

Funeral/Eulogy Script

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INTRO

In this slight adaptation of the classic funeral exercise, participants are asked to imagine that they have died and the children in their life are writing an eulogy. This exercise can facilitate values clarification of how they would like to impact the children they care for.

SCRIPT

Today we're going to be doing an adapted version of the funeral exercise, um, that is specifically intended for parents or caregivers. So as we begin most exercises, let's pause first, either closing our eyes or resting our gaze in front of us...Maybe taking a deep, intentional breath...settling our retention tension to the internal movement of our breathing.

During this exercise if you find yourself distracted or your mind begins to wander, no problem. Whenever you notice that your attention has gone elsewhere, just gently escort it back to the exercise.

Let's begin by imagining that you have lived a long life, and now you are at the end of it. You have just died and the children you cared for are writing your eulogy. Either imagining each person is taking a turn or imagining they're working together.

What do you most dearly hope that they would write in that eulogy? Now, what is a little different about this exercise is that we are not focused on what the most factual version of what they would write. We're really interested in what you most hope they write. If you lived the life you yearn to in your brief time....

If you could write a magical script, what do you most hope that they learn from you? When you no longer can teach them or support them day to day, how did you hope that you impacted their life? You may want to write some notes...You may want to imagine it.

If the children you have cared for took a moment to go around the table saying "The one thing I learned was this..." what do you hope it is?

If they took turns saying "The way I felt when I was with them was this..." what do you most deeply hope they say?

And now take a moment to notice. Is there anything that feels familiar about your hopes and yearnings? Is there anything you were surprised by? Is there anything you would like to do or say or show to them to make some of these dreams a little closer to the reality that you live now? Thank you.

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LIVING ACT
learn - do - grow

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Who was writing the eulogy?
- How did you feel as you imagined it happening?
- Was there anything that felt scary or you wanted to avoid?
- Was there anything that felt inspiring or exciting?
- What did you most hope the children in your life learned from you?
- How do you hope they feel when they are with you?
- How are you doing this in your daily life now?
- Are there places you would like to do more or different?

TAKE HOME

Participants' reflections from this exercise can lead to useful north stars or brief touch points as they engage in committed action. Douglas Long, in his [80th Birthday adaptation](#), also notes that this exercise provides fertile ground for exploring the following ideas: values as a choice versus a “should”, values enacted in behavior and action, and the interconnectedness of vulnerability, caring, and pain.

Special thanks to the work of Walser, Hayes, Long, and Harris who each developed and shared similar exercises.