

Virtual Living Funeral Ceremony



Welcome to the virtual living funeral experience!

In this PDF you will find information about how to prepare for your virtual living funeral. It is important to know that you will be confronting mortality and thinking directly about your own death. This ceremony brings the potential for huge changes and shifts; please remember to be kind and patient with yourself! If at any point while going through this PDF you are needing guidance or clarity, please reach out to your practitioner by e-mail before the ceremony.

Materials:

One sheet of paper and something sturdy to write on if you don't have a table (clipboard, for example).

A photograph of yourself- or alternatively, an important 'artifact' or collection of special items which represent you. Another option is setting up a mirror at eye-level. If you'd like to take it a step further, you may write your birth date under your photo or on a sheet of paper, and write your "death date" as the date of your ceremony. This is optional.

Pen or pencil

Small folding table (breakfast tray), coffee table, or bench. Any table that is about eye-level when sitting on the ground. Alternatively you may want to be sitting in a chair, on a couch, or a bed. In that case, any table will work. If you can't find something suitable, the floor/surface you're sitting on will do! This is optional.

Wireless headphones - If you don't have wireless (bluetooth) headphones, simply sync audio to a bluetooth speaker or listen through your computer.

Tissues or a handkerchief

Drinking water

Helpful materials:

Candles (battery operated or traditional)

Eye pillow or eye mask

Fresh flowers for the room

Relaxing scents (aromatherapy diffuser or incense)

Setting up your space:

Setting up a calm, relaxing space for this ceremony is of utmost importance. Here are some key things to consider:

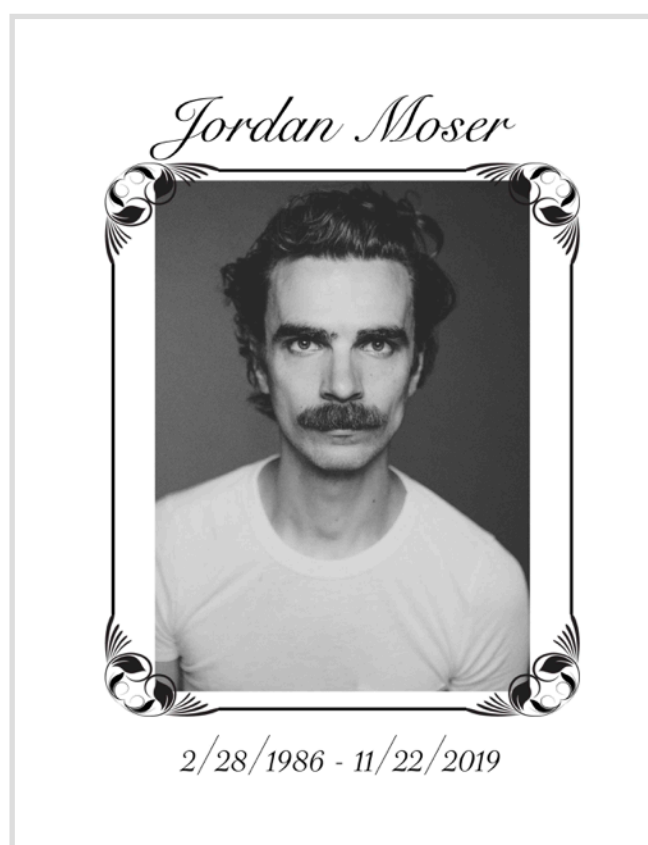
Lighting- Soft, dim lighting is ideal for this ceremony, but make sure your lights are bright enough to read and write comfortably. Once the writing portion has been completed, you may consider dimming or turning lights off completely (you will be reminded!)

Sound and distractions- If possible, move to an isolated, quiet room where no-one else is likely to be walking through. The goal is to create a space where you feel safe and comfortable expressing yourself without thinking about who else is around. Consider asking loved ones to be mindful of volume during your ceremony. Make sure alarms and phones are turned to silent. Look around the room: is there a way to make this space more peaceful? Consider clearing clutter, toys, loose papers, etc. if they are distracting for you.

Smell- If you find specific scents relaxing and enjoyable, feel free to burn incense or turn on an aromatherapy diffuser for your ceremony.

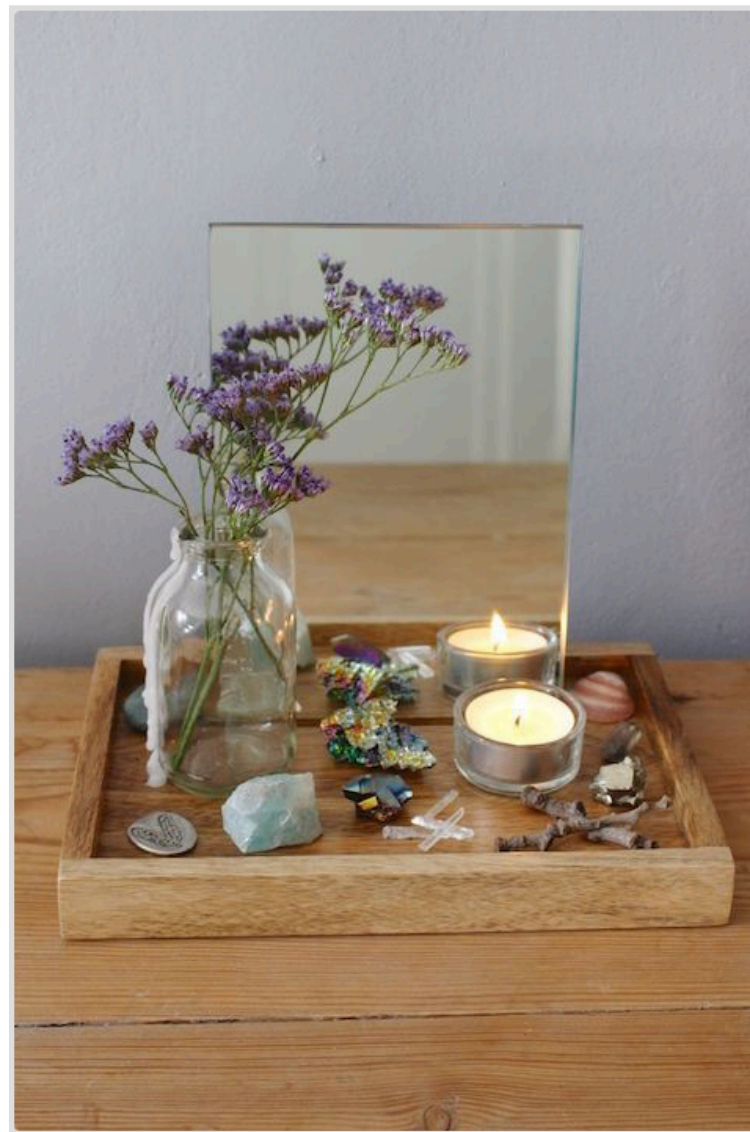
Temperature- Be mindful of the temperature in your space. Are you feeling cold or too warm? Once the ceremony is in session, you'll want to minimize the need for directing your attention elsewhere. If you are prone to getting chilly, have a blanket nearby just in case!

Floor, chair, bed, or couch? If you have back problems or are simply uncomfortable on the floor, you are of course welcome to sit on a chair, couch, or even a bed. You will be asked to recline at a point in the ceremony, but you may choose to remain where you are, or change to whatever position suits you. Remember that you should feel relaxed during your ceremony, as this is for you!



Memorial Photograph Example

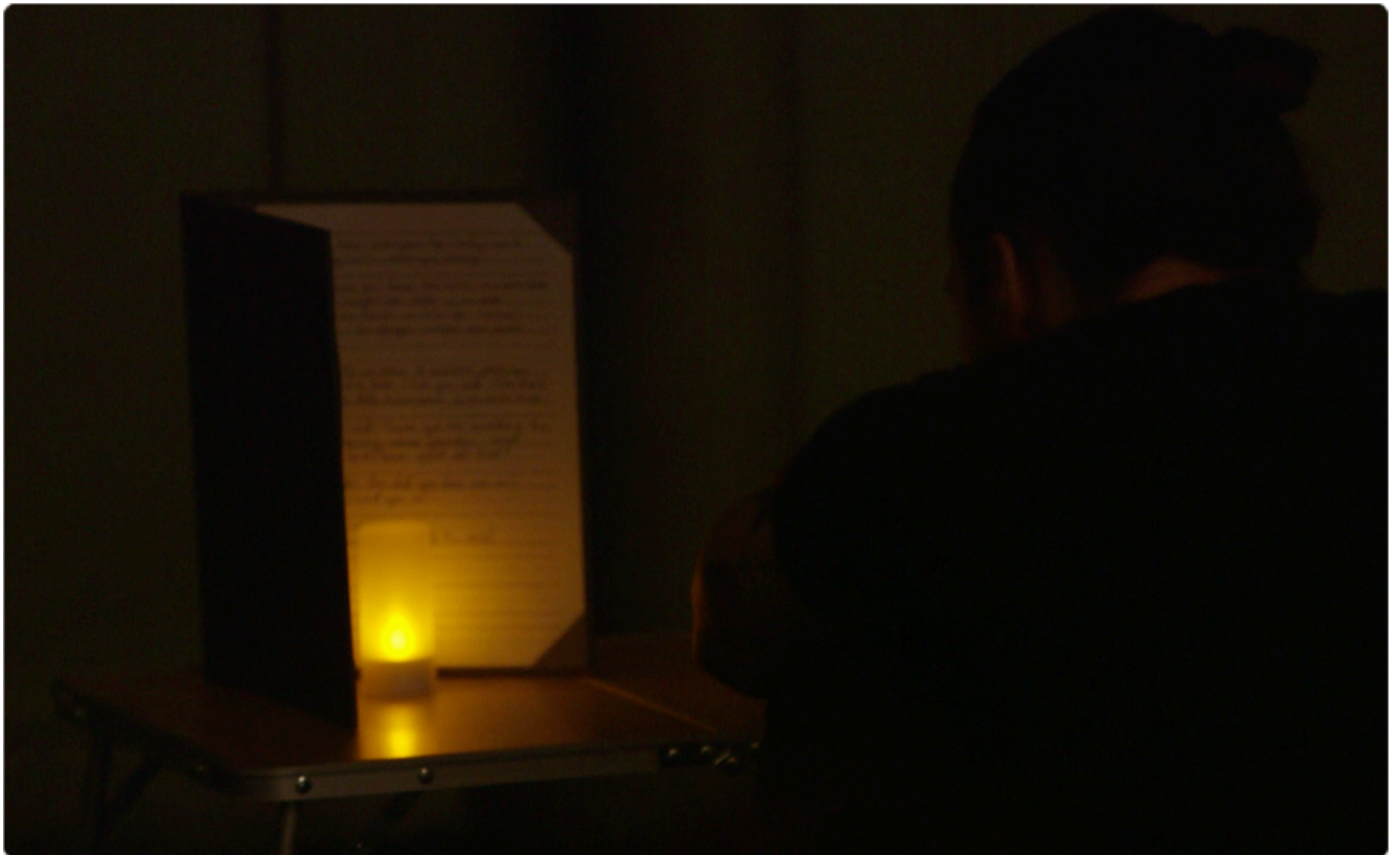
Below are some examples of intentionally created spaces for inspiration:





Setting up your computer or phone for the session:

Ensure that your computer is plugged into its power source or your phone has enough charge to avoid running out of battery. If you feel comfortable with being seen, please position your camera so that the practitioner is able to see your space well— either head-on or to the side. If you do not wish to be seen, you have the option of angling your camera away, or turning your video off altogether. You have the chance to approach the camera at the end of the ceremony for a group chat, but again, please feel free to turn your video capability off at that time if you do not wish to be seen.



Below are some suggested (and optional) exercises to help calm your nervous system before the ceremony. It is recommended that you set aside at least 30 minutes of your time before the session begins to enter a calm headspace.

Preparing to turn inward:

- If possible, do not begin the session with a full (or hungry!) belly. A light snack is recommended prior to signing in.
- Limit caffeine and abstain from alcohol prior to the ceremony.
- Move to-do lists and other anxiety-provoking materials out of the room for the duration of the ceremony.
- Try one of the following breathing exercises:

1. *Begin by sitting or lying down in a comfortable position. Your eyes can be open or closed. Inhale for 4 counts, and then exhale for 4 counts. All inhalations and exhalations should be made through your nose, which adds a slight, natural resistance to your breath. Once you get these basics down, try 6-8 counts per breath.*

2. *Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Take a deep breath in through your nose, allowing diaphragm (not your chest) to inflate with enough air to create a slight stretching sensation in your lungs. Slowly exhale. Repeat 6-10 cycles.*

- Alternatively, try one of the following online guided meditations (clickable links):

3. 5-minute meditation

4. 10-minute meditation

5. 17-minute meditation

Setting up your Zoom account:

In preparation for your virtual living funeral, you will need to create a free Zoom video conferencing account. You will be provided with a link to join the session in a separate e-mail. Tips for accessing Zoom on your computer or mobile phone:

Zoom Tips

Thank you for registering for the virtual living funeral! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your practitioner directly, or e-mail cross@steadywavescenter.com

