



MEMORIAL MERITS

Sanctuary, not sales floor.

# The Family Eulogy Writing Workbook

*Memory Capture Sheets, Structure Templates, and Sample Eulogies for the Family  
Honoring a Loved One*

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Writing a eulogy is rarely a solo task. The strongest eulogies pull from many voices. This workbook gives you the tools to gather memories from your whole family, organize them into a clear structure, and stand up to speak from a place of love rather than panic.

*Free to print, share, and distribute.*

*[memorialmerits.com](http://memorialmerits.com)*

*By Gabriel Killian | Memorial Merits*

## How to Use This Workbook

### In Short

This workbook is built for families, not solo writers. Print copies, hand the Memory Capture Sheets to siblings, parents, cousins, and longtime friends, then weave their answers into the structure templates inside. One person delivers the eulogy. Many voices shape it. The result honors who your loved one actually was, not just who any single person remembers.

### Why a family workbook, not a solo guide

Most eulogy guides assume one person writing alone at a desk. That misses the best material. The funniest stories, the most specific habits, the small moments that show who someone actually was, those usually live in the memory of someone other than the person speaking. A spouse remembers the morning rituals. A child remembers being tucked in. A sibling remembers childhood. A friend remembers the stories that never made it home. Gather them all, then choose what fits.

### The three-step workflow

One. Print the four Memory Capture Sheets and hand them to the people who knew your loved one best. Give them a deadline that is short, ideally within forty-eight hours, because grief makes thinking hard and a deadline gives permission to write something rough.

Two. Collect the sheets back and use the Story Synthesis Worksheet to pull the strongest threads. You are looking for specific details, not summaries. A phrase she always said. A habit only family saw. The way he laughed.

Three. Use the Eulogy Builder to assemble the opening, two or three stories, the bridge, and the closing. Read it out loud. Adjust until it sounds like you talking, not you writing.

### Length and timing

Most eulogies run five to ten minutes, which is roughly seven hundred to fourteen hundred words. Under five minutes is fine. Over fifteen risks losing the audience. Sincerity beats length every time.

### Give Yourself Permission

*Permission to cry while you write. Permission to laugh at the memories. Permission to include the imperfect parts, because the imperfect parts are what made them real. Permission to ask another family member to read it for you. Permission to say, out loud and without shame, that you cannot do this, and to hand the workbook to someone else.*

## Three Eulogy Frameworks

There is no single right structure for a eulogy. Choose the one that fits your loved one and the way you naturally talk. You can mix elements from more than one.

### Framework One: Chronological

Walk through their life in order: childhood, the people and places that shaped them, the work they chose, the family they built, the last chapter. Best for long lives, for biographies the room already knows in pieces, or when you want the audience to feel time passing.

Strength: Easy to organize. Easy to follow. Risk: Can feel like a resume if you list events instead of telling stories.

### Framework Two: Theme-Based

Pick two or three qualities that defined them, generosity, stubbornness, dry humor, fierce loyalty, and tell one specific story for each. Best for people whose character was bigger than any single timeline. Best when the room knows the facts of the life and needs to hear who the person actually was.

Strength: Memorable and quotable. Risk: Picking themes that are too abstract. Anchor every theme in one concrete story.

### Framework Three: Letter to Them

Write the eulogy as a letter to your loved one and read it out loud. "Dad, I want to tell you what I would have said if I had known I was running out of time." Best when grief is fresh, when the relationship was close, and when the audience would rather feel intimacy than ceremony.

Strength: Emotionally honest. The audience hears love in real time. Risk: Hardest to deliver without breaking down. Have a backup reader identified beforehand.

## Memory Capture Sheet: For the Spouse or Life Partner

*You knew them in a way no one else did. The small daily things, the private habits, the way they were when no one was watching. Take twenty minutes if you have it. If you have ten, ten is fine.*

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- *What was the first thing they did every morning?*

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- *What did they say so often it became a family joke?*

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- *What did they do that made you fall in love with them, and were they still doing it at the end?*

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- *What was the kindest thing you saw them do for someone outside the family?*

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- *What is something only you knew about them?*

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- *If they could hear this eulogy, what would they say to you afterward?*

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*Return this sheet to the family member writing the eulogy by [date]. Companion workbook: [memorialmerits.com/free-resources](http://memorialmerits.com/free-resources)*

## Memory Capture Sheet: For the Adult Child

*You saw both sides of them, the parent who tried and the person who was trying. Write what you would want your own children to know about your mother or father.*

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- *What did they teach you without ever sitting you down to teach you?*

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- *What did they sound like when they were laughing the hardest?*

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- *What is a small memory from childhood that came back to you in the last few days?*

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- *What did they get wrong, and did you forgive them, and did they know?*

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- *What was the last meaningful conversation you had with them?*

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- *What do you want their grandchildren to grow up knowing about them?*

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*Return this sheet to the family member writing the eulogy by [date]. Companion workbook: [memorialmerits.com/free-resources](http://memorialmerits.com/free-resources)*

## Memory Capture Sheet: For the Sibling

*You have memories from before anyone else in the room had memories of them. Childhood. The version of them no one else got to see. That is the gold.*

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- *What is the story from childhood that you still tell at family gatherings?*

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- *What did they protect you from, or what did you protect them from?*

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- *What did they do that drove you crazy when you were kids but you miss now?*

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- *When did you realize they were not just your sibling but a person?*

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- *What did they confide in you that no one else heard?*

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- *What is a song, smell, or place that will always bring them back?*

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*Return this sheet to the family member writing the eulogy by [date]. Companion workbook: [memorialmerits.com/free-resources](http://memorialmerits.com/free-resources)*

# Memory Capture Sheet: For the Close Friend or Chosen Family

*Sometimes the people who chose to love someone, who were not required to by blood, hold the clearest picture of who that person was. Share what only you would think to share.*

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- *How did you meet, and when did you know this was going to be a long friendship?*

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- *What is a story about them that the family probably does not know?*

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- *What was the version of them you got that maybe their family did not?*

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- *What were they like in a crisis, and how did that change how you saw them?*

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- *What did they always order, always wear, always say at the end of a phone call?*

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- *If you could thank them for one thing they did for you, what would it be?*

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*Return this sheet to the family member writing the eulogy by [date]. Companion workbook: [memorialmerits.com/free-resources](http://memorialmerits.com/free-resources)*

## Story Synthesis Worksheet

The sheets are back. Read them slowly, in one sitting if you can. Mark every phrase that made you stop, smile, or cry. Those are the candidates. Use the grid below to organize them. The best eulogies use three or four strong stories, not ten weak ones.

Story or detail	From whom	Why it lands	Where it fits

Tip: Group stories by theme before you pick. Two stories that show the same quality from different angles are stronger than one. Stories that contradict the surface impression, the gruff man who fed strays, the reserved one who held the room, are usually the ones the audience remembers.

# The Eulogy Builder

Use this and the next page as your working draft. Write in fragments. Write in the wrong order. Cross things out. Get it down on paper first, then shape it.

## Opening (one to two minutes)

*Introduce yourself, name your relationship to your loved one, acknowledge the room. You do not need to be eloquent. You just need to begin.*

Draft your opening:

## Story One (one to two minutes)

*Open with the story that captures them best. Specific details only.*

Draft story one:

## Story Two (one to two minutes)

*A different side of them. If story one was tender, story two can be funny.*

Draft story two:

## The Eulogy Builder (continued)

### Story Three, optional (one to two minutes)

*Use only if the eulogy needs another beat. If the first two stories are doing the work, skip this and tighten what you have.*

Draft story three:

### Bridge (one minute)

*What did they teach you, leave behind, or model? This is the line that turns the eulogy from memory to meaning.*

Draft the bridge:

### Closing (one minute)

*One true thing. A line they would have said. A promise to honor them. Leave the audience with something to carry home.*

Draft your closing:

## Sample Eulogy Excerpts by Relationship

These are short excerpts, not full eulogies. They show what specific, honest writing sounds like at the podium. Notice that none of them sound like a biography. They sound like one person remembering another out loud.

### Eulogy for a Parent

*"My mother kept a jar of quarters in the car door. Not for parking, for parking meters that were about to expire on other people's cars. She would drive around downtown, see a meter blinking, pull over, feed it twenty-five cents, and drive off. Forty years of that, no one ever knew. I knew because I was in the passenger seat. That was my mother. The world was a little less mean because she was in it."*

### Eulogy for a Spouse

*"He never said I love you in those words. He said 'drive safe.' He said 'did you eat?' He said 'call me when you get there.' For thirty-one years that was our vocabulary. I miss those three sentences more than I knew it was possible to miss anything."*

### Eulogy for a Sibling

*"My brother got me out of more trouble than my parents ever knew about, and he never once held it over me. We talked on Sundays for thirty years. He always answered. Even the last time, when his voice was wrong, he answered. I will pick up my phone on Sundays for the rest of my life and feel that."*

### Eulogy for a Close Friend

*"We met in line at a coffee shop in 1998. She told me my shoes were terrible. I married someone else's brother, I moved across the country twice, I lost two parents, and through every one of those years, she was the first person I called. Not the second. The first. That is what she was to a lot of us."*

## Delivery Day

You wrote it. Now you have to say it. These are the practical details that actually help when you are standing at the podium with shaking hands.

### Before You Speak

- Print the eulogy in 16pt font. Double-spaced. Number the pages.
- Do not read from your phone. Phones lock. Hands shake. Paper does not fail.
- Bring water to the podium. Your mouth will go dry.
- Read it out loud at least twice. Once alone. Once to someone you trust.
- Identify the two sentences most likely to break you. Practice those specifically.
- Identify a backup reader. A sibling, an adult child, a trusted friend. Tell them in advance.

### At the Podium

- Speak slowly. Grief makes people rush. Cut your natural pace in half.
- Look up at the end of every story. The room needs to see you.
- If you need to pause, pause. Silence is not awkward in a eulogy. It is permission for the room to feel something.
- If your voice breaks, keep going. The audience will not judge you. They are in the same room emotionally.

### If You Cannot Continue

Three acceptable outcomes, in order of preference. One: pause, breathe, drink water, try again. Two: signal your backup reader to finish for you and remain standing beside them. Three: say 'I am sorry, I cannot finish this right now,' and sit down. No one in that room will think less of you for any of those choices.

### After

You did it. Do not critique yourself afterward. Do not replay the parts you wish had gone differently. The people in the room heard what they needed to hear. If someone tells you it was beautiful, believe them.

# Quick Reference Card

*Tear out or photograph this page. Carry it to the podium.*

## The Structure

1. Opening (one to two minutes). Introduce yourself. Acknowledge the room. Set the tone.
2. Stories (three to six minutes). Two or three. Specific details, not summaries.
3. Bridge (one minute). What they taught you. What they leave behind.
4. Closing (one minute). One true thing.

## Delivery Reminders

- Print 16pt on paper. Not phone.
- Water on the podium.
- Speak slowly. Look up.
- Pause when you need to. Silence is permission.
- Backup reader identified before the service.
- Five to ten minutes total. Seven hundred to fourteen hundred words.

*"You do not need to be eloquent. You just need to be honest."*

## After the Eulogy

### Honoring Their Memory in Lasting Ways

The eulogy is the moment. What follows the moment is the long work of carrying someone forward, in objects, in stories, in places that will outlast the day of the service.

The pages that follow are partners Memorial Merits has vetted across the memorialization landscape. Each one solves a specific need a family has after a loss, and each one offers a Memorial Merits discount you would not find anywhere else. Scan the QR code with your phone to reach the partner directly, or read our full review on [memorialmerits.com](https://memorialmerits.com).

Nothing on these pages is required. They are tools, not asks. Use what helps your family. Skip what does not. Pass this workbook on to someone else when you are done with it.

Disclosure: Memorial Merits earns a small commission when readers purchase through partner links at no extra cost to the reader. We only recommend partners we have personally vetted and would use ourselves. These commissions fund the free workbooks, directories, and tools you find across the site.

## Preserving Their Voice and Story

### Remento

*Capture family stories in their own voice, while you still can*

Sends weekly story prompts to a parent or grandparent by text. They record their answer over the phone. After a year, Remento turns the recordings into a printed keepsake book the family keeps forever. The strongest companion to this workbook for anyone who still has elders to record.

Use code MMFREEBOOK for a free extra book (\$59 value) or MEMORIALMERITS for \$10 off

Read our full review: [memorialmerits.com/remento-preserve-family-stories-memories](https://memorialmerits.com/remento-preserve-family-stories-memories)



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### One Special Song

*Custom memorial song written and recorded for your loved one*

Professional songwriters create an original song from your stories and memories. Played at the service, or saved for a private anniversary years later. Often the single most-talked-about moment of a memorial. Human-written, not AI-generated.

Use code memorial10 for 10% off (all lowercase)

Read our full review: [memorialmerits.com/one-special-song](https://memorialmerits.com/one-special-song)



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## Cremation Jewelry: Carry Them With You

### Spirit Pieces

*Handcrafted glass and resin cremation keepsakes*

Artisan-made pendants, rings, and small sculptures that suspend a tiny amount of cremated remains inside hand-blown glass. Each piece is one of one. Strong choice for someone who wants something modern and artistic rather than traditional.

Memorial Merits exclusive discount applied at checkout

Read our full review: [memorialmerits.com/spirit-pieces-cremation-jewelry](https://memorialmerits.com/spirit-pieces-cremation-jewelry)



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### Pulvis Art Urns Cremation Jewelry

*Hand-crafted cremation jewelry collection*

European-designed cremation jewelry across a range of materials, from stainless steel to sterling silver. Designed to hold a small portion of ashes discreetly inside the pendant. Wide selection for people, dogs, cats, and small pets. Family-owned workshop, ships internationally.

Use code MemorialMerits at checkout (case sensitive)

Read our full review: [memorialmerits.com/pulvis-cremation-jewelry](https://memorialmerits.com/pulvis-cremation-jewelry)



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## Heirloom and Permanent Memorials

### Lee Alexander & Co.

*Premium heirloom cremation jewelry, made to be passed down*

Hand-built precious-metal pieces with a sealed waterproof remembrance pod designed to hold a meaningful portion of cremated remains. Made in the US, platinum and gold tiers, four to six week lead time. The piece your grandchildren will wear at their own children's weddings.

Use code Memorial100 for \$100 off (stacks with military and other promos)



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### Engrave Ink

*Memorial tattoo ink mixed with a portion of cremated remains*

Patented process that prepares cremation ash for safe use in a tattoo by a licensed artist. Send in a small portion of remains, receive a sealed sterile vial back, take it to your tattoo appointment. Engrave Ink also helps locate an artist near you who works with the ink.

Use code memorialmerits10 for 10% off your order

Read our full review: [memorialmerits.com/engrave-ink-review](https://www.memorialmerits.com/engrave-ink-review)



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## Unique Ways to Hold a Presence

### Turning Hearts

*QR memorial medallion that links to a private online tribute*

A small engraved medallion that mounts to a headstone, urn, or memorial marker. Each medallion carries a unique QR code that opens a private online tribute page with photos, stories, and family messages. Visitors scan and remember together, even years later.

Automatic 15% discount when you scan the QR or use the link

Read our full review: [memorialmerits.com/turning-hearts-review](https://memorialmerits.com/turning-hearts-review)



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### Parting Stone

*Solidified remains: cremation transformed into smooth stones*

Turns the full set of cremated remains into roughly forty to sixty smooth, river-rock-like stones the family can hold, share among relatives, or place in meaningful locations. A peaceful alternative to keeping ashes in a single urn. Approved by hundreds of funeral homes nationwide.

Memorial Merits partner pricing applied at checkout

Read our full review: [memorialmerits.com/parting-stone-review](https://memorialmerits.com/parting-stone-review)



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## Free Tribute Pages and Family Fundraising

### ForeverMissed

*Free online memorial page, no credit card required*

Build a permanent online tribute in under ten minutes. Photo gallery, biography, guest book, candle lighting, story sharing. The free tier is fully usable and stays online indefinitely. Premium tier adds music, private access, and unlimited photos. A simple gift for relatives who could not attend the service.

Free tier always available, no payment required

Read our full review: [memorialmerits.com/forevermissed-memorial-pages](https://memorialmerits.com/forevermissed-memorial-pages)



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### Ever Loved Memorial Crowdfunding

*Funeral fundraising platform, zero platform fees on memorial pages*

Built specifically for funeral and memorial fundraising. No platform fee on the memorial page itself, only the standard payment processing fee. Includes obituary builder, photo gallery, guest book, and donor messages. Used by hundreds of thousands of families to bridge the gap between sudden funeral cost and what insurance covers.

Free to create, raise what your family needs

Read our full review: [memorialmerits.com/everloved-memorial-services](https://memorialmerits.com/everloved-memorial-services)



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## More From Memorial Merits

Three additional resources, all free, that families lean on most heavily in the first thirty days after a loss.

### Financial Resources Hub

*Cost-shock relief, financing, life insurance, and benefits navigation*

If the funeral cost arrived faster than the family expected, start here. We document the full range of options: funeral financing, life insurance comparisons, federal and state burial benefits, veteran burial assistance, and the questions to ask a funeral director before signing anything.



*Scan to open*

### Funeral Home Directory

*State-by-state directory of vetted funeral homes, with cost transparency*

Eleven state directories live now, more added every month. Each state page includes federal funeral consumer rights, average cost ranges, vetted local funeral homes by city, and immediate-help resources for families who need cost relief in the next forty-eight hours.



*Scan to open*

### Solace: free AI grief and planning companion, 24/7

*When you cannot sleep at 2 AM and the questions are spiraling, Solace is there. Trained on Memorial Merits' full library of grief, planning, and financial guidance. Free to use. No account required. No data sold.*  
[memorialmerits.com/meet-solace](https://memorialmerits.com/meet-solace)

## Thank You for Trusting Us With This Moment

If this workbook helped your family, the kindest thing you can do is hand it to another family who is about to need it. Print it, email it, share it on your community page. It is free, it stays free, and it is licensed Creative Commons so anyone may share it as long as Memorial Merits attribution stays intact.



*Scan to read the full article online*

[memorialmerits.com/how-to-write-a-meaningful-eulogy-tips-and-examples-to-honor-your-loved-one](https://memorialmerits.com/how-to-write-a-meaningful-eulogy-tips-and-examples-to-honor-your-loved-one)

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