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GUIDE TO WRITING A EULOGY

A eulogy is a brief account of the milestones and achievements of the deceased's life and is usually presented by a celebrant or occasionally by a member of the deceased's family.

When a family member accepts this onerous responsibility, he/she does so in the belief that it's preferable to have the eulogy presented by someone who knew the deceased than someone who didn't.

While there is a certain logic in that argument, the reality is that in some cases family members are either too emotionally connected to the deceased, or lack writing and/or public speaking experience to do the job justice. But for those who decide to accept the challenge, here are some helpful guidelines.

Whilst a degree of chronology or a timeline will help put the deceased's life in some historical context, you do not need to be too precise about dates and places. What is more important is that the words you use are a fitting and accurate description of the person whose life you are celebrating.

Quiet, shy, gregarious, extroverted, courageous, independent, determined, selfless, compassionate, emotional, sentimental, are the kinds of adjectives that will help paint a word portrait of the person many mourners will have known personally.

The eulogy or 'potted biography' should touch on such areas as the deceased's childhood, family background, education, adolescence, and adulthood. The headings that follow will help you develop the deceased's life story:

- Employment History
- War Service (if relevant)
- Marriage/Children/Grandchildren/Great grandchildren
- Favourite Holiday Destinations
- Hobbies and outside interests
- Club or group memberships
- Sporting Interests
- Favourite music, books, films and television programs
- Favourite expressions or homespun philosophies/nick names
- What were the happiest times in the deceased's life?
- Religious beliefs if any