

From First Conversation to Final Farewell

A considered, step-by-step approach to creating a ceremony that matters.

Choosing a celebrant is not only about who speaks on the day. It's about who listens, prepares, and holds the process with care.

Every celebrant works differently.

What follows describes my personal approach to working with families and Funeral Directors to create a meaningful farewell.

Note: Throughout this document, *family* refers to blood relatives or chosen family and/or community;

The Process (Part One)

Conversation, communication & collaboration

1. Initial contact

The process usually begins with a call from the Funeral Director or Arranger to confirm details, timing, and points of contact.

2. Preparing for the family meeting

I contact the family to arrange a face-to-face meeting, ideally in the home. Before we meet, I send optional reflection questions to support memory-sharing and reduce pressure.

3. The family meeting (2–3 hours)

This is the heart of the process. We share stories & memories, explore personality, life journey & legacy, and discuss tone, music, ritual, and participation. I ensure multiple voices are welcomed.

4. Clear next steps

After the meeting, I provide a practical to-do list outlining tasks, responsibilities, and deadlines.

5. Working with the Funeral Director

I maintain ongoing communication to confirm logistics, AV needs, timing, and family wishes.

The Process (Part Two) & Closing

Writing, refining, and holding the day

6. Writing the ceremony

I draft the ceremony using the family's stories and preferences. This may include integrating family-written tributes or writing a full eulogy.

7. Reviewing tributes

I review all contributions to support flow, timing, and clarity, offering gentle guidance if requested.

8. Family review

The full draft is shared with the family for fact-checking, emotional accuracy, and final adjustments.

9. Final preparation

I prepare the final ceremony script, incorporating any feedback from the family. I also create a Run Sheet for the Funeral Director or AV operator, with clear cues for timing, music, and ritual elements, to ensure smooth ceremony flow. If an Order of Service is desired, I provide a rough outline for the designated printer.

10. On the day

I arrive early to confirm cues, coordinate with the Funeral Director and AV operator, support the family, and lead the ceremony with warmth, and care.

This way of working is designed to reduce overwhelm, support grieving families, and ensure the ceremony is meaningful and that it matters.

Karen Brady