
From Humanist funerals

And when the stream that overflows has passed,
A consciousness remains upon the silent shore of memory;
Images and precious thoughts that shall not be
And cannot be destroyed.

William Wordsworth

I fall asleep in the full and certain hope
That my slumber shall not be broken;
And that, though I be all-forgetting,
Yet shall I not be all-forgotten,
But continue that life in the thoughts and deeds
Of those I loved.

Samuel Butler

For thou shalt sleep and never wake again,
And, quitting life, shall quit all living pain;
But we, thy friends, shall all these sorrows find
Which in forgetful death thou leav'st behind.

Translated from Lucretius

We came into the world with nothing and
we were not afraid. We leave this world
with nothing; let us go without fear.



SUFFOLK HUMANIST CEREMONIES
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Tel: 01473 658828
ceremonies@suffolkhumanists.org.uk
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Suffolk Humanist Funerals

Celebrating the lives of those who've lived without religion

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Funerals with feeling, without religion

There have been rite of passage ceremonies throughout history, since long before the major world religions were established. People have always marked the important events in their lives, including the death of a loved one, according to their culture in a wide variety of ways. Today many people have discovered that funerals don't have to be religious. If someone has lived without religion, either because they chose not to or because it was never very important to them, why mark his or her death with a religious ceremony?

A funeral should be a celebration of a life. It should reflect the personality and beliefs of the person who's died. It should be relevant and dignified, and offer comfort and consolation to the bereaved.

Humanist funerals are acceptable to almost everyone, whatever their beliefs. There's usually an opportunity for religious mourners to say a private prayer. You can choose appropriate music and readings. Family members or friends may wish to speak. The Humanist Celebrant will meet those close to the person who's died to learn as much as possible about him or her, so he or she can prepare a personal, unique ceremony.

Suffolk Humanist Ceremonies

"What motives can we have for doing good?" asked a Humanist on BBC Radio Suffolk's Thought for the Day. "To please ourselves and others; to live happily and peacefully; to gain the affection and esteem of our fellows; to avoid the remorse felt by those who've done harm. It's natural to want all these things. We've no need of any external authority, only our own consciences."

We care about right and wrong but we're not judgemental. We're a friendly bunch who are interested in people and what makes them tick, and we can offer calm, competent help and guidance at a difficult time. We've been conducting secular ceremonies in Suffolk and N E Essex since 1991 and have built up a strong reputation for good work with local funeral directors.

Humanists are atheists or agnostics. We won't include any religious elements in our ceremonies with the exception of some music, such as religious orchestral works, that the deceased might have enjoyed. This means that there are no hymns, prayers or religious readings, and no references to an afterlife. We think that what survives is our memory, our influence, and (if we have children) our genes. If you want a funeral that's not traditionally religious but has religious elements, the funeral director should be able to refer you to a minister who'd be willing to help. We can help you plan a personal, dignified funeral ceremony with understanding and sensitivity, without religion.

What people have said about our work...

These are typical of the unsolicited testimonials we receive.

"Many people have said to me what a sincere, personal tribute to her it was. You have made some think very seriously about the day they will be faced with the same situation of saying goodbye to a loved one."

"Everybody I spoke to afterwards has said what a lovely service it was and that you delivered it wonderfully well, I must say I agree wholeheartedly."

"I have had a new sad but salutary experience, my first humanist funeral service. I was I admit faintly apprehensive. I was wrong. As it happened, the address was splendid, humane and moving."

"That's just what I want when I go."

