

## **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, also known as *Dia de los Muertos*, the Day of the Dead celebration.

A lesser-known holiday on October 30 is Create a Great Funeral Day. Before ghosts and spirits 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 face the inevitability of dying, our culture tends to deny death. Yet we also have this enormous death-related celebration at Halloween.

Create a Great Funeral Day offers time to consider how you would like to be remembered and let loved ones know how you'd like your life celebrated. With advanced planning and discussion, 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 create a meaningful funeral for his mother, who left no directions before she died. Observing his grief, Allen felt if she knew what her mother-in-law might have wanted, it would have eased her husband's pain.

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 human behavior is ultimately motivated by fear of death. Thoughts of death create anxiety. The awareness of our own eventual death, called "mortality salience," affects our decision-making in the face of this terror. Many people simply decide to avoid the topic to reduce their anxiety.

Create a Great Funeral Day prompts us to be mindful of mortality. Calm self-awareness enables us to plan reflectively in advance and engage in conversation. Let's not leave our families to react with stress and disorganization because we were too anxious to discuss death and funeral planning.

Blue Öyster Cult's 1976 hit song, "Don't Fear the Reaper," is a perennial favorite on classic rock stations. Its intended message: 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. Move away from the fear of funerals to embrace love and life, and discuss this inevitable party no one wants to plan.

Your courage will help your family reduce stress at a time of grief, minimize conflicts, 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 yourself here – example below)

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