



Tips for writing & delivering a eulogy



A eulogy is a written tribute or speech given at a funeral or memorial service to commemorate someone who has passed away. This can be quite a difficult task for some people. A eulogy usually flatters and showcases the life of the deceased and may be given by one or many individuals. It is hard to condense a lifetime of experiences into a short speech. Eulogies do not necessarily have to be depressing or formal, they can include favorite poems, anecdotes, meaningful reminiscences, war stories or even jokes.

The first thing to work out is what you would like to say. Collect the basic facts about the deceased. These could include;

- When and where the deceased was born
- Career or educational achievements
- Places they've called home or liked to visit
- Names of brothers, sisters, parents, children, grandchildren or survivors
- Memberships, etc
- Marriage
- Hobbies and past times
- Interests in books, music or films
- Favourite expressions or nicknames
- Sporting interests
- Personal achievements, character attributes
- Details of any war or military service
- Early childhood experiences

Plan to speak for about 2 to 7 minutes, be uplifting and inspiring. Acknowledge the deceased in an honest and loving way. Avoid negative statements and profanities that may offend other mourners.

Define a chronological order, give the eulogy a theme or focus. For instance – if you are giving a eulogy about your grandfather, your theme could be about his military service and his great story telling abilities. With your theme in place, you might talk to fellow service men, you could collect stories he told other survivors and yourself about that time in his life.

Include recollections of friends and family and highlights from the deceased's life. Be consistent with how they would like to be remembered.

Organise your notes into segments. Once you have organised your notes into an order that flows well, write the information into a rough outline ready to be written into your first draft.

Using the outline you are happy with, write out a draft of your eulogy. Try not to read the notes word for word, you do not want a long fact sheet on your loved one's life. Incorporate real life anecdotes and experiences between the facts, using humour if you think it is appropriate.

Finalise what you are going to say. Make sure it sounds right to you, practice your eulogy in front of other people, this is a great time to get feedback. This will also help you point out areas that do not sound right or are inappropriate. When you have fine tuned your eulogy rewrite or type it neatly so that it will be easy to deliver at the funeral. Even if you have memorised the eulogy, make sure you have a copy of it on note cards or in point form. Funerals are emotional and you may forget parts that are not written down.

While giving the eulogy; relax and breathe normally, no one will be judging you. The mourners are there to honour your loved one.

Have a back up reader in case you're too emotional to proceed with the presentation.

