

Eulogy

Writing and Delivering Tips

In our lifetime, most of us will be asked to give a eulogy for a family member, loved one, or co-worker. Here are a few tips to make that honor and privilege go a little smoother.

1. **Make your tribute unique.** Find out who else is offering a tribute, and tailor yours so it doesn't repeat anyone else's.
2. **Gather memories** by speaking to others who knew the deceased well. They will have memories that you can include. Go through scrapbooks and photo albums to make your eulogy solid and sentimental.
3. **Write it down.** Have someone else read it or read it out loud to someone. They may offer tips to improve it, and you will get used to reading it in front of people.
4. **Be personal and authentic.** Don't be afraid to show emotion. Tears are a demonstration of love and can sometimes be more meaningful than words.
5. **Stick to a theme.**
 - Biographical—A timeline highlights in story form the accomplishments and milestones of the person's life.
 - Personal—The stories of challenges and lighter moments of the loved one's life, seen through the eyes of others, can be relatable to all.
 - Specialized—Focus on a specific trait or characteristic of the deceased. What was their highest passion? Family? Community service? Work? Maybe you worked with them on a specific task and observed how they handled pressure or teamwork.
6. **Mention how you knew or how you were related to** the one being remembered. It helps others who knew them (but may not know you) put your speech into the context of their life.
7. **Keep it brief.** Three to five minutes is about the right amount of time. Speak clearly and slowly enough that everyone can hear you.
8. **Read from a copy of your speech.** You may think you have rehearsed and memorized the speech but being behind the microphone has been known to make people go blank. Having the written speech before you will help if you get tongue tied or lose your place.
9. **Stay positive.** Uplift the spirits of those in attendance. Give them smiling memories that get them nodding their heads as if to say, "Yes, that was John," or "I remember when that happened to Mary."
10. **Conclude with your theme.** Bring your speech back to the reason you were asked to deliver this special tribute. End with a quote or line from a song or poem that ties into your theme and the person you just remembered.