



## INVENTORY ON RITUAL PROFILE FOR FUNERALS

The questionnaire is designed to help you determine your own ritual strategy. The inventory is useful in determining ritual profile and strategy in the case of a funeral for a loved one. *Notes on ritual profile and strategy* are in Chapter 2. *The Key to the inventory on ritual profile for funerals* is located in Chapter 5.

How well did you know your family member or friend and the kind of funeral she or he would have wanted? Once you are relatively clear about her or his ritual profile it will be easier to determine the best strategy for creating funeral rituals to honour her or his life.

**Part I** Circle the icon next to the statements that best fit your family member or friend and bar those that do not apply.

- ★ S/he was an active member of a religious institution.
- S/he was an inactive member of a religious institution.
- S/he was a member of an organization with humanist or philosophical views.
- ◆ S/he was attracted to groups that value holistic or esoteric practices.
- ★ S/he attended religious worship services at least once a month.
- S/he lived by her/his own ethical code that was based on reason and humanistic values.
- S/he attended religious worship services about once or twice a year.
- ◆ S/he believed in some sort of rebirth (reincarnation, metempsychosis or transmigration) and/or had other esoteric ideas about life and death.
- S/he would have chosen to have her/his funeral almost anywhere, except in a religious setting.
- ◆ S/he celebrated nature, was sensitive to the colours of the seasons and marvelled at the cosmos.
- ★ S/he would want her/his funeral held in a religious setting with a religious leader.
- S/he would have wanted her/his funeral ceremony in a religious setting but, if possible, without a priest/pastor/rabbi/imam or other religious leader.
- In her/his view, Epicurus got it right: 'When death is there, we are not; when we are there, death is not.'
- ◆ S/he would have wanted a simple funeral reception in a natural setting, far from artificial structures.

- ★ S/he was comforted knowing s/he would go to heaven and see her/his lost loved ones when s/he died.
- S/he was not religious, but s/he was practical. S/he would not have objected to having the funeral in a religious setting or at a funeral parlour simply because it would be easier to organize.
- ◆ A funeral ceremony presided by a shaman would have suited her/him quite well.
- It comforted her/him to know that s/he would not disappear when s/he died.
- In her/his view, no god or any supernatural beings are necessary for living and dying well.
- ★ S/he would have wanted sacred texts read and religious rites performed at her/his funeral.
- S/he would have wanted her/his ceremony to be performed by a humanist celebrant or at least someone who shares her/his humanist values.

**Part II** Circle the icons next to the statements that best describe your family member or friend and bar those that do not apply.

- ❖ Religious holidays were important to her/him because they preserved her/his cultural and social traditions.
- ▲ S/he advocated progressive values and ideals regarding gender and social roles.
- ❖ Official documents (religious or civil) confirming her/his wedding/funeral/child's life events were important to her/him.
- ▲ A ceremony celebrating her/his wedding/funeral/child's life events would have to correspond to her/his values rather than to official social or civil standards.
- ▲ S/he belonged to one, or several groups composed of people who come together around projects, leisure activities or ideals.
- ❖ S/he was most comfortable with time-tested values, roles and rituals.
- ▲ S/he liked the idea of having a close friend or non-official person preside over a life event ceremony, such as her/his wedding, funeral or a naming ceremony for her/his child.

- ♣ Only a spiritual or civil leader could validate the ceremony of a life event, such as a wedding, a funeral or a ceremony for her/his child.
- ▲ S/he could have imagined holding her/his wedding/funeral/child's ceremony in a unique setting such as a museum, garden, restaurant, library or on a farm.

**Part III** Please note below the number of times you have ticked each of these six symbols and, if you wish, your observations.

Observations:

- ★ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ \_\_\_\_\_
- ▲ \_\_\_\_\_
- ♣ \_\_\_\_\_

 KEY TO THE INVENTORY ON RITUAL PROFILE FOR FUNERALS

These symbols ★ ● ■ ◆ are indicators of *how you perceive your family member or friend's ritual profile*.

- ★ (5)\* **Institutional**. If this symbol ★ represents the majority of your answers, you see your family member or friend as having had a religious practice that was regular and probably satisfying. A religious funeral with a religious leader in a traditional setting would be coherent with his/her values and view of life. You probably also ticked this symbol ♣ a few times.
- (5) **Distanced**. A majority of this symbol ● indicates that you perceive your family member or friend's religious practice as occasional. Her/his ties with a religious institution may have been stretched. A funeral held in a religious setting may or may not be the best way to honour her/his life. A personalized religious ceremony is indicated if you also ticked the symbol ★ and see a clear majority of this symbol ♣. A majority of this symbol ▲ points to the need for a personalized non-religious funeral.
- (6) **Secular or Humanist**. A majority of this symbol ■ indicates that you identify your family member or friend as a 'none' (e.g. atheist, agnostic). S/he may have been indifferent or even against religion. Perhaps s/he was a member of a humanist or secular group. A custom or humanist funeral ceremony would most likely best honour her/his life. You may have ticked a majority of either of these symbols ▲ ♣.
- ◆ (5) **Alternative**. If this symbol ◆ was ticked at least three times it means you see your family member or friend as having been most comfortable with a holistic approach to life. S/he may have been a member of an esoteric group. A bespoke funeral ceremony would best honour her/his life. If you ticked a majority of this symbol ▲ consider an alternative to a funeral presided by a traditional authority figure.

These two symbols ▲ ♣ help you fine-tune how you see your family member or friend's ritual practice.

- ♣ (4) **Traditional**. You see cultural and social activities linked to one or more traditions as having been important to your family member or friend's sense of identity. Strong ties with tradition do not necessarily mean one should organize a religious funeral. However, it does mean that it is important to include some traditional phrases or gestures in the funeral. It is likely that you ticked a number of these symbols ★ ● ■; a majority of this symbol ◆ is improbable.
- ▲ (5) **Modern**. You perceive the personal journey and values of your family member or friend as being of utmost importance. S/he may have belonged to groups with little official status and avoided institutional settings. A funeral with crafted rituals would probably best reflect her/his life, values and interests. While you may have ticked a number of these symbols ● ■ ◆, it is unlikely you have a majority of this symbol ★.

\* Indicates the maximum number of times this symbol appears in the inventory.