

When one considers the concepts of an extraordinary and meaningful funeral service, the initial thought might be to provide a service with considerable grandeur. However, one could suggest this ill-conceived notion fails to include the psychologically assuaging elements which truly make the experience meaningful. To compensate for this, a funeral director should utilize active listening skills coupled with an extraordinarily accommodating desire for the personalization of the service.

In regards to the immeasurable significance of active listening skills and personalization of the service, one should consider the following scenario. A tragically, heartbroken elderly lady enters the funeral home and reveals that her husband of 52 years has just passed away four hours ago. The attentive funeral director immediately offers her a warm mug of coffee with biscotti, and a comfortable seat. The lady then begins to reminisce about the pleasant moments shared with her deceased husband, moments that appear to simply be nostalgic rambling. At this time, the lady recalls a particularly romantic date spent hiking on a forest trail on a warm, spring day. The husband had noticed a beautiful patch of wild daffodils growing just off the path. She says that he bent down, after a couple of minutes, and carefully chose the youngest yellow daffodil. She recalls asking why he chose that one in particular, to which he replied it symbolized his love for her was continuously growing stronger and more beautiful with each breath that passed. She then seems to come to the present and begins to discuss funeral plans with the funeral director. This story might seem unremarkable to the funeral director that fails to actively listen, but the lady had just revealed an opportunity to make the service extraordinarily meaningful and personal. The funeral director could personalize the entire service with the theme of daffodils, nature, and the continuous metamorphosis of

love. Of course the options in regards to this theme would be limitless and very easily customized to create a sincerely meaningful experience for the lady. If the funeral director is willing to actively listen, then they would be able to make the bereaved feel truly important and special.