

To enable us to create the ceremony you wish, it will be helpful for us to get to know as much as possible about the person who has passed away, as each ceremony is different and highly individual. This all helps to make the occasion more personal & special. This information is usually gathered by one of us making a home visit to you, but if necessary this can also be done via phone or email.

It may be helpful to think about the following areas in readiness for my contacting you:

- ✿ Where the deceased was born & grew up
- ✿ Siblings & family members they grew up with
- ✿ School days & childhood stories
- ✿ Partners, children, grandchildren & other family members
- ✿ Closest friends
- ✿ Armed forces/National Service
- ✿ Career and places of work
- ✿ Groups and societies belonged to
- ✿ Interests and achievements
- ✿ Favourite memories
- ✿ Musical tastes
- ✿ Sayings, stories & anecdotes
- ✿ What will they most be remembered for?
- ✿ Did the deceased ever make any personal requests about their own funeral?
- ✿ Will anybody else be speaking/participating in the service?



*“Death is a challenge. It tells us not to waste time... It tells us to tell each other right now that we love each other.”*

– Leo Buscaglia



It's totally reasonable to be scared of death, but instead of seeing it as a demoralising element, we should strive to see it as a ticking clock, reminding us to make the most of our time and never waste a second on trivial pursuits.

We look forward to speaking with you and meeting you soon – and of course any other family members or friends, whom you would like to be involved in preparing the ceremony.

Should you have any questions prior to our meeting or be yet undecided as to whether or not this type of service is right for you, please do not hesitate to contact either of us.

### Bristol Celebrant Services

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## Beautiful alternatives to traditional funeral ceremonies

by Steve & Jacqui Wood

We respect people of all faiths and those with none.



Member of the Fellowship of Professional Celebrants & Fellowship of Independent Celebrants



Our names are Steve and Jacqui Wood, and we write and conduct funeral services throughout the Bristol Area. Every ceremony is individually written and created to honour and celebrate the life the

person who has died in a dignified and fitting tribute, focusing on everything that made them special.

A funeral service is a vital and integrative part of beginning to heal from your loss, and so this end-of-life ceremony has two main purposes: firstly to celebrate the life of your loved one, and secondly to sensitively acknowledge your deep sadness at this difficult time.

In today's world, many people are developing their own ideas and philosophies about life and religion, and therefore neither a religious nor atheist funeral truly reflects their personal beliefs about life and death.

### An uplifting, respectful experience

Far from being sad and sombre, the ceremonies we create are positive and uplifting: the focus is on life, not death. You will find great comfort in providing a ceremony the person who has died would have wanted. On most occasions we will meet with the family of the deceased, to discuss and create a funeral ceremony which reflects the wishes, beliefs, values and cultural background of your family and loved one (although if the family lives a long distance away, this can be done via telephone or email).

We will discuss all your wishes and ideas with you and work with you to create a service that is just right for the individual whose funeral is to take place.

You may want family or close friends to participate in the service by means of readings, poems, live music or their own personal tributes. There are no set rules for this – we welcome and encourage all those who wish to take part to express their own sentiments and say goodbye in ways that have significance for themselves and all those present.

You may try and include more unusual ways of marking your loss that are meaningful to you, and yet inclusive of everyone. Whatever your wishes and requirements, we will work closely with you and your chosen funeral director to ensure you say goodbye to your loved one in a way that you, and they, would have wished.

### Non-religious services

This type of funeral service is without mention or reference to any form of religion or after-life and is revolves very much around more humanist values. It is important to remember though that, even if the person who has died was agnostic or atheist, people attending the funeral may have faith. It is therefore considerate to honour both sides accordingly: if you feel it appropriate, then a short period of quiet reflection can be included within the service to allow those with religious beliefs to say a silent prayer.

If the service is being conducted at a crematorium then, on request, it can usually be arranged for the crucifix or other religious symbols to be removed from the chapel prior to the start of the service.

### Semi-religious (Christian) service

More and more people are finding themselves not associated with any "church" or simply feel the church itself has lost significance for them, yet they are still deeply spiritual inside. They have their faith, but don't have a place for it within organised religion and would like a service of significance. This type of funeral honours the existence of Jesus and the belief structure of Christianity. It is deal for a funeral where the deceased's background was Christian, but they were not a churchgoer.

You will be invited to suggest any hymns, prayers, readings or poetry that you would like included in the service.

### Spiritual funerals

Many people don't class themselves as religious or are simply unsure as to if or what they believe, but they don't want to close the door on the possibility of life after death or some form of spiritual life.

We can conduct agnostic and specific funerals which reflect individuals levels of belief – whatever they may be.

Participants are welcome to suggest appropriate hymns, music, readings and symbolism – either spiritual or secular – which will make the ceremony personal and moving and which will provide comfort to all those present.

### New-age/holistic funerals

In this modern world, many people may prefer a blending of beliefs, often referred to as "New Age" or "Holistic". We can conduct a range of holistic funerals which honour the principles of reincarnation and spirit presence. These may include music, meditation, angelic and energy-focused rituals.

As we are totally independent of both religious and humanist organisations; we can create a service which totally reflects each person's beliefs about both life and death.

These individual life-centred funeral ceremonies are both beautiful and unique and are aimed at those who want something more personal and more meaningful than a traditional ceremony.

