

## **October 30 Is Create a Great Funeral Day - Don't Fear The Reaper By (Name)**

On Halloween, October 31, we celebrate ghosts and scary things. The spirits of the deceased are remembered on November 1 and 2, All Saints Day and All Souls Day, respectively, also known as the Day of the Dead celebration.

Yet, you might not know this October 30 is the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Create a Great Funeral Day. Before Halloween ghosts and Day of the Dead spirits can go a-haunting, there's usually a funeral or memorial service – the party no one wants to plan.

Confronting the idea of our own death causes uncomfortable thoughts. Rather than facing the inevitability of our dying, our culture denies death. Yet at the same time, we have this enormous celebration of scary and death-related things at Halloween.

The idea behind Create a Great Funeral Day is to consider how you would like to be remembered. By letting loved ones know how you'd like your life celebrated, the survivors' experience can be so much easier.

Create a Great Funeral Day began in 2000, started by Stephanie West Allen. She saw her husband struggling to pull together a meaningful funeral for his mother, who had left no directions before she died. Observing his grief, Allen felt that knowing what her mother-in-law might have wanted would have eased the pain of memorial service preparations.

Why do people hesitate to discuss funeral planning, let alone do anything concrete about it in advance?

Social psychologists cite the Terror Management Theory, that all human behavior is ultimately motivated by the fear of death. Death creates anxiety, not only because it can strike at unexpected and random moments, but because its nature is essentially unknowable.

The awareness of our own eventual death, called "mortality salience," affects our decision-making in the face of this terror. Many people decide to avoid the topic.

Create a Great Funeral Day prompts us to be mindful of our mortality. This self-awareness enables us to plan reflectively in advance, so we don't leave our families to react, disorganized and stressed, after our death.

Blue Öyster Cult's 1976 hit song, "Don't Fear the Reaper," is a perennial favorite on classic rock stations. Its intended message is that love transcends the actual physical existence of the partners. The Reaper refers to the Grim Reaper, a traditional personification of death in European folklore.

A fear of funeral planning equates to fear of death. Those who hold fear in one area of their lives often have fear in other areas. It won't kill you to move away from the fear of funerals.

Act with love, plan ahead, and talk about what you might want. Your courage will help your family reduce stress at a time of grief, save money, and create a meaningful, memorable "good goodbye."

On Create a Great Funeral Day, don't fear the Reaper.

(Put a line or two about you here – example below)

*Gail Rubin is a Certified Celebrant and author of [A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don't Plan to Die](http://thefamilyplot.wordpress.com/category/30-day-challenge/). Follow her "30 Funerals in 30 Days Challenge" at <http://thefamilyplot.wordpress.com/category/30-day-challenge/>*