

# TRANSITIONS

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## it's holiday time.... and I'm not jolly...



by Sherry L. Nau EdD, LCSW



The holidays are approaching with lights, songs, and pictures of smiling faces. Despite how hard you try, you just aren't "feeling it." Losing a loved one leaves us feeling sad and often alone. It is overwhelming to imagine going through the holiday season without your special person. At the same time, family and friends are able to celebrate, and it might be nice to join them. Here are a few tips that might give you a reprieve from the powerful feelings of loss and create an opportunity to enter the world draped in festivities.

### **There are no rules – You don't need to do anything.... Really!**

You can say no. You don't need to decorate. You can find a great book and read instead of going to the party. It can feel exhausting to be with people, so take care of yourself. Taking care of yourself one day allows you to go out on another day... it's all about balance.

### **Arrive late and leave early.**

This is an old trick that still works. This approach takes some of the pressure off of long, drawn-out events. You don't need to listen to one more story of someone's gift-searching success.

### **It's okay to lie!**

Yup... you are allowed to say you have another event to attend even when you don't. You can give any excuse you want. This technique has a bit of a "reverse psychology" effect. Once you know you can lie, you feel free to go places and make plans, because you now have a way out if your mood changes.

### **Try to find someone with whom to share your feelings.**

At least find someone who will distract you from your feelings... at times any reprieve can help. Seriously, staying alone too much can increase sadness and make each day feel like 48 hours.

### **Prepare for the inevitable... People trying to help.**

People try to *help* with unhelpful statements such as "I know what you are going through," or "They're in a better place." No one knows your feelings. When you are faced with these useless clichés, respond with a polite "thank you" and immediately excuse yourself to use the restroom (remember you can lie).

### **This might be a great opportunity to establish a new ritual.**

Honestly.... Did you ever like your Aunt's sweet potatoes?

### **Finally, don't be surprised if you find yourself laughing**

If, for a couple of seconds you are laughing at something ridiculous or cute – don't feel guilty. We are humans with a bundle of emotions that are not rational. The approaching holidays will be challenging. Be gentle with yourself and allow the vast ocean of feelings and reactions to be part of your healing journey. So, take your time and make this a day-at-a-time ride through a tricky couple of months.



**Bartolomeo & Perotto**  
FUNERAL HOME, INC.

*A Life Remembered, Lives On.*

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# helping your grief by helping others



The pilgrimage through grief takes many twists and turns and takes you to places you never imagined you'd be. Finding your way through the void of where someone once was and the haze of emotions can be disorienting and confusing. Grief takes time to reconcile and no two have the same journey.

But it's your grief and like it or not, it is connected to someone that means a lot to you. How can you counteract it? There are plenty of ways. Consider one that veers the center of attention away from your grief to a meaningful purpose... volunteering your time. This simple concept can provide enormous relief.

Volunteering can shift your focus and even before you are aware it's happened, your perspective has done an about-face. Paying it forward is an incredible coping mechanism that can help to lessen your feelings of sadness, anxiety, or loneliness. You may be surprised to find how much changing your mindset to helping others can be healing to you. Volunteering can help fill a void and nourish your soul.

Bartolomeo & Perotto Funeral Home is pleased to introduce you to a worthwhile volunteer program.

## The Generation Two (G2) Volunteer Program

If you like the idea of providing meaningful relationships with children to help them learn and grow, the Intergenerational G2 volunteer program might be right for you.

The mission of this program is to strengthen young children's social and emotional development. This happens by using child-directed play, which empowers empathic, trusted adults to understand them. Child-directed play allows children to make the rules, and change the rules.

They lead during play sessions. Just think, by using your positive energies you can make a difference to a whole new generation!

## Volunteers that are already in the program have found it to be two-fold, where as much as you give, you get back!

- 90% of G2 volunteers return to participate again every year
- Volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds: retirees, college students, lawyers, police officers, PTA members, and more

## What do volunteers get from experience?

- **JOY** – working with spirited children who need you!
- **PURPOSE** – you are making a difference!
- **PLAYFULNESS** – the simple delight in play is remarkably meaningful!

## So you like the idea, but you still have reservations and many questions. See the outline below of what you can expect as a G2 volunteer:

- No previous experience is needed, you will be trained before you start
- 2hr commitment per week
- 20 – 25 sessions per year from October – May
- Predictable schedule and an assigned site (schools or community sites)
- Brief journaling about sessions
- Debriefing sessions

## Want to learn more?

Explore website – Register your interest:  
[www.g2rochester.org/volunteer/](http://www.g2rochester.org/volunteer/)

Email:  
[oni.heard@g2rochester](mailto:oni.heard@g2rochester)

Call:  
(918) 688-7100



*Take a step to healing by volunteering!*



by Andrea Ruggieri

# revelations of a funeral home employee

I was struggling to find a job after a layoff. After many months of job searching, of all places I received a call from a funeral home! First thoughts... I'll get back to you! Do I want to work with weird funeral directors (because, of course... they ARE weird, why else would they be a funeral director?) Is it going to be creepy? Despite my discomfort, my lack of employment coerced me to think, Is it possible I could make a go of this?

I'd like to share my perspective first hand, as someone who works at a funeral home, and is not a funeral director. I think this is a very important perspective, as I too carried the negative funeral home *stigma* in my back pocket. I formerly worked in a long-term care organization taking care, in my own way (marketing), of the people who lived in assisted or long-term care communities. It brought me such gratification to know that, regardless of my professional part in this organization, I was helping someone.

When I began working at the funeral home I admittedly wrestled with the idea of sticking around, feeling out of sorts, thinking Is this where I should be? In fact, I spent the first month shouting this question over and over in my mind.

I'm not sure when it happened, or how it happened, but one day I was enlightened... I'm still working in an organization that helps people. I don't know why that simple fact eluded me in the beginning. I suddenly reveled in the fact that there was a place that you were taken care of as you transitioned from life to death, and more importantly, families and friends were being cared for too. My work was directed to a new form of discretion, a very important form of care. People who work in funeral care are coming to the aid of people when they are in the most need of support and comfort.

As I got to know the funeral directors that I work with, I realized with each day, how crucial their job is. I don't think you just *want to be a funeral director*. It is a calling, a life commitment, comparable to being a doctor or clergy who are on call, at all hours. These guys and gals drop everything and often leave their own families in order to take care of someone else's family.

So next time you have feelings of unease when you think of funeral homes, remember these are havens where family and friends surround and comfort you. The funeral directors that work in them are incredible and real people, and are there to guide and help you through one of life's most difficult times with great care.

It's been six years since I began my journey in funeral care. I recently came across this article I wrote back in 2018 and thought it was worth sharing again. Cheers to the job I thought would be temporary!... I guess I like it here.



**Bartolomeo & Perotto  
Funeral Home**





# checklist for the courageous & organized

For all you planners out there, and even to those who aren't... here are some things to think about:

## Funeral Planning Checklist

### Disposition

- Burial
- Cremation
- Green burial (eco-friendly)
- Anatomical donation (ending in cremation)

### Type of Services:

- Visitation
  - Public \_\_\_\_
  - Private \_\_\_\_
- Celebration of life service personalized to reflect your life
- Funeral service led by a Celebrant at funeral home or somewhere else
- Traditional funeral service at church
  - Body present \_\_\_\_ or not \_\_\_\_
  - Casket open \_\_\_\_ or closed \_\_\_\_
- Graveside service
- Memorial service (occurs after burial or cremation)
- Green or eco-friendly funeral service
- Scattering ceremony
- Family gathering
- Reception or fellowship meal

### Personalizing Life Celebration:

- A location that reflects your interests: a park, a golf course, a lake, garden, beach, event center, theater, art gallery, church, or stadium. Keep in mind a backup location for outdoor events in case of bad weather
- A speaker, such as a clergy member or funeral celebrant
- Pallbearers, eulogist, assistants, and attendees
- Catered or potluck meal
- Prayers, poems, or other readings
- Songs, hymns, live or recorded
- Memorial video set to special music
- Memorial, monument, or virtual memorials, such as a grave marker, headstone, video tribute, or online memorial website
- Memorial contributions to charity organizations

### Final Resting Place:

- Burial in a private cemetery, veterans cemetery, or on private property
- Scattering of cremains at sea, in a park, on private property, or in a memorial garden (with permission of local municipality)
- Keepsake jewelry, such as fingerprint or cremation jewelry
- Organ donation or anatomical donation

### Ways to pay for Funeral Services:

- If you prefer to prearrange your funeral, a funeral trust can be established
- At the time of need, family members may wish to help pay



for portions of the funeral or to contribute in different ways, such as bringing food or sending flowers. Sites like [www.youcaring.com](http://www.youcaring.com) or [www.gofundme.com](http://www.gofundme.com) can assist with crowdfunding to help pay for services if money is tight

- Life insurance can be assigned toward funeral costs

### Solidify your final wishes:

*Final wishes are guidelines. Keep in mind that funerals are really for your surviving loved ones.*

- Schedule a funeral pre-planning meeting with a funeral home to ensure your wishes will be followed
- Complete a funeral planning guide and share copies
- Verbally share your final wishes with those likely to be arranging your funeral, but have plans in writing as well
- Record your wishes with a video/audio recording

### Make sure your final documents are accessible:

- Collect important documents and notify your next of kin about where they are stored
- Store a copy of your will, marriage and birth certificates, veteran's discharge papers, military service records, life and health insurance policies, social security information, and other estate planning documents where your next of kin can easily find them
- Write your own obituary or gather important biographical information for your obituary
- Keep a copy of your funeral plans on file with a funeral provider, and notify at least two other emergency contacts of where your funeral will be held and where your final wishes are recorded

If you have further questions, please give us a call.  
We are happy to help. **585-720-6000**

These guidelines are based on outline created by funeralbasics:  
[www.funeralbasics.org](http://www.funeralbasics.org)