



QUESTIONNAIRE ON MY RITUAL PROFILE

Notes on ritual profile and strategy are in Chapter 2. The *Key to the questionnaire on my ritual profile* is located in Chapter 5.

This questionnaire is designed to help you define your own ritual profile and determine the best strategy for ritualizing different life events, from birthdays to weddings to funerals.

Part I Circle the icons next to the statements that best describe you and bar those that do not apply.

- ★ I am an active member of a religious institution.
- I am an inactive member of a religious institution.
- I am a member of an organization with humanist or philosophical views.
- ◆ I am attracted to groups that value holistic or esoteric practices.
- ★ I attend religious worship services at least once a month.
- I live by my own ethic which is based on reason and humanistic values.
- I attend religious worship services about once or twice a year.
- ◆ Life is a natural process. My life event ceremony should celebrate the mystery, joy and uncertainty of life.
- My wedding/funeral/child's life event ceremony could take place almost anywhere, except in a religious setting.
- ◆ I celebrate nature, am sensitive to the colours of the seasons and marvel at the cosmos.
- ★ I imagine my wedding/funeral/child's ceremony in a religious setting.
- I would love to have my wedding/funeral/child's life event ceremony in a religious setting but, if possible, without a priest/pastor/rabbi/imam or other religious leader.
- As human beings, we alone are responsible for solving the environmental problems we have created. No belief in a god or a supernatural force can help us.
- ◆ It is important for me to have a simple funeral and to be buried or have my ashes spread in a natural setting, far from artificial structures.
- ★ I cannot imagine my wedding/funeral/child's ceremony without a priest/pastor/rabbi/imam or other religious leader.

- My wedding/child's life event ceremony may be held in a secular setting but I cannot imagine my funeral without religious rites.
- ◆ A life event ceremony with a shaman would suit me quite well.
- My family and friends would be disappointed if I did not organize a religious ceremony for my wedding/funeral/child's life event ceremony.
- I do not need god or any supernatural being in order to live and die well.
- ★ It is important to have sacred texts and religious rites performed at my wedding/my funeral/our children's life event ceremonies.
- I want my wedding/funeral/child's ceremony to be presided by a humanist celebrant or at least someone who shares my humanist values

Part II Circle the icons next to the statements that best describe you and bar those that do not apply.

- ❖ Religious holidays are important to me because they preserve my cultural and social traditions.
- ▲ I advocate progressive values and ideals regarding gender and social roles.
- ❖ Official documents (religious or civil) confirming my wedding/funeral/child's life events are important to me.
- ▲ A ceremony that celebrates my wedding/funeral/child's life events must correspond to our values rather than to official social or civil standards.
- ▲ I belong to one or several groups composed of people who come together around projects, leisure activities or ideals.
- ❖ I am most comfortable with time-tested values, roles and rituals.
- ▲ I like the idea of having a close friend or non-official person preside over a life event ceremony, such as my wedding, funeral or a naming ceremony for my child.
- ❖ Only a spiritual or civil leader can validate the ceremony of a life event, such as our wedding, a funeral or a ceremony for our child.
- ▲ I can imagine holding my 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 QUESTIONNAIRE ON MY RITUAL PROFILE

What is your ritual profile? Being clear about your ritual profile helps you determine your ritual strategy. A coherent strategy is essential for designing, creating and implementing appropriate rituals that celebrate your life events.

These symbols ★ ● ■ ◆ are indicators of your ritual profile.

- ★ (5)* **Institutional.** If this symbol ★ represents the majority of your answers, your religious practice is regular and satisfying. A religious ceremony would be important for you and consistent with your values and view of life. You probably also ticked this symbol ♣.
- (5) **Distanced.** A majority of this symbol ● indicates occasional religious practice; your ties with a religious institution may be stretched. A ceremony held with a religious leader in a traditional setting may or may not satisfy your need to mark a life event. You may also have ticked the symbol ★. A clear majority of this symbol ♣ indicates a personalized religious ceremony would be appropriate; a majority of this symbol ▲ points to a personalized ceremony outside a religious context.
- (6) **Secular or Humanist.** A majority of this symbol ■ indicates that you identify yourself as a 'none' (e.g. atheist, agnostic). You may be indifferent or even against religion. You may be a member of a humanist or secular group. Tailor-made or humanist ceremonies would best serve your need to mark a life event. You may have a majority of either of these symbols ▲ ♣.
- ◆ (5) **Alternative.** If you ticked this symbol ◆ at least three times it means you find yourself most comfortable with a holistic approach to life and may be a member of an esoteric group. A bespoke ceremony would suit you well. If you ticked a majority of this symbol ▲ consider an alternative to a ceremony presided by a traditional authority figure.

These two symbols ▲ ♣ about practice help you fine-tune your ritual profile.

- ♣ (4) **Traditional.** Cultural and social activities linked to one or more traditions are important to your sense of identity. Yet, feeling strong ties with a tradition neither precludes nor indicates a desire for custom ritual or ceremony. However, when a ritualizing an occasion, you may need to hear some traditional phrases or to perform certain traditional gestures. It is likely that you ticked a number of these symbols ★ ● ■, but improbable that you have a majority of this symbol ◆.
- ▲ (5) **Modern.** You feel comfortable with people who respect your personal journey and who encourage you in the development of your own values. You may belong to groups with little official status and avoid institutional settings. It is important that you feel free to craft the kind of rituals that are right for you. While you may have ticked a number of these symbols ● ■ ◆, it is unlikely that you have a majority of this symbol ★.

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



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.





CHECKLIST FOR A FUNERAL CEREMONY

PLANNING

First things first



<input type="checkbox"/> We are clear about our objectives for this ceremony
We have identified:
<input type="checkbox"/> About whom? The deceased , her/his life and relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> By whom? Close family and friends are responsible for crafting/presiding/organizing
<input type="checkbox"/> With whom? Who participates/is invited
<input type="checkbox"/> What? Funeral
<input type="checkbox"/> When? Determine date/time/duration
<input type="checkbox"/> Where? A suitable place/setting/venue
COMMUNICATION AND CONTINGENCY
<input type="checkbox"/> We have contacted or invited all ('With whom?') noted above
<input type="checkbox"/> Participants have approved their roles
<input type="checkbox"/> If there is disagreement about how to proceed we know who makes the final decision
<input type="checkbox"/> We have contingency plans for When, Where, What



PAUSE

CREATING

Making sense (craftspeople)



We, the craftspeople, are agreed on:
<input type="checkbox"/> Why and how we ritualize our loved one's passing
<input type="checkbox"/> Deceased is at the HEART ♥ of this ceremony
<input type="checkbox"/> The deceased's key values, ideals or philosophy of life (in the case of a baby, the parents' values)
<input type="checkbox"/> Decisions confirmed (Who, What, When, Where)
<input type="checkbox"/> If there is disagreement, we have discussed the issues
CONTENT
<input type="checkbox"/> Words ♥ Homage + tributes
<input type="checkbox"/> Music
<input type="checkbox"/> Symbols/objects
<input type="checkbox"/> Gesture of separation
FORMAT
<input type="checkbox"/> Entry into ceremonial space
<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart ♥ Homage + tributes
<input type="checkbox"/> Closing/exit ceremonial space > transition
<input type="checkbox"/> Social gathering
<input type="checkbox"/> Choreography/scenography
<input type="checkbox"/> Reminder list
<input type="checkbox"/> We have checked for flow and choreography



PAUSE



REALIZING

Expressing meaning

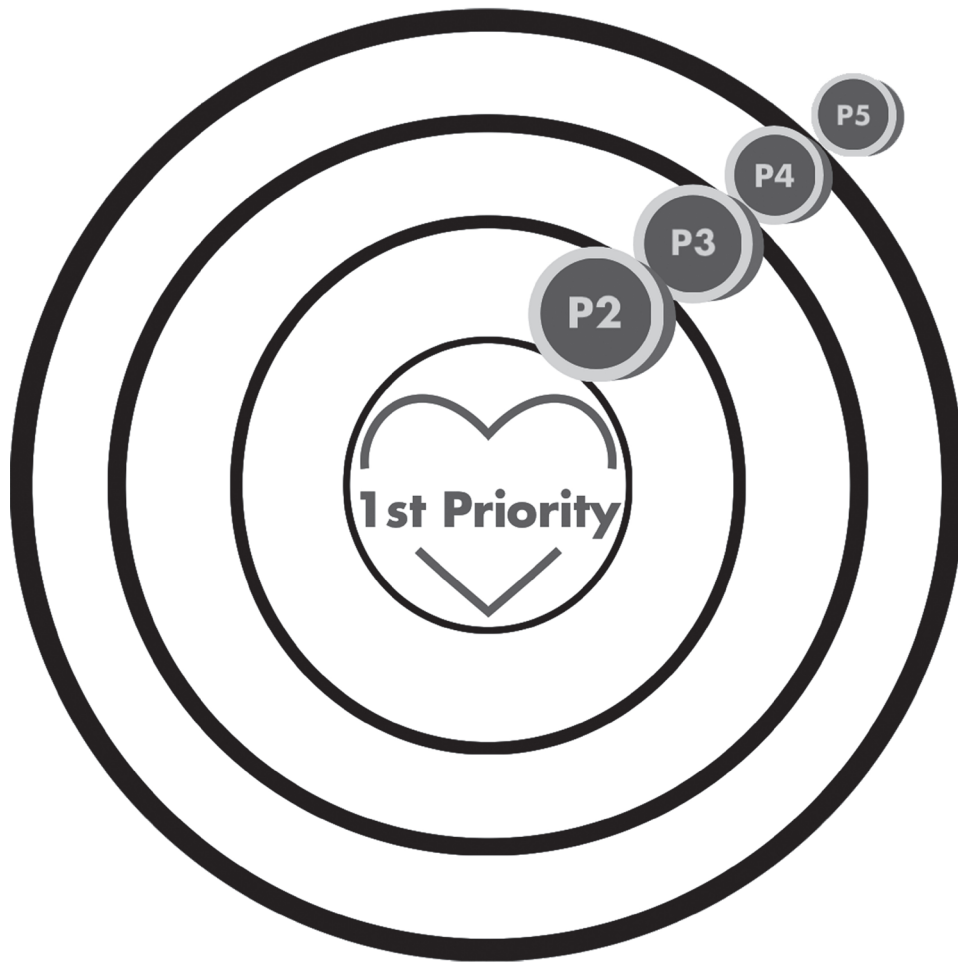
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare setting (presider/participants)
<input type="checkbox"/> Open ceremony (presider)
<input type="checkbox"/> Ritualizing (Content + Format) ♦ Conduct (presider) ♦ Participate (all)
<input type="checkbox"/> Close ceremony (presider)
<input type="checkbox"/> Open social part of event (presider)
<input type="checkbox"/> Social gathering (all)
<input type="checkbox"/> Close event and clean up (organizer)
DURATION OF EVENT (suggested)
Ceremony (20–50 minutes)
Social gathering (1–3 hours)

This checklist is not intended to be comprehensive. Modifications to fit specific situations are encouraged.

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PRIORITIZING

This tool helps visualize what is most important to you, whether that be the choice of a venue or a presider. You can use it alone or with the team of craftspeople. Prioritizing helps you make decisions about who to invite, where to hold the ceremony and who participates. It takes about 20 minutes.




COHERENCE TEST

Use the Coherence grid (Table 6.2) to explore how the core values are expressed concretely in each aspect of the funeral.

Pencil your keywords in the top row and compare them with the different aspects of your preparation for the ceremony. Do the elements express the values of the deceased? Have you covered a number of the different facets of her or his life? Is the content of the ceremony balanced?

TABLE 6.2. COHERENCE GRID

	Deceased's values (keywords across)				
Death announcement					
Date/time of ceremony					
Ceremony/reception venue					
Choice of presider, participants					
Homage*					
Tributes* 1, 2, etc.					
Gestures*					
Music*					
Materials used (<i>tables, chairs, serving, decorations</i>)					
Disposal of body					
Final resting place					
Cost					
<i>Other</i>					

* see appropriate tool