

Tips for Writing and Giving a Eulogy or Memorial

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A eulogy or memorial is a tribute speech given at a funeral or other memorial service. The purpose is to honour the life of the one who has passed and to share stories and reminisce of a life well-lived. It can often seem a daunting prospect to put one together. Beyond the following suggestions, we at Oliver's can personally help you create a fitting tribute to your loved one.

Decide the tone of your speech: While traditional funerals are still popular, today there are no rules when it comes to putting together a service that best suits your loved one. You may wish to have a somber, respectful tone or one that is more lighthearted and humorous. Consider your loved one and what is most important and consider your audience and what they would find most meaningful.

Seek inspiration: Read old letters, look through photo albums, even walk around the deceased's house and garden to trigger memories of your times with them. This can kickstart reminiscing that will be useful when putting together the eulogy.

Ask others for stories to share: Call up friends and family members of the deceased and ask for their favourite stories. Pick out a few that are especially touching or entertaining to include in your speech.

Be sure to introduce yourself: Explain your relationship to the deceased, whether family or friend. Let people know who you are with a few biographical details.

Share some basic biographical information about the deceased: Often a memorial service is a time when people learn new facts and stories about the person they have lost. Share some of the person's history and feel free to include stories or anecdotes with each major life event.

Use specific examples to reveal the person's character and personality: This makes a speech more meaningful. For example, "We could never walk past a puppy without Bob reaching down to give it a pat, even when we were in a rush," is more powerful than simply saying, "Bob loved dogs."

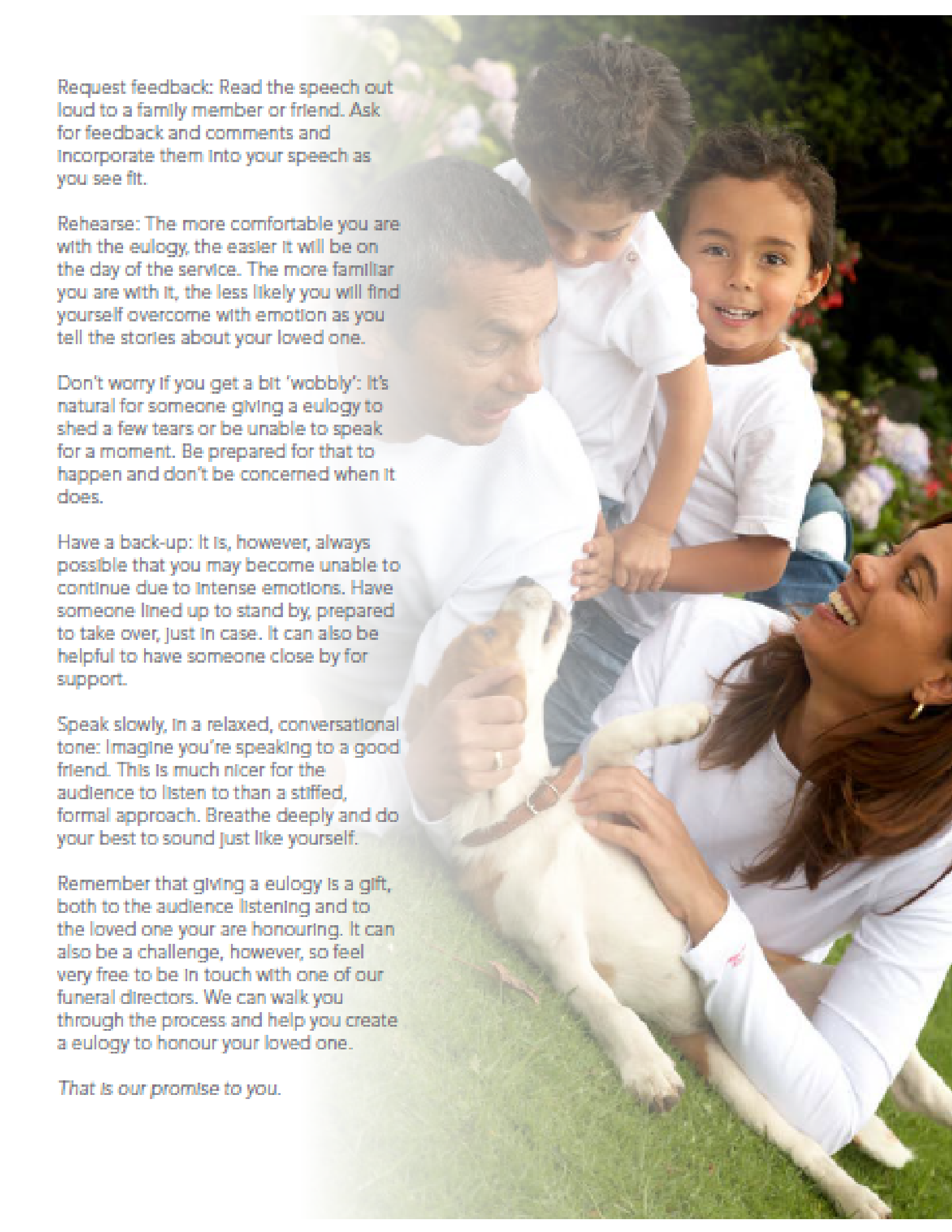
Avoid negative comments: Everyone has negative aspects of their personality. Avoid these when giving a eulogy, even in a joking manner. It's best to focus on the wonderful characteristics that made your loved one such a special human being. Celebrate the good parts of the life that was.

Consider reciting a beloved short poem or quotation: Did the deceased have a motto, special quotation or poem that was special to him or her? Consider including it in your eulogy.

Pretend someone in the audience has never met the deceased: Would they leave with a good sense of who the person was? It's a nice way to ensure you've covered all the bases of a person's life.

Be organized: Give your speech a beginning, a middle and a nice ending. Do your best not to ramble or go off on tangents.

Remember, shorter is sweeter: Keep your remarks concise and to the point. Eulogies are most commonly between three and five minutes long. Anything significantly longer can try the patience of the audience on what is already a difficult day.



Request feedback: Read the speech out loud to a family member or friend. Ask for feedback and comments and incorporate them into your speech as you see fit.

Rehearse: The more comfortable you are with the eulogy, the easier it will be on the day of the service. The more familiar you are with it, the less likely you will find yourself overcome with emotion as you tell the stories about your loved one.

Don't worry if you get a bit 'wobbly': It's natural for someone giving a eulogy to shed a few tears or be unable to speak for a moment. Be prepared for that to happen and don't be concerned when it does.

Have a back-up: It is, however, always possible that you may become unable to continue due to intense emotions. Have someone lined up to stand by, prepared to take over, just in case. It can also be helpful to have someone close by for support.

Speak slowly, in a relaxed, conversational tone: Imagine you're speaking to a good friend. This is much nicer for the audience to listen to than a stiffed, formal approach. Breathe deeply and do your best to sound just like yourself.

Remember that giving a eulogy is a gift, both to the audience listening and to the loved one you are honouring. It can also be a challenge, however, so feel very free to be in touch with one of our funeral directors. We can walk you through the process and help you create a eulogy to honour your loved one.

That is our promise to you.