

Analogy of a Runner

By Melanie Loyd

Recently I had a conversation with a consistently successful director about his day and meeting with cremation families. This was his response:

“It’s hard. Sometimes it’s exhausting. Families come in saying, no-ceremony. In some cases, going the distance with them, they still walk out without ceremony, but choose \$1500 of meaningful jewelry or keepsakes. In the end, I feel like a runner; endorphins, exhaustion and satisfaction.”

My deduction in this is that the effective runner (director) behaves as if he/she is in training all the time. Even on the easy trails, the same skills are applied. The same muscles and methods are used. The trail may have a lessor incline but the application is the same. When confronted with a steeper Challenge more energy is expended, a few zigzags may be necessary but the essential methods are the same. The sure and steady of the tortoise are the characteristics that win, rather than the undisciplined rabbit approach.

Giving a little more consideration, I thought to consult with my marathon runner friend, Ken. After our conversation, he furthered my analogy by saying, “Cremation families should be treated as a 10K race, not a 100-yard dash. If a cremation arrangement takes 30 minutes, it better be because that’s the time the family wants.”

“Occasionally, a runner gets injured. It could be due to a stumble, improper stretching, or going out faster than they have trained. The runner should analyze how the injury occurred and take proper precautions to ensure it doesn’t happen again.” The arranger needs to implement the same strategy; what did I do wrong in this cremation arrangement? Did I forget to discuss the deceased’s interests and hobbies (stumbling) not prepare and offer all the ceremony and merchandise options (improper stretching), or did I hurry through this arrangement (going out too fast)? Whatever the reason, the arranger needs to analyze those cremation arrangements that just “didn’t work” and prepare for their

next cremation 10K with a fresh mind.”

As I continue to have conversations with directors who demonstrate more consistent success, I find the “muscles and methods” to be the same. It takes time, a conversation, an interest, a concern and a commitment. It isn’t being led but leading. It isn’t haphazard but disciplined. It isn’t circumstantial but consistent.

We run the race with the same intent for every family; to win (meaningful ceremony experience and keepsakes). It requires consistency with every family. They determine the ease or grade of the course you will run. If you consistently train for a 10K and the family is a 5k, it can be a remarkable victory for both. You will also be in condition for those families who leave you exhausted but are satisfied by the fact that you went the distance for them! If you want to, as Ken says, “analyze how the injury occurred and take proper precautions to ensure it doesn’t happen again,” request a copy of the **No-Ceremony Form.** It may be helpful in reminding of the “muscles and methods” that are effective and determine causes of injury. “Just Do It!”