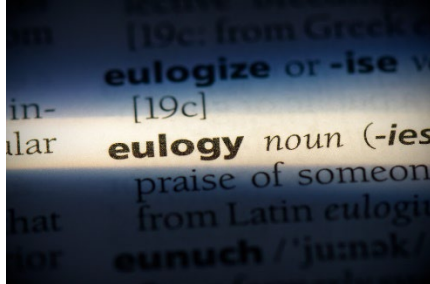


Reducing Conflict 28 Write Your Own Eulogy

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



A eulogy is a very important concept in our society. We intend it to be a way to celebrate the life of a departed loved one by recalling several of the things that person did well during his or her life. A eulogy is normally a somber document, because the person writing it is in grief over the loss of the loved one, yet it also has tinges of happiness as the reader recalls the greatness of the individual.

Helpful Exercise

One practice I advocate for professional people is to sit down and write your own eulogy. Include all the things you would want your friends or loved ones to say about you after you are gone. Be lavish with praise for your strong characteristics. You can also include some irony or even jokes about areas where things were not optimal in your life.

The exercise is a little strange, I will grant, but it has a fantastic payoff if you take it seriously. Once your eulogy is complete, step back and ask yourself seriously how likely your friends or loved ones would use similar words to what you wrote about yourself.

The Benefits of Doing This Exercise

You may find the analysis rather unsettling, but there is a huge payoff. You are not dead yet, so there is still time for you to modify your actions and behaviors to move in the direction of your ideal self. How would you like people to remember you? What actions can you take now that can ensure people will see you that way when you are gone?

Example from My Past

My parents were married in July of 1941. Mom put a gold wedding ring on Dad's finger. He never took the ring off for any reason until after her death at 98 on October 8, 2010. After that time his hands were so frail that the ring would not stay on. For my father, the ring was a sacred symbol of his love for my mother.

My father died four years later (to the day) on October 8, 2014. Both of my parents were cremated, per their wishes, so we could place the urns with their ashes in the same crypt in our family mausoleum. The urns were actually touching each other.

At the funeral, I gave the eulogy for my father standing on the exact spot where my parents were married 73 years earlier. I pulled the ring out from my coat pocket and held it up. I told the story of how that ring never his hand until after she died. I said, "This ring was a symbol of Dad's love for Mom, so there is only one place where the ring should reside." I unscrewed the top of the urn that held his ashes and dropped the ring in, so he would have it for eternity as he was with my mother in the crypt.

Dad would have been very proud of that eulogy because it matched exactly how he felt and lived his life.

Take the Time to Write Your Own Eulogy

While you are still alive, take some time and write out the things you wish other people would say about you at your funeral. Then you can modify your behaviors to be a closer match to that ideal version of you.

Free Video

Here is a 3-minute video that contains more information on how to write your own eulogy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JJrD6zvWFQ>

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of four books: 1. The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals (2003), 2. Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online (2006), 3. Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind (2009), and 4. Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change (2014). In addition, he has authored over 1000 articles and videos on various topics in leadership and trust. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations.