

## Helpful hints for writing

1. Write as though you are talking to a friend, for that is what you will be doing - talking to a loving, supportive group.
2. Compose your speech on a computer if possible so you can edit along the way.
3. Look back through photo albums, this may invoke precious memories of the person who died that you would like to share with others.
4. Don't be afraid to use humour where appropriate. Remember, the eulogy is a celebration of the life of your loved one.
5. You may want to use a special quote to open or close your speech. Look to poetry, songs, and historical speeches for inspiration.
6. Once you have completed your first draft, ask a trusted friend or family member to read it over and suggest any changes.
7. When you are happy with your speech, type or write it out in large print with space between the lines so it is easy to read.

## Delivering the eulogy

Public speaking can be frightening. You need to be brave. Know that your listeners are supportive and loving. Know that it is okay to make mistakes. No one expects you to be a great speaker, and certainly not at this difficult time. It is your words, and the sentiment behind them, that matter most.

## Helpful hints for speaking

1. Before the day practice in front of a mirror, imagining your listeners before you.
2. If you fear that you might break down, arrange for a backup speaker to be on hand with a copy of your speech. Simply knowing they are there may get you through.

3. When the time comes, be yourself. Imagine you are talking to a good friend.
4. Remember to speak up and enunciate your words, project your voice so that you can be heard by everyone.
5. If you feel yourself getting choked up with emotion, pause and take a deep breath to collect your thoughts. Your listeners will understand.

*At this time when memories are so important, the eulogy brings them to the surface to be re-lived. In preserving and sharing these memories, you create a gift for others and yourself. Embrace this task you have been given. It means the world to those who share your grief.*



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## THE EULOGY: *A gift you can share*



because *life* is important





## A special task

A loved one has died, and you have been asked to give the eulogy at their funeral - to honour their memory on behalf of family and friends. This is a very special task, for the eulogy helps survivors say goodbye, and can begin the healing process for all. Even so, the thought of writing and delivering the eulogy may have thrown you into a panic. Take heart, for this brochure will help you move through your fear and create a eulogy worthy of your loved one.

## What is the eulogy?

Eulogy means 'speech or writing in praise of a person' and is derived from the Greek word 'Eulogia' which means blessing or praise. Giving the Eulogy is your opportunity to praise the memory of the person who has died, and to be a blessing to those gathered in remembrance. It is a speech in celebration of your loved one, a very personal account of the way they have touched your life and others. A Eulogy is best delivered by someone who knew and loved the person, you may even want to share the task between friends, family and clergy with a number of people contributing words of remembrance, verses and poetry.

## How long should the eulogy be?

Most eulogies are 5 to 10 minutes in length. While this may seem like a long period of time (and a lot to write), you will find the time is easy to fill, and quick to pass.

## You don't have to be a good writer

You may not see yourself as a writer. Quite possibly, you have not written a passage since high school. That is okay. To deliver a eulogy you need not be a writer, but a story teller. Think of the times you have shared stories with family and friends around the dinner table or at work. The eulogy simply means sharing more stories - ones you have written down first. As you write, you may like to imagine your loved one is helping you. What stories would they enjoy most?

## Preparing to write

Before you begin to write, here is a simple strategy that will help you prepare (and know that you are not alone in your task; you have the support of family and friends):

### 1. *Begin with the person's history*

Note the significant events of the person's life in chronological order: childhood, education, jobs, marriage, children, places lived and so on.

### 2. *Gather your stories*

Jot down the stories that you remember - the ones that capture your loved one's character. Ask family and friends for their stories as well. These questions may help get you started:

How did you first meet and become close?

What did you love and admire about her?

What did she do that made you smile?

What will you miss most?

Even the simplest stories are worthwhile; remembering someone's laugh or their love of sweets for example, can be as moving as recalling their kindness and generosity. Be sure to include stories at least some of your listeners will remember.

### 3. *Find a theme*

By now you may see certain themes emerging. For example, your collection of stories may reveal the person's deep love of animals: the strays she brought home as a child, her dreams of becoming a vet, and the joy she experienced at opening her own practice. Writing the eulogy to a theme will help it flow, and is ideal for illustrating the character of your loved one.

### 4. *Arrange your notes*

Now you have a chronology, stories and a theme, you can put your notes in point form. We suggest arranging your material on cards, with a different story or idea on each card. Once you have placed the cards in order, you can begin to write your speech.

## Writing the eulogy

In writing the eulogy, it helps to break it down into three parts: introduction, body and conclusion. With your opening words, introduce your listeners to the ideas you intend to elaborate on. For example, "Today we unite to honour and remember our loved one, who touched us all with her kindness and generosity." The body of the eulogy is where you share the stories that demonstrate the qualities named in your introduction. Be sure to keep your theme in mind as you write, and use linking sentences between each story so the eulogy flows. Use the conclusion to summarise the ideas raised in your speech, and to reiterate what your loved one has meant to you.

Of course this is only a basic guide, and you may wish to refer to eulogies that others have written for further inspiration and assistance. The internet is a good reference point.