

Eulogy

*We cannot, after all, judge a biography
by the number of pages in it;
we must judge by the richness of the contents.
Sometimes the 'unfinished' are among the most beautiful symphonies.*

Victor Frankel

Overview

What would you want said at your own death, at your own funeral? How would you want to be eulogized? A *eulogy* is a statement of praise, a laudable series of comments, a message of praise honoring, generally speaking, some greatness--no matter how humble--in another person. Eulogies are most common at funerals. A eulogy is different from an obituary. An *obituary* is a death notification that appears in a newspaper or other media as a notification of someone's death to the community. This exercise will give you an opportunity to begin assessing what it is you want to do with the rest of your life. It will also allow you to reflect upon what you have done in your life that pleases you. This exercise is a powerful opportunity to re-view your life today and make changes.

Directions and Debriefing

Write your own eulogy. It's too easy to write your eulogy as though you might die tomorrow. Write your eulogy from the vantage point of your wishes, hopes, dreams, and accomplishments. In other words, write your eulogy as the *fully actualized self* you want to be and are becoming. This task requires patience, honesty, fantasy, hope, and promise.

This exercise will allow you to examine your mortality as well as to look upon your life to date. The chance to look back on your life is invaluable for new growth and appreciation of what you have achieved and overcome so far. When you construct the story of your life you cannot fail to examine the self--from past, present, and future. If you find incongruities in your life as a result of this exercise, you might benefit from examining them more closely. Use of a creative journal might prove most helpful.

During class discussion, without mentioning names, read some eulogies aloud. Consider the following questions: (1) How did it feel to do this exercise? (2) Did you make any discoveries about yourself? (3) Did you find any incongruities in your life that needs further examination? (4) How does it feel to read your own eulogy or have it read to the class? (5) What have you done in your life that you are proud of? Not so proud of? (6) How might you enrich your life and live more fully? Attach more pages as needed in the workbook. (7) As a possible follow-up exercise, write another obituary at the end of your course. Compare and contrast how your values and other contents might have changed.

Notes: _____

