

# The Dead Beat



## The Caregiver's Soapbox



*Dedicated to providing information about the people and places involved in the funeral industry*

Volume 16

www.thedead-beat.com

Issue 6



\*\*\*\*\**New Columnist*\*\*\*\*\*

### An Accidental Celebrant

By Michael K. Jones

Just over a dozen years ago I was an ordained minister serving a congregation that had decided to close. The closure process did not go according to plan and things became quite messy in a hurry. As the situation descended into chaos and I was doing media interviews, one question stood out for me: When it comes to closing a church what was your biggest surprise?

Two things surprised me about closing a church. First, I was shocked at how intensely parishioners experienced conflict and grief. Second, I was surprised how related conflict and grief were.

This came back to me recently as I watched a brawl erupt just prior to a funeral I was supposed to lead. As we approached the appointed time for the service, members of the family were making the final touches to the funeral space when someone arrived who was both uninvited and unexpected. It was as if someone threw a match into a bucket of gasoline. As people were yelling and screaming and throwing things I thought about what a volatile and potentially dangerous combination conflict and grief were.

As I learn more about the role of funeral celebrant I become increasingly conscious of the emotional intensity in each and every situation I'm asked to share. The more energy generated by people's experience of grief the more likely a spark of some sort is going to set off what I call an emotional flash.

It doesn't take much to accomplish this either. Sometimes all it takes is a word or gesture. An inexperienced eulogist may share a story that's best left for a coffee shop conversation. Someone may say something that disrespects the deceased. While we cannot prevent these flashes from happening we can help reduce the potential for their occurrence. When we meet people or lead a service we can be extremely conscious of everything we say and do. We can be careful about things; like tone

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Suggestions to Increase  
Engagement

By Joe Weigel



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## Amy Howard Art Gallery



## What Someone Young at Heart Thinks!

(Sent from Mr. Marshall)

I like the question once asked by Satchel Paige, that venerable alumnus of baseball: "How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were?" An honest answer to that question depends on an honest admission of one's attitude. It has nothing to do with one's age. As someone young at heart has written:

Remember, old folks are worth a fortune—silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet, and gas in their stomachs.

I have become a little older since I saw you last, and a few changes have come into my life since then. Frankly I have become quite a frivolous old gal. I am seeing five gentlemen every day.

As soon as I wake up, Will Power helps me get out of bed. Then I go to see John. Then Charlie Horse comes along, and when he is here he takes a lot of my time and attention. When he leaves Arthur Ritis shows up and stays the rest of the day. He doesn't like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day I'm really tired and glad to go to bed with Ben Gay. What a life!

P.S. The preacher came to call the other day. He said at my age I should be thinking about the hereafter. I told him, "Oh, I do all the time. No matter where I am—in the parlor, upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement—I ask myself what am I here after?"



The editor's daughter Amy, who was mentioned in our previous issues, was quite the artist and we've decided to display some of her artwork every issue in her memory.



Amy Howard



*Think Spring!!!!*





## Mortuary Muse By Lowell

Note the following comments are NOT critical of the Crematory Operators. This is a comment on changing consumer attitudes.

**“Hey!! Where are my clothes!! Where is my DIGNITY”**

Most of us have seen documentaries, pictures and heard stories about the Nazi Death Camps with thousands of naked bodies piled in heaps awaiting their turn in the furnace. A visit to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. will further impress the horror and loss of human dignity in your mind.

For me the images were even more impressed in my mind listening to the story as told to me by a friend who served in the 82nd Airborne. Bob was in a unit that liberated one of the death camps. He saw, felt and smelled this horror firsthand.

It seemed that you could see these unspeakable horrors as you looked into Bob’s eyes. Needless to say those poor victims and their families (if they themselves weren’t in the piles of corpses too) did not have any say in the manner their lifeless bodies were pre-

sent to family and friends for a final goodbye. But that unspeakable loss of humanity was a few (3) generations ago. Time brings many changes in human attitudes.

Today there are hundreds, probably thousands, of lifeless bodies in cardboard boxes or body bags stacked in refrigeration units awaiting their turn in the furnace. And a few of them are neatly attired and were given a loving goodbye from family and friends. The majority of those other bodies waiting in line are attired in whatever they were wearing when they died—hospital gowns, P.J., street clothes, or perhaps a bed sheet—hardly suitable clothing for a heartfelt goodbye ceremony no matter how brief. Where is the dignity?

Caregivers/survivors of the terminally ill may have kept the bedside vigil for weeks or months. They are usually physically and mentally exhausted. This is a crucial point in time for the well being of the family and the existence of portions of the death care industry.

If there has been no preneed planning or decisions made concerning end of life ceremonies or disposition of the

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### **Brian Simmons** **Springfield Mortuary Service, Inc** **\* Since 1961 \***



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**Just Published: ‘The Funeral Director’s Guide to Statistics: 2017 Edition’ Guide Includes Hundreds of Data Points to Help Funeral Homes**

Funeral professionals now have a valuable new resource to navigate changing consumer preferences, manage their costs and boost revenues with the publication of “The Funeral Director’s Guide to Statistics: 2017 Edition.”

“Our annual guide to statistics has become one of the profession’s most valued resources in understanding trends, buying behaviors, marketing metrics and more,” said Thomas A. Parmalee, executive director of Kates-Boylston Publications. “While it’s a tall order to improve on previous editions, we think this current one may be the best one yet.”

The 2017 edition covers every key area of business operations. Articles include:

- Cremation statistics from the Cremation Association of North America.
- David Nixon’s latest “Listening to Cremation” study.
- Survey data on consumer spending from Johnson Consulting Group.
- Five numbers you need to know for preneed success from Preneed Funeral Program.
- Insights on motivations to preplan from Homesteaders Life Company.
- Funeral Service Insider’s compensation and casket surveys.

Dean Lambert, senior vice president of marketing and communications at Homesteaders Life Company, which is the exclusive sponsor of the book, says in the book’s foreword, “There has never been a more important time for funeral professionals to access and understand data and information critical to strategic decision-making. Consumer end-of-life preferences are evolving, and service expectations have never been more diverse.”

Enter Discount Code “stat99” when checking out at <https://tinyurl.com/yaegpz5v> to get the book for just \$99.

*Kates-Boylston Publications, the publisher of American Funeral Director and American Cemetery & Cremation magazines and Funeral Service Insider, has been helping death-care professionals succeed and serve since 1877. Learn more at [www.katesboylston.com](http://www.katesboylston.com).*

**Have you had an OPEN HOUSE, built a NEW ADDITION to your funeral home, developed a new PROGRAM FOR GRIEVING CLIENTS, RECEIVED AN HONOR from your community, have an interesting HOBBY or DONE SOMETHING THAT WAS JUST PLAIN FUN? If so, tell us about it. We want to tell your story (WE LOVE PICTURES, TOO) call us 800-575-2611, fax us 417-537-4797 or e-mail us: [editor@thedead-beat.com](mailto:editor@thedead-beat.com).**

**GO “ALL IN” AT THE ICCFA 2018 ANNUAL CONVENTION**

**STERLING, VA (January 22, 2018)** – Go all in this year with inspirational keynote speakers, dynamic breakout sessions and numerous networking opportunities at the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association’s Annual Convention & Exposition, April 18–21, 2018, in Las Vegas, Nevada. You are sure to hit the jackpot and come back from Annual with information to help improve your business.

Keynote speakers include:

**COLONEL DAVID SUTHERLAND, U.S. Army (retired), on “Lead from the Front”:** Leadership comes from an attitude that rejects negative thinking and is built on character, knowledge, and motivation. Col. Sutherland shares his life lessons learned from the battlefield to inspire you to “lead from the front”.

**ERIK QUALMAN, social media and technology expert, on “Socialnomics: Winning Customers’ Heart, Minds and Wallets in a Wi-Fi World”:** Social media has become a part of our everyday lives. How can you use it as a tool to promote your business and increase sales? Qualman will show you how to use social media outlets to develop customer relationships, earn loyalty and drive long-term success.

**STACEY HANKE, author and body language expert, on “Influence Redefined: Be the Leader You Were Meant to Be, Monday to Monday”:** Do you know how your verbal and non-verbal communication affect how other perceive you? What are you doing (or not doing) to communicate your credibility, knowledge and trustworthiness? Hanke will help you engage and connect with others to achieve your goals.

In addition to keynote speakers, the ICCFA Convention will feature over 30 hours of educational breakout sessions. Topics include “How to Create a Non-Profit Foundation for Your Cemetery”, “Why Having a Trustworthy Internet Brand is More Important Than Ever”, “Build a Highly-Engaged Workforce”, and more! Expo Hall hours are always separate from programming at the Annual Convention, so you can meet with supplier representatives and see all the newest products and services on the market. The Expo opens on Wednesday, April 18 and runs until Friday afternoon, April 20.

Full program details available now at [www.iccfaconvention.com](http://www.iccfaconvention.com). You may also download the ICCFA app to begin planning your personal Convention schedule. Search “ICCFA” in Apple Store or Google Play to find the app.

*Founded in 1887, the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association is the only international trade association representing all segments of the cemetery, cremation, funeral and memorialization profession. Its membership is composed of more than 9,100 rooftop locations and 18,000 professionals in the cemetery, funeral home and crematory industries, as well as supplier and related businesses worldwide.*



# Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

*Continuation from "Mortuary Muse"-page 3*

deceased some long lasting emotional and financial problems may arise. Do they need compassionate care—comfort in their grief—or expediency?

By the time the funeral director can reach the next of kin to respectfully inquire about permission to embalm, the survivor with help from other family members who are present may have decided on expediency. Expediency may be direct cremation, organ donation or even immediate burial—all likely without services. Increasingly, hospice workers and organ transplant personnel including hospital chaplains are intervening in the survivor’s deliberating process. They all seem oblivious to the possibility of need for other family members and friend’s need to say goodbye to the actual remains of the person they knew and loved.

In more than 66 years I have been involved in the profession and countless survivors have exclaimed how grateful they were to see the embalmed and restored body of their loved one. Often remarking how they finally look at peace or “they look 20 years younger.” For many who never get to say that goodbye the relationship just does seem finished.

Financial expediency is a growing concern today. To serve the public as we would like to may require body presentation at a much lower cost or donating your charges for prepping and dressing the deceased for a limited viewing before cremation.

Perhaps for the organ donor the organization could arrange to have the body freshened up, new gown or robe and presented somewhat like a maternity viewing room. Since there is often several hours before transporting to the processing facility, this could be worked out with the chosen funeral home.

I realize this is not going to be well received by some, but the opportunity to say goodbye to that important person in your life is vital to coping with the grieving process for many people.

Besides what if an out of body spirit is waiting by the heavenly chariot stop for that low flying chariot and looks back and shouts, “Hey! Where’s my clothes? Where’s my dignity?”

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Since I read at the end of Joanne’s “Afterthoughts” that we were closing the funeral home December 31, 2017, it seems a little strange that my workload, after a month has not diminished. Could it be that I wasn’t doing anything in the first place? Well, I probably did make a few less trips between the front door and the break room.

On New Year’s Day I was sitting there looking at the phone thinking, “If that thing rings—for the first time in my

entire life someone is not obligated to answer it. Our two girls expressed feelings about the first time in their lives the telephone wasn’t answered by a live person.

Now it occurs to me that since we are not operating a funeral home I have no credibility to comment about anything funeral industry-wise. However lack of credibility has seldom deterred me in the past.

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The perceived value of our professional associations to the individual practitioners seems to ebb and flow like the ocean tides—sometimes like tsunamis. The journal “Meetings Today-0817” featured an introspective look at professional and trade associations entitled, “Changing The Paradigm- Associations are rethinking their annuals in a big way.” Compiled from opinions from association executives and meeting planners there was a consensus that associations change or dry up.

Most felt that few Millennials want to sit through a lengthy business meeting or keynote presentations. It was suggested that two or more presenters could give a synopsis of their topic and then present their ideas or papers to interested parties in smaller group settings near the vendors’ booths. Since vendors are paying the bills this might also give them more exposure.

An association (non-funeral industry) has handled regional meetings more effectively I believe by giving attendees a choice of either an evening dinner meeting or a morning breakfast meeting by providing the same format twice.

Perhaps it is time for a leadership or direction change when the annual business session quorum is reduced to the size of board of directors. Associations must bring value to the membership.

States that require Continuing Education Credit for licenses are a lifeline of attendance for some associations regional and annual meetings. Speaking of CE, what about CE for Association Executive Directors? I notice that many association executive directors have that CAE (Certified Association Director) and many do not. CAE alone does not necessarily make a good executive director, but it does set a standard for leadership. An association that we have been affiliated for nearly 60 years manages 9 or 10 smaller associations and has several CAE’s on their staff. Survival will always be a challenge, but that makes life interesting.

About the Author:

**Lowell Pugh** has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address and **editor@thedead-beat.com**

# After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

I guess this is a bit of continuation of my last column.

Retirement????

I truly didn't think I was retiring as much as closing the funeral home, but everyone seems to keep asking me how retirement is. I'm really not sure how to answer since I've had to work just as much at times. Trying to get the final things done for the funeral home, like taxes, and other administrative things has taken considerable time. Also making sure the funeral home doesn't look like a funeral home, so we can't be accused of that by the state board due to our license expiration.

Now as we are changing the interior for our next adventure—transforming our facility into an art and event center. Many challenges there too, but I really haven't had time to do as much research as I need, yet. So my retirement has been changing from one business to another and continuing to complete the magazine.

One thing I have enjoyed is not having to worry about getting a call in the middle of the night and all that was involved in that. Also being able to plan things and not having to qualify it with "unless I'm involved in a funeral." With my husband being retired we have some

travel plans for the future and at least I can make those plans without worry.

Someone yesterday asked me if I was still going to office. I said yes, but now I can go at anytime I want. Every time I am at our office, I am going through things to decide what I need to keep. Our funeral products we still have, I have to decide what other funeral homes might want or need. We have had a few calls about some items, but that's a whole other story of decision making.

Being a funeral home for 113 years several things have accumulated, but we have phased out of many things over the years. Lowell hasn't been embalming for many years so our supplies related to that were disposed of a long time ago and we haven't a preparation room for many years either. Some of the other more antique things had been given to a funeral museum in Houston in the past. But, oh, the paperwork that has filled the file cabinets and many spots around my office. Now, that's going to take quite a lot of time to go through.

The organization reminds me of having gone through my loved one's things after they had died. It's really a hard process to have all the memories come back. I've only been at the funeral home for 25 years, but many, many memories have been made there. Yes, it's just a

business, but it was a large part of our lives. It's hard to stop things you had done so automatically.

But, life goes on!! Opportunities to be presented. I'll keep you posted on how the "Prairie Sunshine Art and Event Center" progresses.

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One final thought not really to do with retirement.....

Should I be upset when someone takes credit for something I do? Since I take credit for things that God does through me? I was reading a devotion and this crossed my mind. Hopefully we will graciously give credit where it is due and ultimately all the credit is God's!!!



About the author: Joanne Howard is the editor of **The Dead Beat**. She has been a licensed funeral director since 1992 with Pugh Funeral Home in Golden City, MO and also the aftercare coordinator.

Much of her writing in this column is influenced by her loss of her two daughters Laura at age 10 in 1997 and Amy at age 19 in 2003. Any comments or questions can be directed to 417-537-4412, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748 or email: [jfhoward53@yahoo.com](mailto:jfhoward53@yahoo.com)

## In Honor of My Becoming a Recipient of Medicare

Today at the drugstore, the clerk was a gent.  
From my purchase this chap took off ten percent.  
I asked for the cause of a lesser amount;  
And he answered, "Because of the Senior's Discount.  
And there, once again, got quite a surprise.  
The clerk poured some coffee which he handed to me. He said,  
"For you, Seniors, the coffee is free."  
Understand—I'm not old—I'm merely mature;  
But some things are changing, temporarily, I'm sure  
The newspaper print gets smaller each day,  
And people speak softer—can't hear what they say.  
My teeth are my own (I have the receipt).  
And my glasses identify people I meet.  
Oh, I've slowed down a bit..not a lot, I am sure.  
You see, I'm not old...I'm only mature.  
The gold in my hair has been bleached by the sun.  
You should see all the damage that chlorine has done.

Washing my hair has turned it all white,  
But don't call it gray.. Saying "blond" is just right.  
My car is all paid for..not a nickel is owed.  
Yet a kid yells, "Old duffer..get off of the road!"  
My car has no scratches...not even a dent.  
Still I get all that guff from a punk who's "Hell bent."  
My friends all get older..must faster than me.  
They seem much more wrinkled, from what I can see.  
I've got "character lines," not wrinkles..for sure.  
But don't call me old...just call me mature.  
The steps in the houses they're building today,  
Are so high that they take..your breath all away;  
And the streets are much steeper than ten years ago.  
That should explain why my walking is slow.  
But I'm keeping up on what's hip and what's new,  
And I think I can still dance a mean boogaloo.  
I'm still in the running..in this I'm secure,  
I'm not really old..I'm only mature.

## American Funeral Director Honors 'Funeral Director of the Year' Danny Jefferson of Pierce Jefferson Funeral & Cremation Services Wins Award

**WALL, N.J.** — Danny Jefferson, location manager at Pierce Jefferson Funeral & Cremation Services in Kernersville, North Carolina, has been recognized as the "Funeral Director of the Year" by American Funeral Director magazine.

Jefferson was honored for his commitment to funeral service, to the families he serves and to the community of Kernersville, the magazine said in a December cover story about the 61-year-old funeral director.

"We had several really impressive entries, but our screening panel agreed that one candidate stood out from the rest," said Thomas A. Parmalee, executive director of Kates-Boylston Publications, publishers of American Funeral Director. "Danny Jefferson is moving funeral service forward, embracing change and technology when it helps improve service and rediscovering old traditions when modern trends call for it."

Allison Sullivan, publisher of Kates-Boylston Publications, added, "It's clear Danny Jefferson has earned the respect and admiration of his professional colleagues and of those in his community."

Jefferson was selected from a wide field of nominees submitted by funeral professionals around the nation. A native of Burlington, North Carolina, Jefferson got his first job at a funeral home while still in high school. He's a graduate of Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service in Decatur, Georgia, and has worked at Pierce-Jefferson Funeral & Cremation Services since 2004.

In addition to selecting Jefferson as the winner, American Funeral Director named three runners-up in its November issue:

- Heather A. Brown-Simons, managing partner, Hubbard Funeral Home, Baltimore.
- David W. Bolyard Jr., president, Mountain Funeral Group, Clarksburg, West Virginia.
- Christina Morales, president and CEO, Felix H. Morales Funeral Home, Houston.

"Danny Jefferson and our runners-up are each great examples of professionals helping to guide funeral service into the 21<sup>st</sup> century," Sullivan said. "We're proud to recognize their efforts and achievements."

Jefferson's story is featured in a December cover story in American Funeral Director, and he was honored with the award in front of dozens of his peers at the Funeral Service Business Plan Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, where he received a rousing standing ovation.

*Kates-Boylston Publications publishes American Funeral Director, American Cemetery & Cremation and Funeral Service Insider. The company has been helping funeral professionals succeed and serve since 1877. Learn more at [www.katesboylston.com](http://www.katesboylston.com).*

## NFDA Introduces the 2018 Meet the Mentors Program Participants

Brookfield, Wis. - The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) is proud to announce the names of the 50 funeral professionals who will attend the association's Meet the Mentors program, March 11-13 at the Emory Conference Center Hotel in Atlanta, Ga. Meet the Mentors has been wholly funded by the Funeral Service Foundation since the program's 2011 inception.

During Meet the Mentors, these 50 funeral professionals who are either age 40 or under or new to the profession (first licensed within the last five years) will have an opportunity to meet, learn from and talk with innovative and successful funeral professionals. It's also an opportunity to network and form relationships with other new professionals.

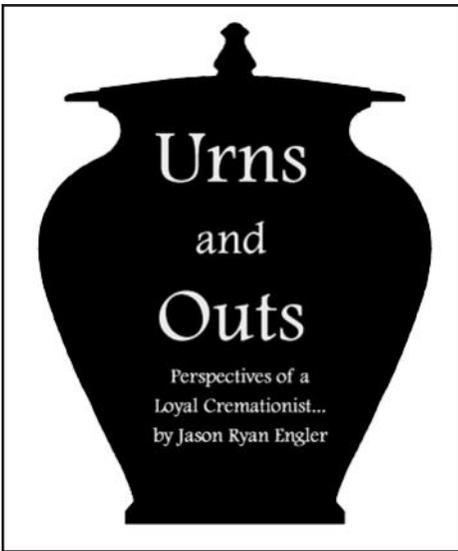
The names of the 50 participants were announced last week through a series of video drawings, which were shared on the NFDA website—<http://www.nfda.org/mentors> and social media sites (e.g., Facebook—<https://www.facebook.com/NationalFuneralDirectorsAssociation>, Twitter—<https://twitter.com/nfda>, etc.).

### About Meet the Mentors

During Meet the Mentors, attendees will meet, learn from, and talk with three innovative and successful funeral professionals: Matthew Baskerville, CFSP, CPC, CCO, owner of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes, which has locations in Coal City, Gardner, Morris and Wilmington, Ill.; Erlinda Valdez, general manager of Wallin Funeral Homes, which has locations in Sanger, Fowler, Riverdale and Parlier, Calif.; and Victor C. March, Sr., president and CEO of March Funeral Homes in Baltimore, Md. March also serves on the Funeral Service Foundation Board of Trustees. Baskerville is a 2013 Meet the Mentors alum.

There is no cost to participate in the Meet the Mentors program itself. The Funeral Service Foundation's—<http://www.funeralservicefoundation.org/> grant provides exclusive, career-transforming access to three mentors and covers attendees' registration fees, two nights' lodging and select meals. The 50 individuals selected to attend only pay for their transportation to the program.

More than 600 young professionals and emerging leaders have benefited from the Meet the Mentors program, which underscores the Foundation's mission to support all of funeral service in building meaningful relationships with the families and communities it serves. The program is part of the Foundation '45 Awards—<http://www.funeralservicefoundation.org/how-you-can-support/foundation45/>, which are designed to transform the careers of funeral service professionals through scholarships, awards, resources and mission-focused outreach.



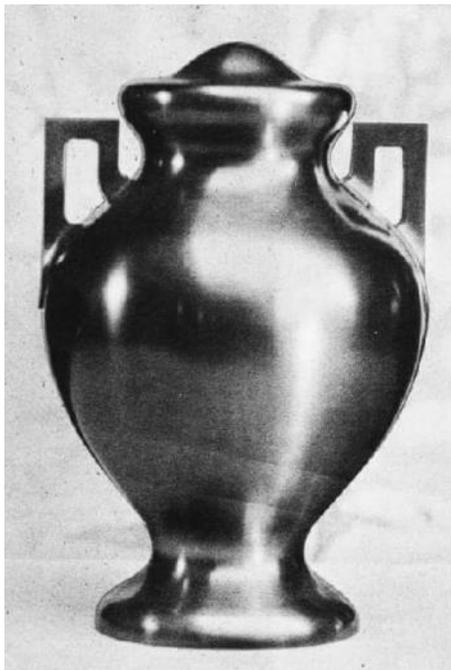
Jason Ryan Engler is a licensed funeral director and certified celebrant. He is The Cremation Historian for the Cremation Association of North America and the National Museum of Funeral History and a frequent speaker and writer on the subject of cremation in the US, urns, and their history. He is the cremation products buyer for Service Corporation International and lives in Houston, Texas, with his miniature dachshund, Otto.

## Stupidity

Let's face it, there are a lot of dumb people out there. Sometimes you want to express how stupid they really are and here's how...

- \* An intellect rivaled only by garden tools.
- \* As smart as bait.
- \* Doesn't have all his dogs on one leash.
- \* Doesn't know much, but leads the league in nostril hair.
- \* Elevator doesn't go all the way to the top floor.
- \* Forgot to pay his brain bill.
- \* His belt doesn't go through all the loops.
- \* If he had another brain, it would be lonely.
- \* Missing a few buttons on his remote control.
- \* Proof that evolution CAN go in reverse.
- \* Receiver is off the hook.
- \* Surfing in Nebraska.
- \* An experiment in Artificial Stupidity.
- \* A few beers short of a six-pack.
- \* A few peas short of a casserole.
- \* The cheese slid off his cracker.
- \* Warning: Objects in mirror are dumber than they appear.
- \* He fell out of the stupid tree and hit every branch on the way down.
- \* Not the sharpest knife in the drawer.
- \* Not the brightest light bulb.
- \* Somewhere, a village is missing its idiot.
- \* A few links short in a chain.
- \* A door without a handle.
- \* A few feathers short of a full pillow.

...The first in a new series, as part of my column I will be spotlighting a historic image of an urn from my collections. In this issue: This is the Gorham Bronze Urn QU 4309. At 13-1/2" tall x 9" diameter, this dual capacity urn weighed a mammoth 33 lbs and was available with or without the buttress handles you see in this catalog image. It is abundant in columbaria in the Northeast US. (Gorham catalog in the NMFH Cremation Collection, the gift of funeral historian Jim Kurtz)



## Modern Proverbs

- \* Age is a very high price to pay for maturity.
- \* Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you a mechanic
- \* Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity
- \* A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
- \* A closed mouth gathers no feet.
- \* If you must choose between two evils, pick the one you've never tried before.
- \* My idea of housework is to sweep the room with a glance.
- \* Not one shred of evidence supports the notion that life is serious
- \* It is easier to get forgiveness than permission.
- \* For every action, there is an equal and opposite government program.
- \* If you look like your passport picture, you probably need the trip.
- \* Always yield to temptation, because it may not pass your way again.

## Spiritual Self-Care

By Ken Doka

Dealing with grief does take a toll. We can experience our grief in so many ways—anger, anxiety, powerlessness, hopelessness, sadness, or guilt. We can feel we are on an emotional roller coaster and become emotionally depleted or depressed. It can affect us in so many ways, even beyond our emotions. We can feel tired and experience all sorts of aches and pains. We can become preoccupied with disease or trauma; perhaps constantly fearing that we or someone we love will have a similar experience. We can become unfocused, rigid, or apathetic.

Even worse is that our grief can sap our spiritual strength, however we define it. The experiences we have in hospice and palliative care as we see the person we love decline can cause us to question our assumptions about the world. It can seem so unfair that someone we care so much about is dying. We may have had to watch someone we love suffer through disease, uncertainty, and death. In such situations, it is only normal that we might question the benevolence of the world or a higher power.

This can happen even when we strongly adhere to our beliefs. It happened to Rabbi Kushner, the author of “**Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People?**” Rabbi Kushner wrote the book after his young son was diagnosed with progeria, a rare genetic disorder that results in premature aging and early death. It was also experience by the Christian writer, C.S. Lewis. Once a confirmed bachelor, he fell deeply in love and married a younger divorcee only to watch her painfully die. In “**A Grief Observed,**” Lewis cried out “Where is God when you need Him—a door slammed in your face.”

Self-care means not only addressing our physical and psychological needs, it means attending to our

spiritual needs as well. We may use different approaches as we take care of ourselves spiritually. For some, it may be reading books like **A Grief Observed** or **Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People?** For others, it may be utilizing traditional religious practices such as worship, spiritual retreats, prayer, meditation, readings from sacred texts, or conversations with our own spiritual companions. Still others, particularly those without religious beliefs, may find solace and spiritual comfort in walks on a beach, socializing with others, caring for pets, getting involved in charitable causes, creative endeavors, music and art.

Lewis models that we need not shy away from asking the tough spiritual questions. Questioning is part of spiritual self-care, perhaps even its center. Belief is never blind; rather, it is a struggle as we wrestle with the questions that truly trouble us. Most of the spiritual books written, including Kushner and Lewis, grapple with exactly those questions. They model the importance of sometimes struggling with those beliefs. As C.S. Lewis tackled his profound questions, he found the answer to his plaintive question. As he stated later, “it was my own frantic need that slammed that door.”

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Kenneth J. Doka, Ph.D., is a Professor of Gerontology at the College of New Rochelle. Dr.

Doka's books include: **Disenfranchised Grief; Living with Life Threatening Illness; Living with Grief: After Sudden Loss; Death and Spirituality; Living With Grief: When Illness is Prolonged; Living with Grief: Who We Are, How We Grieve; AIDS, Fear & Society; Aging and Developmental Disabilities; and Children Mourning, Mourning Children.** In addition to these books, he has published over 60 articles and chapters. Dr. Doka is the associate editor of the journal **Omega** and editor of *Journeys*, a newsletter of the bereaved. Dr. Doka has served as a consultant to medical, nursing, hospice organizations, as well as businesses, educational and social service agencies. As Senior Consultant to the Hospice Foundation of America, he assists in planning, and participates in their annual Teleconference. In 1998, the Association for Death Education and Counseling honored him by presenting him an Award for Outstanding Contributions to the field of death education. In March 1993, he was elected President of the Association for Death Education and Counseling. Dr. Doka was elected in 1995 to the Board of the International Work Group on Dying, Death and Bereavement and elected Chair in 1997. Dr. Doka is an ordained Lutheran Clergyman. (*And a heck of a nice guy— Editor & Publisher*)

## Chuckles

*Editor Note: My apologies if anyone has been offended by jokes in this column*

Our teacher asked what my favorite animal was, and I said, "Fried chicken," She said I wasn't funny, but she couldn't have been right, because everyone else laughed. My parents told me to always tell the truth. I did. Fried chicken is my favorite animal. I told my dad what happened, and he said my teacher was probably a member of PETA. He said they love animals very much. I do, too. Especially chicken, pork, and beef. Anyway, my teacher sent me to the principal's office. I told him what happened, and he laughed too. Then he told me not to do it again. The next day in class my teacher asked me what my favorite live animal was. I told her it was chicken,. She asked me why, so I told her it was because you could make them into fried chicken. She sent me back to the principal's office. He laughed and told me not to do it again. I don't understand. My parents taught me to be honest, but my teacher doesn't like it when I am. Today, my teacher asked us to tell her what famous person we admire most. I told her, "Colonel Sanders." Guess where I am now....



\*\*\*\*\*



A group of bikers are going on a run when they're stopped by a commotion on a bridge standing high above a roaring river. Their burly, muscled, heavily tattooed leader dismounts to see what's going on. A beautiful woman is standing on the edge of the bridge threatening to jump. The biker decides to seize the day and look good for his crew. He muscled his way through the crowd, past the police barricade and moves up next to the woman. A beautiful creature like you should never consider suicide. If you think no one cares about you, let me prove you wrong. Give me one kiss. Then if you are still determined, I won't try to stop you." The woman embraces him and gives him the longest, most passionate kiss the biker has ever experienced. Then after a moments hesitation, repeats it only with more sensuality and passion. He's left nearly speechless. "That was phenomenal! Why would anyone as passionate as you want to commit suicide?" "My parents don't like me dressing like a girl."

\*\*\*\*\*

### Church Bulletin Oops.....

- \* Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
- \* Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.
- \* The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.
- \* Pot-luck supper Sunday at 5:00 p.m.—prayers and medication to follow.
- \* The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every

## Comments

"I thought , why would I want to read anything with a name like that? But I loved it!! I loved the chuckles. I loved the articles and the style of writing"

Jan, a first time reader

Feel free to share comments and thoughts to the editor at editor@thedead-beat.com or mail to The Dead Beat, PO Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748.

## Chuckles (Cont.)

kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

- \* This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.
- \* The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.
- \* Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.
- \* The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM...The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
- \* Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.
- \* The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday: "I Upped My Pledge—Up Yours."

\*\*\*\*\*

In church one Sunday the preacher said, "Anyone with special needs who want to be prayed over, please come forward to the altar." Ole hopped right up and preacher asked, "Well, Ole, what do you want us to pray for?" Ole replied, "Vell, I need you ta pray for help with my hearing." the preacher put one finger of one hand on Ole's ear, placed his other hand on top of his head, and then prayed fervently for Ole while the congregation joined in. After a few minutes, the preacher removed his hands, stood back, and asked, "Ole, how is your hearing now?" "I don't know," said Ole. "Da hearing is not 'till Tuesday!"

\*\*\*\*\*

A man in Ireland calls his son in London the day before Christmas Eve and says, "I hate to ruin your day but I have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing; forty-five years of misery is enough." "Dad, what are you talking about?" the son screams. "We can't stand the sight of each other any longer", the father says. "We're sick of each other and I'm sick of talking about this, so you call your sister in Leeds and tell her." Frantically, the son calls his sister, who explodes on the phone, "Like hell, they're getting divorced", she shouts, "I'll take care of this." She calls

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Chuckles (Cont.)

Ireland immediately and screams at her father, "You are NOT getting divorced. Don't do a single thing until I get there. I'm calling my brother back and we'll both be there tomorrow. Until then, don't do a thing. DO YOU HEAR ME?" and hangs up. The old man hangs up his phone and turns to his wife, "Done! They're coming for Christmas - and they're paying their own way."

Sent from reader.

\*\*\*\*\*

A guy took his blonde girlfriend to her first football game. They had great seats right behind their team's bench. After the game, he asked her how she liked the experience. "Oh, I really liked it," she replied, "especially the tight pants and all the big muscles, but I just couldn't understand why they were killing each other over 25 cents." Dumbfounded, her date asked, "What do you mean?" "Well, they flipped a coin, one team got it and then for the rest of the game, all they kept screaming was 'Get the quarterback! Get the quarterback!' I'm like...Helloooooooooo? It's only 25 cents!!!"



\*\*\*\*\*

During a recent password audit, our I.T. discovered a blonde was using the following password: MickeyMinniePluto-HueyLouieDeweyDonaldGoofySacramento. When they asked why such a long password, she said she was told that it had to be at least 8 characters long and include at least one capital.

\*\*\*\*\*



When the wise company president learned that his employees were tanking up on no-trace-vodka martinis during their lunch hours, he issued the following memo: To all employees: If you must drink during your lunch hours, please drink whiskey. It is better for our customers to know you're drunk than to think you're stupid.

\*\*\*\*\*

Louisiana Highway Department employees stopped at a farm and talked with an old farmer. The man in charge told the farmer. "We need to inspect your farm for a possible new road." The old farmer said, "Ok, but don't get out in that pasture over there." The Highway Dept. employee flashed out his identification card and said, "I have the authority of

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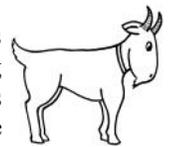
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the State of Louisiana to go anywhere I want. See this card, I will go wherever I wish." So the old farmer went about his chores. It wasn't too much later when the farmer heard loud screams and yelling. He looked over and saw several Highway Department employees running for their lives and right behind was the farmer's huge prize bull. The bull was madder than a hornet's nest and was gaining on the Highway employees at every step. The old farmer yelled out, "Show him your card, Smart A##... Show him your card!!"

\*\*\*\*\*

Two guy are walking through the woods and come across this big deep hole. "Wow...that looks deep." "Sure does...toss a few pebbles in there and see how deep it is." They pick up a few pebbles and throw them in and wait...no noise. "Jeez. That is REALLY deep... here..throw one of these great big rocks down there. Those should make a noise." They pick up a couple football-sized rocks and toss them into the hole and wait...and wait. Nothing. They look at each other in amazement. One gets a determined look on his face and says, "Hey...over here in the weeds, there's a railroad tie. Help me carry it over here. When we toss THAT sucker in, it's GOTTA make some noise." The two drag the heavy tie over to the hole and heave it in. Not a sound comes from the hole. Suddenly, out of the nearby woods, a goat appears, running like the wind. It rushes toward the two men, then right past them, running as fast as it's legs will carry it. Suddenly it leaps in the air and into the hole. The two men are astonished with what they've just seen... Then, out of the woods comes a farmer who spots the men and ambles over. "Hey...you two guys seen my goat out here?" "You bet we did! Craziest thing I ever seen! It came running like crazy and just jumped into this hole!" "Nah," says the farmer, "That couldn't have been MY goat. My goat was chained to a railroad tie."



\*\*\*\*\*

A lawyer defending a man accused of burglary tried this creative defense. "My client merely inserted his arm into the window and removed a few trifling articles. His arm is not himself and I fail to see how you can punish the whole individual for an offense committed by his limb." "Well put," the judge replied. "Using your logic, I sentence the defendant's arm to one year's imprisonment. He can accompany it or not, as he chooses." The defendant smiled. With his lawyer's assistance he detached his artificial limb, laid it on the bench, and walked out.

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## Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues



### ARKANSAS

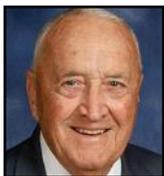


**Charles "Charlie Fred" Dearman, Sr.** 81, of Monticello passed away on July 30, 2017. He attended the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science, graduated in 1959. Upon graduation, he and wife Laura Lee moved to Monticello where Charlie worked for Stephenson Funeral Home, which was then owned by the Stephenson family. Charlie eventually had the opportunity to purchase the funeral home and later renamed it Stephenson-Dearman Funeral Home. In addition to being a licensed embalmer and funeral director, Charlie was elected as the Drew County Sheriff for two terms and served as the Drew County Coroner for over fifty years, which is the longest tenure to-date of any Coroner in the State of Arkansas. Charlie was very involved in the funeral home industry both on a state and national level, serving as the former President of both the Arkansas Funeral Directors Association and the Southeast Arkansas Funeral Directors Association, the former Chairman of the Arkansas State Burial Board and the Arkansas State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors, and was the 1993 recipient of the Arkansas Funeral Director of the Year award. He served as the Arkansas Representative on the Policy Board of the National Funeral Directors Association and was the first Arkansas funeral director to serve in that role. He was also a longtime board member of Selected Funeral & Life Insurance Company, an Arkansas funeral insurance company that he was very dedicated to. The Stephenson-Dearman Funeral Home handled his funeral services.

### KANSAS



**Stephen J. Prusa**, 66, of Coldwater, passed away Oct. 15, 2017. He graduated from San Francisco School of Mortuary Science in 1975. He owned and operated Hatfield-Prusa Funeral Home and Hatfield Furniture's & Monuments. His funeral arrangements were directed by Hatfield-Prusa Funeral Home.



**John Joseph "Joe" Carson**, 93, of Parsons, passed away Jan. 2, 2018. During World War II, Joe proudly served in the United States Navy as a Pharmacist's Mate, Second Class, on the USS Catron (APA-71), a Gilliam-class attack transport and was at the Invasion of Okinawa. Joe attended St. Louis College of Mortuary Science and graduated with Distinguished Honors. After his return to Parsons, he owned and operated Carson Funeral Homes, Thompson Motel, and Corbett Farms. Joe and wife June were actively engaged in the funeral business since 1944. Most recently, Joe served as a funeral director at Forbes-Hoffman Funeral Home in Parsons who directed his funeral services.

### MISSOURI



**Ronald (Ron) H. Berg**, 75, of Baldwin City, KS formerly of Concordia, MO passed away January 27, 2018. He graduated from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science and was a licensed Embalmer and Funeral Director with licenses in Missouri and Kansas. Ron began his career working at Pfitzger Mortuary in Kirkwood, Missouri. In 1964 he joined the Ricks Funeral Home in Elsberry, Missouri. In 1965 Ron and his wife Liz purchased the E.S. James Funeral Home in Concordia, Missouri. Later they purchased two more funeral homes in Sweet Springs and Blackburn, Missouri. Ron and Liz worked side by side for 35 years in the Mortuary business serving four counties in these three communities. They retired in 2001 to Olathe, Kansas to be closer to their kids. They both remained in the Funeral Industry working for Mt. Moriah and Freeman and the McGilley Memorial Chapels in MO and KS. He was a member of the Missouri Funeral Directors Association for over 50 years. He was President of MFDA in 1998-1999 and District Director for MFDA, while also serving on the National Board of Directors. In recognition of service to Lions Eye Tissue Bank, he was recognized with a distinguished service award from the University of Missouri Eye Research. McGilley and Frye Funeral Home in Olathe, KS directed his services.



**Joyce Jensen**, 91, of Forsyth passed away on January 12, 2018. She became a funeral director and worked for Dunn's Funeral Home for 10 years before moving with her husband K. Aage Jensen to Forsyth, MO where she managed the Forsyth Wheelchel Chapel until she retired in 1992. Services were under the direction of Walnut Lawn Funeral Home, Ltd.—DeGraffenreid-Wood-Crematory, Springfield, MO.



**JoAnn Preston**, 84, of Smithville, MO passed away Dec. 19, 2017. She was the wife of Marvin Preston, mother of Mark Preston and Brad Preston. Her funeral arrangements were under the direction of Meyers Northland Cahpel in Parkville.



**Theodore "Teddy" Taylor Yandell, Jr.**, 69, of Webster Groves, passed away Nov. 7, 2017. Teddy attended Meramec Community College prior to being drafted into the United States Army. His service included a tour of duty in Vietnam with Army 1st BN (M) 61st Infantry with a final rank of sergeant. Upon returning from military service, he completed the Forest Park Community College's Mortician Science Program, and in 1976, he received his bachelor of arts degree from Saint Louis University. After graduation, Teddy worked with his father and became funeral director of Yandell Mortuary of Webster Groves. He served numerous years in this position. He was a licensed funer-



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**MISSOURI (Cont.)**

al director of his father's business, Yandell Mortuary, a member of the St. Louis Undertakers Association, Missouri Licensed Embalmers Association, St. Louis Gateway Funeral Directors and Embalmers Association, Missouri State Funeral Directors and Embalmers Association, and the Epsilon Nu Delta Mortuary Fraternity, Inc. He served twice as president of the St. Louis Gateway Funeral Directors and Embalmers Association and served several times in the capacity of president of the Missouri State Funeral Directors Association. He was presently serving as a member of the Education Commissioners Board of Directors of the NFD&MA. His services were directed by Vandell Mortuary.



**Walter Marsh Watkins**, 89, of Dexter, passed away Jan. 18, 2018. He owned and operated Watkins & Sons Funeral Home until his health forced him to retire. His services were directed by Watkins and Sons Funeral Home in Dexter, MO.

**OKLAHOMA**



**James Donald "Jim" Lovett**, 82 of Norman, OK died November 9, 2017. He attended the Dallas Institute Gupton-Jones College of Mortuary Science, graduating in 1961. He served as a fu-



**OKLAHOMA (Cont.)**

neral director for Bahner Funeral Home in Sulphur, OK, and Vondel L. Smith Mortuary in Oklahoma City, OK. He owned and operated Lovett Funeral Service in Mangum, OK from 1969 until 1982. In 1983, he moved to Norman, OK served as managing director with Guardian/Mayes until his first retirement in December 1997. A short time after retiring, he became a funeral service compliance auditor. He traveled the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico auditing funeral homes, cemeteries and crematories. In 2014, Jim officially retired from the funeral service industry. His services were under the direction of The Springs Funeral Services, Norman, Oklahoma.



**Cecil Marvin "Bub" Harvey**, 92, of Ardmore, passed away Feb. 7, 2018. Bub enlisted in the United States Marine Corps July 14, 1943. Assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 21st Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, he was shipped to Guam. From there his unit was assigned to the invasion of Iwo Jima, going ashore on February 21, 1945. He left Iwo Jima on March 28, 1945 and arrived back at Guam April 1, 1945. He entered the family business, Harvey Funeral Home, graduating from the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science, Dallas, Texas. He they owned and operated the Harvey Funeral Home until 1988 when they retired. He held membership in several organizations; the National Association of Funeral Directors, served as President of the Oklahoma Funeral Directors Association and received the "Director of the Year" award, served on the Board of Directors of the International Order of the Golden Rule. His funeral services were directed by Harvey-Douglas Funeral Home and Crematory.

**TEXAS**



**Jim Bailey**, 74, of Navasota, passed away Jan. 28, 2018. He was the stepfather of Jeffrey Nobles with Nobles Funeral Home. He proudly served his country in the United States Army. His services were under the direction of Nobles Funeral Home.



**W. A. Dempsey, Jr.**, 75, of Lufkin, passed away Dec. 12, 2017. He was a funeral director for over 50 years. He had worked for Gipson Funeral Home for 45 years and had currently worked for Carroway Funeral Home for eight years who handled his funeral service.

*(Continued on page 16)*

**If you know of a fellow funeral service colleague that has died that we have not included, please send the information and picture if available (The Dead Beat, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748) or fax it to us (417-537-4797) or E-Mail to Editor@thedeat-beat.com**

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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

TEXAS (Cont.)

(Continued from page 15)



**Jimmie Dale Fleming**, 88, of Wewoka, passed away Dec. 11, 2017. He joined the United States Navy and was stationed at Corpus Christi Naval Air Station, Texas and Camp Pendleton as a Hospital Corpsman during the Korean War. He returned to a life of service in Wewoka, as a funeral director with Stout-Sarber Funeral Home, Stout Funeral Home, and later Stout-Phillips Funeral Home for more than 65 years. His services were directed by Phillips Funeral Service.

**J.E. Foust III "Jr"**, 86, of Grapevine passed away Oct. 18, 2017. He was a graduate of Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science earning licenses in Funeral Directing and Embalming. Foust served as co-owner and manager of J.E. Foust and Son Funeral Directors from 1958 until his retirement in 1995. Services were directed by Foust and Son Funeral Directors.

**Verline Rose Jasek**, 85, of Houston, passed away Jan. 19, 2018. She was wife of Larry Jasek, Chairman Geo. H. Lewis & Sons who handled her services.



**Mildred Nimmo Lucas**, 95, of Fort Worth, passed away on Jan. 14, 2018. She was the Matriarch of Lucas Funeral Homes. She enrolled in the Dallas Institute-Gupton Jones College and in 1966 graduated with a degree in Mortuary Science. She managed the family business up to her death. She had been the North Texas Funeral Directors funeral Director of the Year. Williams & Lucas Funeral Home handled her services.



**William "Bill" H. Marshall**, 68, of Aransas Pass died Dec. 29, 2017. He was a licensed funeral director and embalmer at the Charlie Marshall Funeral Home and Crematory in Aransas Pass and Rockport, which was established by his father, Charlie W. Marshall in 1949. He retired from the family business in 2014. He graduated from the Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service in 1969. His services were arranged by Charlie Marshall funeral Home in Aransas Pass.



**Joseph R. "Jay" Green**, 90, of Harlingen formerly of Newark, OH passed away December 27, 2017 at the age of 90. A retired funeral

director and embalmer, he started his career at the Clarke Funeral Home in Toronto, OH then worked with Martin Funeral Home and Robison Funeral Home, prior to arriving in Newark in 1953 as a member of the staff at Criss Brothers Funeral Home, where he would stay for the duration of his career. He graduated from the Cincinnati College of Embalming and was a member of the Ohio Funeral Directors Association.



**Gerald L. "Jerry" Miller**, 81 of Hewitt, TX died Dec. 13, 2017. He worked as a licensed funeral director at W. Y. Goff Funeral Home in Commerce; Franklin-Bartley

Funeral Home in Lubbock; and Hampton-Vaughan Funeral Home in Wichita Falls from 1954 to 1963. He served as a sales representative for Pierce Chemical/Royal Bond for part of Texas from 1997 to 2000 and from 2001 to 2008 was a sales representative for The Dodge Company, Inc. A 1958 graduate of the Dallas Institute-Gupton-Jones College of Mortuary Science, he served as instructor from 1963 to 1967. He also served as dean at Commonwealth College of Sciences from 1963-1967; president of The Bryman School in Houston from 1970-1971; vice president of Professional Training Schools and Pierce Mortuary Colleges from 1971-1987. From 1987 to 1997 he served as president of Pierce Mortuary Colleges and was a trustee of Pierce Mortuary Colleges and director of Professional Training Schools and Pierce Chemical/Royal Bond. He was a member of the Phi Sigma Eta Mortuary Fraternity; board of trustee and member of the Texas Funeral Directors Association; selected as Funeral Supply Salesman of the Year in 1988 by the Kansas Funeral Directors Association; South Central Texas Funeral Directors Association Salesman of the Year in 1999; named Funeral Supplier of the Year in 2000 by the TFDA; and Certificate of Special Recognition from the Texas Funeral Service Commission in 1997.



**Ethalyn Tate**, 93, of Kerrville, passed away Jan. 26, 2018. She was owner of Ethalyn Tate Funeral Supply and a retired Sales Representative for Bass Mollett Publishers. Her services were under the direction of Grimes Funeral Chapel, Kerr-

**Texas (Cont.)**



ville, TX.  
**James A. Underwood, Jr.**, 92, of Ft. Worth passed away on Jan. 26, 2018. He was the father of Michael Underwood of Greenwood Funeral Homes & Cremation, Fort Worth, who directed his services.



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**9 Phrases Funeral Directors Never Use In Conversation (Seriously!)**

By Alice Adams

We've all said things others interpreted much differently than we thought we meant. Unfortunately, these seemingly harmless comments lead to that awful feeling which only comes when you've planted your foot firmly into your mouth.

Verbal slip-ups often occur because we say things, not knowing the subtle implications they carry. Understanding these implications requires *social awareness* — the ability to understand the emotions and experiences of other people.

TalentSmart tested the emotional intelligence (EQ) of a million people and found "social awareness" is a skill many of us are lacking.

Why do so many lack social awareness? It's mainly because we're so focused on what we're going to say next — and how what other people are saying affects us. With all that going on in our heads, we completely lose sight of other people.

As funeral directors, this can be a problem because, as you know, people -- especially families in shock or who are already grieving -- are complicated. You can't hope to understand someone until you focus *all* of your attention in their direction.

The beauty of social awareness is this: A few simple adjustments to what you say can vastly improve your relationships with other people.

To help you improve these relationships, there are some phrases that emotionally intelligent people are careful to avoid in casual or formal conversation. The following phrases are nine of the worst offenders:

1. **"You look tired"** --Tired people are incredibly unappealing — they have droopy eyes and attitudes, they have trouble concentrating, and they're as grouchy as they come. Telling someone they look tired implies all of the above and then some.

*(Continued on page 27)*



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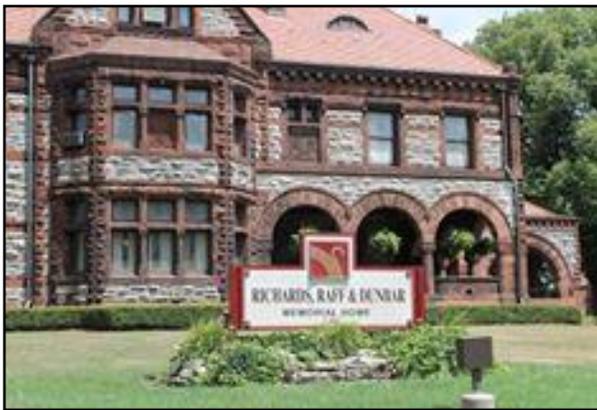


### As We Drive By

We love to take pictures as we go by funeral homes and interesting places, but we'd welcome pictures, if you send them to us.



**Richards, Raff & Dunbar Memorial Home**  
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Pictures provided by Steve Loftin



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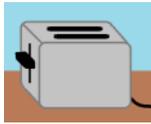
## Early Dementia Test

It's that time of year to take our annual senior citizen test. Exercising the brain is as important as exercising muscles. As we grow older, it's important to keep mentally alert. If you don't use it, you lose it! Below is a very private way to gauge your loss or no-loss of intelligence.



Take the test presented here to determine if you're losing it or not. The spaces below are so you don't see the answers until you've made your answer. Ok, relax, clear your mind and begin.

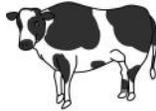
1. What do you put in a toaster?



Answer: "bread"

If you said "toast" give up now and do something else. Try not to hurt yourself. If you said, bread, go to Question 2.

2. Say "silk" five times. Now spell "sink"



What do cows drink?

Answer: Cows drink water.

If you said "milk," don't attempt the next question. Your brain is over-stressed and may even overheat. Content yourself with reading a more appropriate literature such as Auto World. However, if you said "water," proceed to question 3.

3. If a red house is made from red bricks and a blue house is made from blue bricks and a pink house is made from pink bricks and a black house is made from black bricks, what is a greenhouse made from?



Answer: Greenhouses are made from glass. If you said "green bricks" why the heck are you still reading these???? If you said "glass," go on to Question 4.

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4. It's twenty years ago, and a plane is flying at 20,000 feet over Germany (if you will recall, Germany at the time was politically divided into West Germany and East Germany). Anyway, during the flight, two engines fail. The pilot, realizing that the last remaining engine is also failing, decides on a crash landing procedure. Unfortunately the engine fails before he can do so and the plane fatally crashes smack in the middle of "no man's land between East Germany and West Germany. Where would you bury the survivors? East Germany, West Germany or no man's land?"



Answer: You don't bury survivors.

If you said ANYTHING else, you're a dunce and you must stop. If you said, "You don't bury survivors," proceed to the next question.

5. Without using a calculator—You are driving a bus from London to Milford Haven in Wales. In London, 17 people get on the bus. In Reading, six people get off the bus and nine people get on. In Swindon, two people get off and four get on. In Cardiff, 11 people get off and 16 people get on. In Swansea, three people get off and five people get on. In Carmathen, six people get off and three get on. You then arrive at Milford Haven. What was the name of the bus driver?



Answer: Oh, for crying out loud! Don't you remember your own name? It was YOU!! Now pass this along to all your friends and pray they do better than you.

P. S. 95% of people fail most of the questions!!!

# Release Fear, Restore Faith

From My Purview

By Reverend Janice Hoffman

Living a life based on trust is not an easy task. It takes perseverance, faith and a sincere desire. It means risking, falling down and getting back up again. At times others may mock or condemn our actions, yet having the tenacity to persevere through it all, we can hold steadfast in our conviction.

When tempted to waver, some may take the easy road, but remember truth cannot be swayed. We stand in the truth of who we are. Stand in the knowing, or rather the un-knowing, regardless of whether your behavior makes sense to others. Have the willingness to say, "I don't know", and accept for now the unknown. The unknown is uncomfortable but when you have faith you know that this is exactly where you need to be.

There are no questions we could ask that the truth can't answer, for all knowing is provided when we ask. All guidance is laid down before us to help make our steps more purposeful. Every time we surrender our control, love is born again in our hearts.

**Release Fear, Restore Faith** is a daily practice for unreleased fear will eventually putrefy into guilt - the ultimate paralyzer. Fear paralyzes by holding us back from achieving our destiny as well as God's blessings. Don't give in to fear's

charm. Fear is designed to impress yet frighten, manipulate and tempt. Always remember it is you who has the power to control your mind and thoughts.

**Release Fear** by giving your fears to God. Let Him work through you, taking your fear and transforming it into love. As you are able to release your fears, even just a little at a time, the space that fear occupied will become empty creating a space for your faith to flourish and gain strength.

**Restore Faith.** Close your eyes and think of your heart's desire. Breathe faith into that desire. Faith is a powerful tool often misunderstood and brushed aside.

Faith will get you from point A to point B. Faith will give you new eyes from which to see. Faith will restore trust in yourself and in others. Faith will bring you closer to God. Your faith can find its way through you to another, thereby restoring their faith in themselves.

Never underestimate the power of faith. It is the pathway to trust, for you cannot trust without faith. They go hand in hand.

When life feels unfair, what gives you the strength to go on? What gives you the hope that things will improve? When you know the answer to these ques-

tions you understand. Release your fears and restore your faith. Surrender your thoughts to the One who is breathing life into your body right now. Breathe in faith, exhale fear. Breathe in trust, exhale guilt. Breathe in knowing, release doubt. Breathe in divine guidance, release confusion. Breathe in love and release heartache.

You and I are divine spiritual beings taking up this place and time for reasons not yet revealed to us. Trust the still small voice inside. Walk the path less traveled. Its destination is your heart's desire. It is your homecoming. Welcome home, welcome home.



## About the Author:

Ordained in 1999 as a non-denominational Christian Minister, Reverend Janice

Hoffman's ministry has included facilitating a Course In Miracles, leading an Attitudinal Healing support group, and hosting a guided meditation for a group that met weekly for over 13 years. Rev. Hoffman's work with mortuaries and families began in 2008. After the first funeral service Rev. Janice officiated, she had a deep awareness that honoring the life of a family's loved one was where she wanted to focus her ministry. Beginning with meeting with the family for an intake, Janice writes a custom service bringing comfort to families in shock and grief. None of us are promised tomorrow and bringing that awareness to others, fosters appreciation for those in our lives and the time we spend with them. Contact her at [Janice@janicehoffman.com](mailto:Janice@janicehoffman.com) or 303-604-2222.

## Work Smarter and Not Harder

By Richard S. Lee

With all of the changes and challenges in the funeral industry these days, an owner has to be open to moving out of their comfort zone and start utilizing companies that offer services that enable an owner to work smarter and not harder.

Here are a few that come to mind:

**Insurance Assignment Funding Companies** – This allows the owner to get paid quickly on a pre-need policy that becomes at-need. There are several companies that offer this service and the charge is minimal – usually 3.5% - 4% of the policy amount. Yes, you may be giving up a small percentage in order to receive your funds within a few days, but it sure beats the alternative of having to wait for months for the insurance company to finally pay. On a \$7,000 policy, I would gladly give up

\$250 so that I could get the \$6,750 paid to me immediately and not have to go through the aggravation of dealing with the insurance company.

**At-Need Funding Companies** -

There are a handful of these companies around and it's something that is starting to become more attractive to owners to use when they have families with very limited or no funds to pay for an at-need service. With these companies, the family applies for a personal loan to pay for the cost of services and then those funds are paid to the funeral home (and with no re-course). The downside here is that the loan approval rates are generally around 55% - 60%. But for the ones that get approved, it's great for the funeral home. The biggest question is if the family cannot get approved

for a loan, what do you do - let them make payments to you and never get fully paid or tell them nicely that you cannot help them?



**Richard S. Lee is the President of Lee & Associates**, a firm that represents funeral home owners in the sale and transfer of their funeral businesses.

Since 1987, they have been involved in over 170 transactions all over the United States. The scope of their work also includes business valuations, accounting solutions and general consulting services. **Richard is always available for questions and may be reached at 407-257-5024 or email him at Lee-bros@aol.com**

## An Accidental Celebrant (Cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

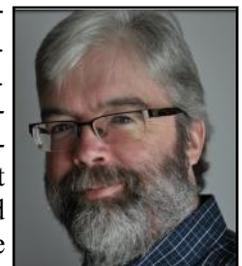
of voice and the appropriateness of our service content.

Funerals are incredibly intense experiences – I have to keep reminding myself that it's often best to treat them with extreme care and caution.

\*\*\*\*\*

A native of Fredericton, New Brunswick, Michael K. Jones was born and raised in Atlantic Canada. A former minister in the United Church of Canada

he has ministered to a variety of congregations for over twenty years. *Dead Reckoning* is his second book. His previous release is *Empty Houses: A Pastoral Response to Congregational Closure*. When Mike is not writing he is enjoying walking and reading. He resides with his wife Trish in Calgary, Alberta.



*Dead Reckoning* is now available online through Amazon.ca.

## Three Easy Writing Suggestions to Increase Engagement

By Joe Weigel

Content marketing: the buzzwords uttered by marketing folks involved with promoting a funeral home or cemetery. It doesn't matter if you call it marketing communications, copywriting, blogging or just writing, content marketing is creating pertinent and engaging material to connect with a firm's target audience. Regrettably, not everything that is penned is a winner. Just the opposite. Without knowing it, you may be making a few simple mistakes that are preventing you from creating an effective content marketing campaign. To improve your effectiveness as well as realize and increase your success rate, avoid these frequent mistakes:

**Producing trivial content.** When you create content with only your interests in mind, you disregard the interests of families and the topics that are of interest and important to them. While you may be proud of the cemetery's new backhoe or the funeral home's new hearse (and feel they are worthy of a Facebook post), most families could care less. Strive to create content that really strikes a chord with your families.

**Keeping it to yourself.** Don't merely put your content on your website and expect results. The more you repurpose your content, the more views it will get and attract the attention of a search engine. Distribute your content to appropriate outlets on social media. Post your blog to discussion groups about funeral service on LinkedIn, put the press re-

lease you sent to the local media on your website and tweet a link on Twitter when your news release is published.

**Focusing on quantity, not quality.** While it's crucial that you constantly create new content, quality is much more important than quantity. When you generate interesting content, you build trust, increase engagement and demonstrate thought leadership. In addition, Google prefers high quality content to mundane content – even boring content sprinkled with keywords.

It's no secret that the landscape for content marketing is an ever changing one. As a result, it can make achieving success a moving target. But by following the above tips – along with testing and experimentation – you'll be better off than most funeral and cemetery companies when it comes to content marketing.



Joe Weigel is the owner of Weigel Strategic Marketing, a communications firm focused on the funeral profession that delivers expertise and results across three interrelated marketing disciplines: strategy, branding and communications. You can visit his website at [weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com](http://weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com). He also can be reached at 317-608-8914

or [joseph.weigel@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.weigel@gmail.com).

### Interesting Point of View –sent by reader

This is about being in the service but it could apply to all who have been at the bottom in any workplace.

A Canadian Army N.C.O. was about to start the morning briefing, the N.C.O. decided to pose a question to all assembled. He explained that his wife had been a bit frisky the night before, and therefore he failed to get his usual amount of sound sleep.

He posed the question; "How much of the act of lovemaking is "work," and how much is pure pleasure?"

A Captain chimed in with 75-25% in favor of work.

A Lieutenant said it was probably about 50-50%.

A Warrant-Officer responded with a 25-75% in favor of

"pleasure."

There being no consensus, the N.C. O. turned to the you private who was in charge of making the coffee. What was YOUR opinion?

Without hesitation, the young private responded, "Sir, it has to be 100% pleasure, Sir."

The N.C.O. a little surprised and as you might guess, said, "And why is that soldier?"

"Well, Sir, if there was any work involved, the officers would have me doing it for them, Sir."

## A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Grave..... I Became an Undertaker

**\*\*Part 2\*\***

**By Lowell Pugh**

I do not recall my introduction to cemeteries or cemetery equipment. I do remember when I was 4 or 5 that I laid my too large to ride scooter on its side and spun the rear wheel while telling my grandfather it was my lowering device. So apparently my Dad had been taking me along when he went out to set up or take down the cemetery equipment.



When my great uncle bought out Udell & Finney Furniture and Undertaking that was next door to their hardware store it did not include much in the way of cemetery equipment. The only thing I know of for sure was a pair of 15 foot long leather harness reins to lower the coffin in the grave. It is possible Uncle E.A. may have acquired those from his in-laws who owned the harness factory. At least by the time I was born they had a complete set-up.

By the time I was 6 or 7, weekends and summertime I got to “help” my dad load, set-up and later take down

and stow away the equipment. I suspect that in the early years I was flattered into thinking I was real help.

Over the years three retired farmers who loafed around the pot-bellied stove at our store were the real helpers. After I got a driver’s license I moved up to the number one spot on the cemetery crew.

All of our rural cemetery graves were dug by friends, neighbors or relatives, usually the day before the funeral. As a courtesy Uncle E.A. or Dad would take the tent out the day before to shelter the volunteer grave diggers from inclement weather. Of course this meant an extra trip and time for us.



On one of these occasions the grave diggers encountered excessive rock in the grave. A LOT OF ROCK. They had to resort to a little dynamite. After the fuse was lighted—someone realized they had not taken our tent down!!!!



### Phobia

A man went to a psychiatrist for his problem.

“Doc,” he said, “I’ve got trouble. Every time I get into bed, I think there’s somebody under it. I get under the bed, I think there’s somebody on the top of it. Top, under, top, under. You gotta help me, I’m going crazy!”

“Just put yourself in my hands for two years,” said the shrink, “Come to me three times a week, and I’ll cure your fears.”

“How much do you charge?”

“A hundred dollars per visit.”

“I’ll sleep on it,” said the man.

Six months later the doctor met the man on the street. “Why didn’t you ever come to see me again?”

“For a hundred bucks a visit? A bartender cured me for ten dollars.”

“Is that so! How?”

“He told me to cut the legs off the bed.

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## 9 Phrases Funeral Directors Never Use In Conversation (Seriously!) (Cont.)

By Alice Adams

(Continued from page 17)

Instead say: "Is everything okay?"

Most people ask if someone is tired because they intend to be helpful (they want to know if the other person is okay). Instead of assuming someone's disposition, just ask. This way, they can open up and share. More importantly, they will know, without a doubt, that you are concerned instead of being rude.

**2. "Wow, you've lost a ton of weight!"** -- A well-meaning comment, right? In this case a compliment— but it creates the impression that you're being critical. Telling someone they've lost a lot of weight suggests you think they used to look fat or unattractive.

Instead say: "You look fantastic."

This one is an easy fix. Instead of comparing how she looks now to how she used to look, just compliment her for looking great. It takes the past right out of the picture.

**3. "You were too good for her anyway"** -- When someone ends a relationship, whether personal or professional, this comment implies the person made a poor choice in the first place.

Instead say: "Her/his loss!"

This provides the same enthusiastic support and optimism without any implied criticism.

**4. "You always . . ." or "You never . . ."** -- No one **always** or **never** does anything. People don't see themselves as one-dimensional, and you shouldn't attempt to define them as such. These phrases make people defensive and closed off to your message, which isn't a good thing since you likely use these phrases when you have something important to discuss.

Instead: Simply point out what the other person did that's a problem for you. Stick to the facts. If the frequency of the behavior is an issue, you can always say, "It seems like you do this often." or "You do this often enough for me to notice."

**5. "You look great for your age"** -- Using "for your" as a qualifier always comes across as condescending and/or rude. No one wants to be smart "for an athlete" or in good shape "relative to other people who are also knocking on death's door." People simply want to be smart and fit.

Instead say: "You look great."

This one is another easy fix. Genuine compliments don't need qualifiers, like "for your age" or "for you weight."

**6. "As I said before . . ."** -- This phrase makes it sound as if you're insulted at having to repeat yourself, which is hard on the recipient (someone who is genuinely interested in hearing your perspective).

Getting insulted over having to repeat yourself suggests either you're insecure or you think you're better than everyone else (or both!). Few people who use this phrase actually feel this way.

Instead say: When you say it again, see what you can do to

convey the message in a clearer and more interesting manner.

This way they'll remember what you said.

**7. "Good luck"** -- This is a subtle one. It certainly isn't the end of the world if you wish someone good luck, but you can do better because this phrase implies they need luck to succeed, implying they lack the skills or qualifications to achieve whatever it is they are trying to do.

Instead say: "I know you have what it takes."

This is better than wishing her luck, and it suggests she has the skills needed to succeed. It provides a huge boost of confidence. You'll stand out from everyone else who simply wishes her luck.

**8. "It's up to you" or "Whatever you want"** -- Although you may, truly, be indifferent to the question, your opinion is important to the person asking (or else he wouldn't have asked).

Instead say: "I don't have a strong opinion either way, but a couple things to consider are . . ."

When you offer an opinion (even without choosing a side), it shows you care about the person asking.

**9. "Well at least I've never \_\_\_\_"** -- This phrase is an aggressive way to shift attention away from your mistake by pointing out an old, likely irrelevant mistake the other person made (and one you should have forgiven her for by now).

Instead say: "I'm sorry."

Owning up to your mistake is the best way to bring the discussion to a more rational and calm playing field so you can work things out. Admitting guilt is an amazing way to prevent escalation.

**Bringing it all together:** In everyday conversation, it's the little things that make all the difference. Try these suggestions and you'll be amazed at the positive response you get.

*This article is based on information published on [Linked-In](#) by Travis Bradberry, co-author of [Emotional Intelligence 2.0](#) and the co-founder of [TalentSmart](#).*



About the author: A native West Texan, Alice Adams has been a newspaper feature writer, arts editor/critic and columnist and has written more than 30 books on management and business, numerous magazine articles and several dramatic works.

After earning a bachelor's degree in Creative Writing from the Texas Center for Writers - The University of Texas, she then added a master's in mass communications/education and doctorate in educational leadership with an emphasis on adult education to her name, teaching marketing and public relations at Odessa College and business communications at the Cameron School of Business at The University of St. Thomas - Houston..

Since 1994, she has been president of Adams Communications and continues to work as a writer and columnist for The Houston Chronicle, The Jewish Herald-Voice, The Minority Business Journal and other regional and national publications. She is a founding co-editor of *Southern Calls Magazine*, has served as editor for The Texas Director Magazine for close to two decades and has been honored by Texas Funeral Directors Association for her service. Alice has earned awards from the Texas Press Association and Texas Newspaper Association and has been recognized for her contributions to the Texas educational and business communities.

## Dylan's Directives It's okay...

I want to start by saying that I am not a licensed medical professional... so what I'm about to share is not to be taken as medical advice or counseling suggestion. I'm one of you, so this will all be my own opinion.

Burnout...is very real. So let's take a moment and look at what it is.

Burnout happens in any profession or occupation when there is no rest, no reprieve, no time away. When it comes, it usually brings with it a certain apathetic and unconcerned attitude towards daily tasks, and anxiety about each day. It can affect anyone, and it is no laughing matter.

For the funeral professional, burnout is especially dangerous. But how do we recognize it and/or combat it? I can answer that in two simple words... we simply agree "It's okay."

It's okay to take a day off. I know, somewhere in your mind you believed at one point that if you weren't in the building, things would go wrong. Maybe you're right. Maybe not. But a fatigued director who is battling exhaustion is of little use when the mistakes begin to pile up.

Who pays the price? The family, of course, and all for the belief that no time off is allowed. I know it's hard, because we come to the profession because of a calling, and we yearn to serve. However, recharging in a day or two off on a regular schedule will go a long way for your own well-being and the quality of service you deliver to your families.

In conjunction with this, it's okay to trust your teammates. Yes, one of them in your past may have made a mistake. Get ready for the truth here... so have you. We all have. If you want to prevent a replay of the same mistake in the future, the best solution is not to be present for every second of every day. No. The best solution is to write it all down, conduct a proper handoff to your colleague (who very likely feels the same calling as you, and probably carries the same passion for service as you), and make certain the family and your colleague know you have complete confidence in the service going smoothly without you present. Now answer me honestly... is there any greater show of confidence in your firm and your team than letting them serve in your place?

Expanding on this concept further, it's okay to take a vacation. Unplug physically, mentally and emotionally. Leave. Leave for several days. Go home and serve YOUR OWN FAMILY...and/or YOURSELF.



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Relax, enjoy some time without the looming constancy of a potential death call and subsequent midnight removal. Breathe easily, see some sights, and be free of emails. In these moments, you'll realize one of the many reasons you serve families with everything in your being: it's because you want someone to someday serve your family in the same way. So refocus yourself by stepping away and taking stock of what really matters in your life...and, if I may be so bold, leave the country and don't respond to anything while you're gone. It's great therapy.

To continue on that note, it's okay to turn off your phone. We live in a digital age where our smart phones literally have the capability to manage our entire firm at the touch of a button. Answering service calls can be recorded and scripted out, every manner of investigation can be performed into the goings on from a distance, and all that does is keep work right in front of your face. ALL THE TIME.

I don't think I would be able to live like that, so I learned it is perfectly okay to turn off my phone. It's okay for you, too. Trust me, it will do you good.

Now, let me clarify a few things. When I turn off my phone, it's not for enormous periods of time. Generally only a few hours at most, mostly in the evening (because I don't work for a funeral home anymore). I also have implicit trust in my team. If a client cannot get me personally, they call the office or leave a message. Either way, they are taken care of.

When I vacation with my family, we do leave the country...preferably on a cruise ship. The phone doesn't work there, and that's one of the reasons we take cruises. The five of us reconnect by not having access to social media or email demands or phone calls that require an answer. It's a wonderful time.

Lastly, and likely the most serious thing I'll ever say in any article, I would like to point out it's okay to seek professional help...and I want to reassure you on that point by restating it clearly. It is perfectly acceptable to seek professional guidance. There is nothing wrong with having a sounding board, a person to vent to, a friend to lean on or a therapist to help you walk through difficulty.

## Dylan's Directives

### It's okay..... (Cont.)

Funeral directors see serious things. Heavy things. We serve everyone, regardless of the manner of death, tolerance, belief system or any other such qualifier. And it's no joke, we carry a burden.

People talk all the time about how it "takes a special person to do what you do," and they're not wrong. But that doesn't make us superhuman... like everyone else, we feel and we hurt and we need relationships to carry us through things. Otherwise, that dangerous apathy I mentioned earlier grows into a cold and cynical approach to families -- and to life. And then we've hurt the very people we originally intended to help.

Burnout is real, my friends. I've felt it, and I know you have, too. As I said, I am not medically certified to provide any certifiable advice in this arena... but I can tell you, if you'll take a moment and realize it's okay to have

time for yourself, to have time away from the office, to have time away from your phone, to trust your team, then you will be able to recharge and return with better focus and an even stronger drive to serve.



#### About the author:

Dylan Stopher is a licensed funeral director and embalmer in the states of Texas and Louisiana, and currently serves with Wilbert Vaults of Houston, LLC. He is an active member of the SETFDA and the TFDA, and a regular contributor to both the Texas Director Magazine and the Millennial Director blog.



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