

## Ideas List

Use what is appropriate

- School
- Education
- Hobbies
- Community
- Career
- Sport
- Sayings + Quirks
- Travel
- Marriage/s
- Children
- Grand/Great Children
- Family
- Friends
- Successes
- Challenges
- Holidays
- On a good day?
- On a bad day?
- Discipline
- Bouquets
- Faith/Religion
- .....
- .....
- .....

The form consists of approximately 15 empty rounded rectangular boxes of various sizes and orientations. Some boxes have solid blue borders, while others have dashed blue borders. They are arranged in a scattered pattern across the page, intended for users to write down ideas from the list on the left.

 Celebrating the Life of:

## Useful Steps to Writing a Eulogy

How do you capture the essence of a person? Especially on top of all the emotion when the one you are speaking about, was a dearly loved one?

The majority of a eulogy is based on the memories of your loved one. My aim is to help create and lead the funeral service and to do that requires some down-to-earth steps that will help you and me create a service befitting the needs of your family and in some cases the wishes of the person who has passed. As with any practical advice, as in life, there are no guarantees, and you are cautioned to rely on your own judgement about individual circumstances and to act accordingly.

The mind map on the previous page is just a creative way for you to start jotting down some notes across the spectrum of activities that someone might have undertaken in their life. Of course, not everyone lives to reach their eighties and beyond.

01

Eulogies are the heart of the service, the essence of the deceased person and to be asked to deliver one, is special. It's natural to freak out when asked. Our minds swirl with perhaps where to start, what to say, how will I go speaking, how will I be received? Stress is all part and parcel of it. Having some structure in the process will mean it can reduce the amount of thinking about "what" you will talk about and enable you start thinking about all the stories and experiences that made up their life. It also helps you focus on the important things as you do not have to mention everything. It also helps you decide, with family members who may be speaking about what as your congregation does not want the hear 4 people say the same thing.

02

To help with your situation and to put your mind at ease, some key thoughts to embrace are:

- Consider how special it is to deliver a Eulogy. It really is.
- There is no 'perfect' way to compose a Eulogy.
- The audience aren't expecting a flawless speech.
- Family and friends of your loved one will be eager to hear anything you want to share. Often family and friends are hearing stories and facts about the deceased that they are not aware of for the first time. Have you ever been to a funeral and had that experience?

03

To help with your task at hand:

- Ask family and friends for their stories and fond memories.
- Go through old photo albums.

04

Encapsulating a whole life into a precious summary, focus reflection on

- A brief life history of the deceased.
- Important achievements and milestone events in the deceased's life.
- Details about family, friends, work and interests.
- Share favourite memories/anecdotes of the deceased.

Your speech can be serious, light-hearted or a combination of both. Your tone should match the tone of the service. It is fine to touch upon negative qualities, just be respectful about doing it and contextualise them against the good things. This can be an area where people struggle. They want to talk about it but don't know how. There can be various family relationships at play - past and present. Be mindful of this, as a degree of tact may be required. As a Funeral Celebrant it is important that I am aware of any issue so that at the core of the service it is a celebration of the person who has passed.

05

Rather than reciting a list of dry facts of what the deceased loved, instead share a story that illustrates what they loved.

Opening – things you may want to include:

- Introduce yourself and explain your relationship to the deceased
- Thank guests for attending the service; acknowledge guests that have travelled to attend
- Express condolences to family member and close friends of the deceased.

Body – this will be the longest part of the Eulogy.

- Weave the life history, important achievements, milestones, details about family, friends, work, interests, favourite memories and anecdotes into 3-5 main points with supporting examples. Offer uplifting and comforting thoughts to the audience

Closing – a summary can also serve as your conclusion.

- No new information should be introduced in the summary.
- Summarize how a loved one touched your life with a quote or poem. This is an excellent way to finish your Eulogy.
- Say goodbye to the deceased (directly or indirectly)
- Keep it between 5 and 12 minutes – as a guide 7-800 words is two pages of typed A4 paper and would typically take a speaker 7-8 minutes to deliver. If there are multiple people within the family that would like to give eulogies, I as Celebrant would need to manage the time in terms of the overall service.
- Type it out in large print and number the pages. A good idea can be to give a copy to a friend just in case you decide you are too fragile to speak. Alternatively, you can give me a copy and I will have it available to read if the "friend" feels uncomfortable speaking once put on the spot.

06

Rehearse and practice your delivery.

07

- Take a friend up with you so you are not alone.
- Take deep breaths before beginning your speech.
- Remember everyone in attendance will be behind you 1000%.
- When delivering your speech, maintain eye contact with your audience.
- Speak in a normal conversation voice.
- It is okay to break down, pause, and cry.
- Take some tissues!

I hope that you find the 7 Steps to be a valuable guideline as you accept, prepare and present what is certainly an enriching contribution to the celebration of someone's life story.