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## Gordon-Lennox's "Crafting meaningful funeral rituals: A Practical guide" (book review)

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# Book Reviews

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Gordon-Lennox, J. (2020). *Crafting meaningful funeral rituals: A Practical guide*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 194 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 9781785923890

Written primarily to help guide a secular audience craft a meaningful secular funeral ritual for those mourning, this introductory book provides hands-on guidance on how to honor a deceased loved one. Intent on personalizing a service based on someone's ritual profile through ritual strategy, it was written by a psychotherapist who trains secular celebrants in carrying out secular ritualization. While not religious in nature, some elements could also be adapted to customize an institutional ceremony.

Four separate parts cover mortality, the need for ritual, ceremonial preparation, and one's future relationship with those they are grieving, whether someone understands death from a distanced, secular, humanist, alternative, or religious perspective. Each chapter opens with a short story and recommended ways of approaching a funeral service. Based on the identity of the deceased, strategies form what kind of ceremony to hold as a way to create meaning for both the dead and the living in a way that honors who a person truly was and stood for.

People, place, and participation are the three ritual materials utilized when crafting a secular ritual with planning, creating, and realizing all part of the process. The design should consider context, roles, content, sensemaking, and coherence. Through her varied notes on how to pay homage to a loved one, the author achieves her purpose of providing ritual making tips for amateurs.

Unique to books written on how to mourn or on how to conduct a funeral from a religious perspective, this book contributes to its field of study by offering meaningful methods for memorial services for those with alternative or secular profiles who desire a more modern and less religious approach. Little has been written on this, yet 'nones' continue to increase, while not everyone values traditional ritual practice, which Gordon-Lennox states has primarily been culturally constructed.

This work contains ritual toolboxes, destressing techniques, a ceremony checklist, footnotes, a glossary, recommended resources, a reference list, and an index. It would be a useful addition for a public or academic library.

## Reviewer

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