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Talk Topics with Gail Rubin, “The Doyenne of Death” and author of *A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don’t Plan to Die*

Using Funny Films to Start Serious Funeral Planning Conversations

Funny film clips provide an effective way to start serious conversations about funeral planning issues. This talk includes selected clips from independent films and major motion pictures including “About Schmidt,” “The Big Chill,” “The Big Lebowski,” “Death at a Funeral,” “Departures,” “Four Weddings and a Funeral,” “Harold and Maude,” “Undertaking Betty,” and “Waking Ned Devine.”

Consumer Funeral Planning by the Numbers

Americans tend to avoid funeral planning, which affects life’s other plans. Just as talking about sex won’t make you pregnant, talking about funerals won’t make you dead – and your family will benefit from the conversation. This upbeat outreach talk covers these numbers:

- One live to live
- Two events - the similar elements of weddings and funerals
- Three or more reasons people avoid talking about death and funeral planning
- Four important reasons to pre-plan a funeral
- Five things to know NOW before someone dies
- Six questions to ask before talking to your local funeral director

Oy Vay: Jewish Funeral Planning in a Goyim World

Jewish traditions regarding death and dying, the funeral, the treatment of the body, burial, mourning, and annual remembrances are very different from Christian practices. This talk illuminates the differences and similarities of these funeral traditions – highly beneficial for interfaith families. Gail Rubin is a member of the *Chevra Kaddisha*, a society of volunteers who wash and dress the bodies of Jews for burial, and she also serves on the cemetery committee for her synagogue, Congregation Albert in Albuquerque, NM.

30 Funerals in 30 Days: Lessons Learned from the Front Lines of Funeral Service

In November 2010, Gail Rubin attended a funeral or memorial service a day and wrote about each with a short YouTube video at her blog, *The Family Plot: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don’t Plan to Die* (<http://TheFamilyPlot.wordpress.com>). The project revealed interesting insights on trends in modern funeral service, from today’s creative life celebrations to the impact of modern technology.

The Newly-Dead Game

Funerals almost always seem to be a surprise, and that’s why most people are unprepared when they happen. But according to Gail Rubin, author of **A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don’t Plan to Die**, playing a little game can increase your chances of avoiding emotional and financial disaster. “The Newly-Dead Game,” based on elements of “The Newlywed Game” TV show, tests how well couples know their partner’s last wishes.