,
and nobody seems to know where you go,
and what does it mean?
Oh, is it a dream?

Bright eyes,
burning like fire.
Bright eyes,
how can you close and fail?
How can the light that burned so brightly
suddenly burn so pale?
Bright eyes.

Is it a kind of shadow,
reaching into the night,
wandering over the hills unseen,
or is it a dream?
There's a high wind in the trees,
a cold sound in the air,
and nobody ever knows when you go,
and where do you start,
oh, oh, into the dark.

Bright eyes,
burning like fire.
Bright eyes,
how can you close and fail?
How can the light that burned so brightly
suddenly burn so pale?
Bright eyes.

Bright eyes,
burning like fire.
Bright eyes,
how can you close and fail?
How can the light that burned so brightly
suddenly burn so pale?
Bright eyes.

If I Had Only Known

Reba McEntire

If I had only known it was the last
walk in the rain,
I'd keep you out for hours in the storm.
I would hold your hand, like a life line
to my heart.
Underneath the thunder we'd be warm.
If I had only known it was the last walk
in the rain.

If I had only known I'd never hear your
voice again,
I'd memorize each thing you've
ever said.
And on those lonely nights, I could think
of you once more.
Keep your words alive inside my head.
If I had only known I'd never hear your
voice again.

You were the treasure in my hand.
You were the one who always stood
beside me.
So unaware, I foolishly believed that you
would always be there.
But then there came a day,
And I turned my head and you
slipped away.

If I had only known it was my last night
by your side,
I'd pray a miracle stop the dawn.
And when you smiled at me I would
look into your eyes
And make sure you know my love for
you goes on and on.
If I had only known,
If I had only known,

The love I would have shown,
if I had only known.

Tears in Heaven

Eric Clapton

Would you know my name
If I saw you in heaven
Will it be the same
If I saw you in heaven
I must be strong, and carry on
Cause I know I don't belong
Here in heaven
Would you hold my hand
If I saw you in heaven
Would you help me stand
If I saw you in heaven
I'll find my way, through night and day
Cause I know I just can't stay
Here in heaven


Time can bring you down
Time can bend your knee
Time can break your heart
Have you begging please

(instrumental)

Beyond the door
There's peace I'm sure.
And I know there'll be no more...
Tears in heaven

Would you know my name
If I saw you in heaven
Will it be the same
If I saw you in heaven
I must be strong, and carry on
Cause I know I don't belong
Here in heaven
Cause I know I don't belong
Here in heaven

Poetry & sayings



Say not in grief 'he is no more' but live in
thankfulness that he was

Hebrew proverb



Perhaps they are not
stars in the sky,
but rather openings
where our loved ones
shine down
to let us know they
are happy.



If tears could build a stairway,
and memories a lane, I'd walk
right up to heaven and bring you
home again.



Gone yet not forgotten,
although we are apart,
your spirit lives within me,
forever in my heart.



A gift for such a little while,
your loss just seems so wrong,
you should not have left before us,
it's with loved ones you belong.



The journey is the reward

Tao saying

I thought of you with love today
but that is nothing new
I thought about you yesterday
and days before that too,
I think of you in silence
I often speak your name
All I have are memories
and your picture in a frame
Your memory is my keepsake
with which I'll never part
God has you in His keeping
I have you in my heart.



No farewell words were spoken,
no time to say goodbye,
you were gone before we knew it,
and only God knows why.



The memory of a good person is a blessing.

Proverb 10:7



When someone you love becomes a memory,
the memory becomes a treasure.



If love could have saved you,
you would have lived forever.



Grief is the price we pay for love.



Do not stand at my grave and weep;
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there, I did not die.

Mary Frye

When you were born,
you cried and the world rejoiced
Live your life in a manner that when you die,
the world cries and you rejoice

Native American Proverb

Tears water our growth

William Shakespeare

Some men see things as they are
and say "Why?"
I dream things that never were
and say "Why Not?"

*Edward Kennedy speaking of
Bobby Kennedy in Eulogy*

Serenity Prayer

God grant me the Serenity to
Accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
and the Wisdom to know the difference.

The best and most beautiful things in
the world cannot be seen or even touched.
They must be felt with the heart.

Helen Keller

We've shared our lives these many years.
You've held my hand; you've held my heart.
So many blessings, so few tears—
yet for a moment, we must part.
The memories you've given me
are times I've shared with my best friend
I'll hold them, Love. Right here they'll be
until we share our lives again.

T.C. Ring

Grieve not, nor speak of me with tears, but
laugh And talk of me as if I were beside you.
I loved You so—'twas heaven here with you.

Isla Paschal Richardson

Butterfly

As you danced in the light with joy,
love lifted you. As you brushed against
this world so gently, you lifted us.

T.C. Ring

Footprints in the Sand

Lord, You said that once I decided to follow
you, we would walk side by side through life.
But when I needed you most, I say only one
set of footprints in the sand. The Lord replied,
"I love you and I would never leave you.
During your times of trial and suffering, when
you see only one set of footprints, it was then
that I carried you."

Until we meet again, may God
Hold you in the palm of his hand.

Irish Prayer

We shall find peace. We shall hear angels,
we shall see the sky sparkling
with diamonds.

Chekov

Funeral Blues

*Made popular in the movie,
"Four Weddings and a Funeral"*

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message He is Dead.

Put crepe bows round the white necks
of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen
wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last forever:
I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

W.H. Auden

Dad

We'll always remember
that special smile,
that warm embrace,
you always gave to us.
You being there
for Mom and us
through good times and bad,
no matter what.
We'll always remember
you, Dad, because
there'll never be another one
to replace you in our hearts
and the love we will always
have for you.

"Let us be silent that we may hear
the whisper of God."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

MISS ME - BUT LET ME GO

When I come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me
I want no rites in a gloom-filled room.
Why cry for a soul set free?
Miss me a little--but not too long
And not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love that we once shared
Miss me--but let me go.
For this is a journey that we all must take
And each must go alone. It's all a part of the
Master's plan
A step on the road to home.
When you are lonely and sick of heart
Go to the friends we know
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds.
Miss Me - But Let me Go!

"The guardian angels of life sometimes fly
so high as to be beyond our sight, but they
are always looking down upon us."

Jean Paul Richter

The Magic of a Mother's Touch

There's magic in a mother's touch
and sunshine in her smile.
There's love in everything she does
to make our lives worthwhile.
We can find both hope and courage
just by looking in her eyes.
Her laughter is a source of joy.
Her words are warm and wise.
There is a kindness and compassion
to be found in her embrace
and we see the light of Heaven
shining from a mother's face.

"To love for the sake of being loved is
human, but to love for the sake of loving is
angelic"

Alphonse de Lamartine

Celebration of Life

The celebration of life, shared in the beginning, and again, in the end. Yet we forget to celebrate it, in every moment we live. Time, days, years, go on, but are we alive? Alive and do not know it, sleeping in the world and dead to the life we are to live. To celebrate all life, the sparrow who sang in the morning, and died in the night, why do we not celebrate its life? To know thyself is to know you are alive — to give, to love, to seek truth, beauty, and suffer pain. In life as it is meant to be, pain is forgotten, and strength is all that's left to be gained in the moment by moment celebration of life.

Deborah Peabody



To My Best Friend

I kept my promise to love, honor and share. I kept my promise that to you I would always be there until death do we part. That is what they say. Oh my love why did you leave me that day?

I wasn't ready for you to say goodbye, as I look into the heavens with tears in my eyes, I wasn't ready for you to die. My best friend why did you leave and not say goodbye? With so many questions and no answers as to why. I would have gone with you, however, God knows best and took you home to give you rest.

I was not ready, no not just yet. With only one regret that I didn't tell you one last time I love you, and forever you will be mine. My best friend, this you must know, and never forget— I will see you again when God calls my name and says it is time to go home and be with your best friend once again.

Diana Johnson



Those we love remain with us for
love itself lives on,
and cherished memories
never fade
because a loved one's gone
Those we love can never be more
than a thought apart,
for as long as there is memory,
they'll live on in the heart.

Alone Again

Some days the road once traveled
is a saddened trail,
Some days it's roses and it feels
so good just to be alive.

Some days we feel like no one
is out there who cares,
And you're the only one left to
pick up the broken pieces
life has left you to deal with.

Love can be such a wondrous thing
and it can also
hurt like a thorn; pricking every feeling and
emotion left inside you.

Sometimes love just stinks and other times
it makes one feel warm and tingly inside.

When the love is gone...
The hurt begins for one or both...
Someone always gets hurt in the end.

Two hearts beating as one...
Two hearts now broken apart.

As the story goes,
I found myself falling in love...
And now I find myself falling apart.

Love can be grand...
It can also tear you apart until you
feel like you can't go on.
You left when I needed you the most...
But I am strong and I will mend and
fall in love all over again.

Bonnie Carnahan



Speak Low

Time is so old and love so brief,
Love is pure gold and time a thief.
We're late, darling, we're late,
The curtain descends, everything ends,
too soon, too soon...

*Ogden Nash with Kurt Weill from
"One Touch of Venus"*



Death leaves a heartache no one can heal;
Love leaves a memory no one can steal

Irish Tombstone

Don't weep for me because
I'm no longer here,
I've a date with a
butterfly to dance in the air.
I'll be singing in the
sunshine, wild and free
playing tag with the wind
while I'm watching over thee.



If I should go tomorrow
It would never be goodbye,
For I have left my heart with you,
So don't you ever cry.
The love that's deep within me,
Shall reach you from the stars,
You'll feel it from the heavens,
And it will heal the scars.



But Not Forgotten

I think no matter where you stray,
That I shall go with you a way.
Though you may wander sweeter lands,
You will not forget my hands,
Nor yet the way I held my head
Nor the tremulous things I said.
You will still see me, small and white
And smiling, in the secret night,
And feel my arms about you when
The day comes fluttering back again.
I think, no matter where you be,
You'll hold me in your memory
And keep my image there without me,
By telling later loves about me.

Dorothy Parker



Gates of Prayer

Reform Judaism Prayer Book

As long as we live, they too will live; for they
are now a part of us: As we remember them!

At the rising sun and at its going down we
remember them. At the blowing of the wind
and in the chill of winter we remember
them. At the opening of the buds and in the
rebirth of spring we remember them. At the

blueness of the skies and in the warmth of
summer we remember them. At the rustling
of the leaves and in the beauty of the
autumn we remember them. At the
beginning of the year and when it ends we
remember them.

As long as we live, they too will live, for they
are now a part of us. As we remember them.
When we are weary and in need of strength
we remember them. When we are lost and
sick at heart we remember them. When we
have decisions that are difficult to make we
remember them. When we have joy we crave
to share we remember them. When we have
achievements that are based on theirs we
remember them.

For as long as we live, they too will live, for they
are now a part of us, as we remember them.



He is Gone

You can shed tears that he is gone, or you
can smile because he lived... You can close
your eyes and pray that he will come back,
or you can open your eyes and see all that
he has left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't
see him, or you can be full of the love that
you shared... You can turn your back on
tomorrow and live yesterday, or you can be
happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember him and only that he is
gone, or you can cherish his memory and let
it live on... You can cry and close your mind
be empty and turn your back, or you can do
what he would want—smile, open your eyes,
love and go on.



How to Scatter Cremated Remains

You may envision going out to a beautiful spot and scattering your loved one's remains. While this can be a beautiful, ceremonial and a very healing way of returning a loved one to nature, it can also be a challenge. The following guidelines will make the experience a positive one and make the final wish of your loved one, "I just want my ashes to be scattered" to come true.

To begin, often the word "ashes" is used to describe cremated remains. The media portrays it as light ash. The reality is the remains are bone fragments that have been mechanically reduced. They normally don't gently flow into the air. It is more like heavy mixture of sand and dust or ash that can blow in the wind. When scattering cremated remains, make sure to check the wind so they don't blow back in people's faces or onto a boat.

You will also want to consider the legal requirements to scatter remains. In no state is it legal to scatter remains on private property without permission from the property owner. Many parks also have rules and permit requirements so you will want to check into the requirements.

If you do plan on scattering the remains, many families are choosing to keep some of the remains in a keepsake container or mini urn. Some feel they still want a part of the person and sharing the cremated remains is a way to still have a part of the person with you. Keep in mind that you will want to make sure the partial remains are in a sealed plastic bag inside the keepsake or mini urn. A funeral director can handle this for you. Many products are also available, such as diamonds that are made out of the remains, jewelry that is designed to hold the remains or hand blown glass paper weights.

Techniques for Scattering

CASTING

Casting is a way of scattering where the remains are tossed into the wind. As mentioned previously, you will want to check the direction of the wind and cast the remains downwind. Most of the remains will fall to the ground and some of the lighter particles will blow in the wind forming a whitish-grey cloud.

One person in the group may cast the remains or scatter some and hand the container to the next person so everyone has a chance to ceremonially cast the remains. Another option is people are given paper cups or casting cups and they cast simultaneously in a sort of toasting gesture.

TRENCHING

Trenching is digging a hole or trench in the ground or sand and the remains are placed into the trench. At the end of the ceremony, survivors often rake over the trench. A deceased name can be drawn in the dirt or sand... perhaps inside of a heart. The remains could also be placed inside this name and heart. You may consider taking a photo of this for a memory book. If done at the beach, it can be timed that the tide comes in and ceremoniously washes it out to sea. Family and friends may want to join hands and form a circle. If not too windy, candles may also form a circle around the site. The candles can then be given to each person as a keepsake.

RAKING

Raking involves pouring the cremated remains from an urn evenly on loose soil and then raking them into the ground at the conclusion of the ceremony. It is important to keep the urn close to the ground when pouring out the remains due to wind. Survivors may wish to take turns raking the remains back into the earth. If you choose to do this in a scattering garden at a cemetery, this is how they will perform the scattering.

GREEN BURIAL

This is done either at a "Green Cemetery" or at a traditional cemetery. Often cemeteries will allow you to place a biodegradable bag or biodegradable urn on top of a gravesite of a family member, as long as it is buried. Obviously, you will want to check with the cemetery and see what their requirements are.


WATER SCATTERING

Water scattering involves placing the remains into a body of water. A biodegradable bag or urn is recommended to prevent cremated remains from blowing back into a person's face or get washed up onto the side of the boat. Both experiences can be traumatic and not the everlasting peaceful memory you envisioned. If you search on the internet or in the phone book you can find people who have boats and are experienced. There are urns on the market designed to gently float away and then quickly biodegrade into the water. Many people throw rose petals or flowers into the water after the urn. If the remains are in a biodegradable bag they may sink so you also may wish to throw a wreath of flowers into the water and watch the wreath drift away.

AIR SCATTERING

Air scattering is best performed by professional pilots and air services. The airplanes are specially designed to handle the cremated remains. Often it can be arranged that close family and friends fly along.

While scattering cremated remains can be emotionally very difficult, by knowing your options and being informed, it will make a difficult time a little easier.



Ten Ideas for Creating a Memorial

Below you will find many memorial and remembrance ideas that you can use to keep the memory of your loved one alive. After the funeral, memorial service or life celebration many people wish to have something permanent as a reminder of the person that they loved and lost. It may help to think about what was important to the person you lost. What did they value? What made them smile? Perhaps by beginning there, the appropriate memorial will present itself. Here are 10 ideas that may help to guide you.

1. **Plant a tree in their memory.** You can find tree seedlings on the internet. You could also buy a tree at a local nursery.
2. **Have your loved one's photo placed on a stamp.** This also would be ideal for the thank you notes you will be sending for the flowers, donations and the help you will be receiving. Get more information at photo.stamps.com On the anniversary of their death or on their birthday, consider sending a card or a memorial gift to close friends and relatives.
3. **Donate a memorial bench ...** if they loved golf, their favorite golf course may welcome the donation of a memorial bench. You may also consider purchasing a plaque or a brick in their name to help fund a community project.
4. **Have a star in the sky named** after your loved one.
5. **Plant a section in the garden each year** with their favorite flowers. You also may want to add a stepping stone or rock with their name on it in their special section of the garden. Consider each year sharing flowers from that section of the garden with the family and friends of your loved one.

6. **Start a college scholarship in their name.** If the person you lost loved golf or tennis, you might want to start a memorial golf or tennis tournament and all proceeds would fund the scholarship. If they liked dance, perhaps a dance-a-thon would be fun while raising money for the scholarship at the same time.
7. **Create a video or DVD from photos and video or movie clips.** This video can be played at family gatherings and on the person's birthday or anniversary of their death. You can also easily make copies to share with close friends and relatives.
8. **Create a book of memories.** Have friends and family write on note cards and include them with photos in the book. You may also want to include newspaper articles about the deceased, their obituary, etc.
9. **Create a memorial on the web.** There are several websites that allow loved ones to memorialize the deceased through video, pictures, and voice recordings.
10. **Keep a journal of your memories, your thoughts and what you learned from your loved one.**

Dealing with a loss of a loved one is very difficult. It's important to do what brings you peace of mind. Creating a memorial may help you through the grief process and allow you to focus on the unique and positive aspects of your loved one's life and how that life can be remembered and celebrated for years to come.



From the Author...

I started designing memorial products and urns because it was apparent that families needed more choices. This knowledge led to designing memory cards and memorial favors for people who were looking for new ideas of how to plan a memorable and meaningful life celebration.

What started out as a couple pages of information on my website grew into this book. I hope that the thoughts and ideas shared by myself and others help to guide you through this challenging time.

This book could not have been created without the help of family, friends and colleagues. I thank them all for their encouragement, time and support.

– *Mary Hickey*

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Planning a celebration of Life checklist

DONE	ITEM TO DO	NOTES
	Select the location that fits the lifestyle/beliefs of the departed and set the time of the service, and reserve the location. Communicate the date and time with friends and family. Pg. 2	
	Find a planner if you feel you need additional help and identify officiate, or person of your choice to officiate service. Pg. 2	
	Select the components of the service (food, drinks, music, prayers, readings, eulogies, sharing memory cards, name tags, memorial favors to hand out, video, etc.) Pg. 2-8	
	Decide on the sequence and order of the service (when poems are read, when the music is played).	
	Pick individuals to do readings, give eulogy or share thoughts.	
	Select your loved one's favorite music, live or taped, to be used during the service and the order the songs will be played (consider sharing the song list with guests). Pg. 26	
	Purchase memorial guest book, share memory cards, flower arrangements, and anything else you will need for the service. Pg. 10	
	Create the memorial program folder with details of the service, photos and reception information. Pg. 9	
	Prepare any video or audio that will be used during the service and designate someone to run the equipment.	
	Make sure flowers are delivered and displayed at least 30 minutes prior to guests arriving. Pg. 5	
	Set up pictures or memory table at least 30 minutes before the service. Pg. 2	

DONE	ITEM TO DO	NOTES
	Verify with facility or location that there are adequate stands or tables for floral arrangements and photos to be displayed.	
	Assign someone to remove the flowers after the service and share them with friends or take to the cemetery, or consider donating them to a local hospital.	
	Meet with planner, officiate and musicians prior to service to review the order of the service including readings, speakers and songs.	
	Place memorial register book, sharing memory cards, donation tray, and other materials at the entry point to the service. Designate a person to direct attendees to fill out a memory card, sign the book as they enter.	
	Decide how family will enter the service and leave at the end.	
	Reserve adequate seating for family members and special guests. Make available accommodations for any handi-capped attendees.	
	Designate ushers to seat guests and answer questions.	
	Have someone make announcements at the beginning of the service such as turn off cell phones, and where to meet after the service.	
	Make sure all checks and honorariums are made out and distributed before the service, such as clergy/officiate/planner and musicians.	
	Send thank you notes to those who sent food, flowers, donations, etc. Pg. 17	

Notes _____



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