



### Why the Quietest Costs Sometimes Surprise Us

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Most families expect to talk about big things after someone dies. The service. The paperwork. The decisions that need to be made right away.

But if I were gone, I would want my family to be prepared for something smaller - the quiet costs that appear without warning. Not the price of a casket or the fee for cremation. I'm talking about the costs that slip in around the edges. Parking at the cemetery.

Extra death certificate copies because someone forgot how many banks or institutions would ask for one. An obituary notice that ends up twice as long as expected - because the words matter more when you're trying to say goodbye.

These are not the first costs people plan for. They show up later, quietly, and sometimes feel more personal than practical. If I were gone, I'd want my family to know these things aren't mistakes. They're just part of what happens when people are trying their best to honour someone they love.

The lunch afterward might feel small in comparison to the service - but it matters when people sit together and share stories. The printed cards, the flowers delivered late, the rush courier to send papers across the province - these things are often about more than logistics. They are about care. And yes, they add up. That's what surprises some families the most. They budgeted for the core service. They compared funeral homes. They asked good questions.

But a few days later, the extras begin to show up. And often, they are paid without question - because it feels like the right thing to do. I have spoken with many families who later asked themselves the same thing: "Did we spend too much?" If I were gone, I would want my family to know that asking that question does not mean they did something wrong. It means they're human.

Grief has a way of making generosity feel urgent. We want to do right by the people we've lost - even if it means stretching ourselves in the moment. Still, I would want them to know it's okay to pause. To ask whether that delivery charge is necessary.

To take a breath before upgrading something no one asked for. And if someone says, "This will only be another hundred dollars," I would want them to feel free to say, "Let me think about it." Because every small cost feels manageable on its own. It's only later, when the receipts are gathered, that people realize how quickly it all added up. That realization shouldn't bring shame. It should bring clarity for the next time - for another family, or for another conversation.

If I could leave one reminder, it would be this: The way someone is remembered does not depend on the extras. It depends on how they were loved. No one sits at a memorial and says, "The parking was free, so it must have meant less." No one judges the depth of someone's grief based on how many flowers arrived. So if I were gone, I would want my family to spend carefully, but not guiltily. And to know that the small things they chose - or chose not to do - will never define how I am remembered. Next week, I'll write about something that confuses many families: how prepaid funeral plans actually work, and what to watch for when comparing options.



### Tiny Fish Offer Great Nutrition Common Sense Health – Diana Gifford-Jones

This week, I write from Tokyo, where small fish are eaten with remarkable regularity. A traditional Japanese breakfast includes such fish – salted, dried, grilled and served cold – consumed head-to-tail, bones, eyeballs and all. Small sardines are tucked into lunch boxes. Convenience stores sell little fish for snacking. It's common to add sardines or mackerel to spaghetti sauce. Eating little fish is a way of life.

What is it about little fish? A large Japanese cohort study following more than 80,000 adults for roughly nine years found that people who regularly consumed small fish had significantly lower risks of death from all causes and from cancer, particularly among women. Even modest intake of just a few times per month was associated with measurable reductions in mortality.

Nutrition science offers an explanation. Small oily fish, such as sardines and anchovies, are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, along with minerals and high-quality protein that support cardiovascular, brain, and bone health. Emerging evidence suggests regular sardine consumption may also improve insulin response and reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Eating the head, bones, and organs means the Japanese are consuming concentrated micronutrients such as calcium and vitamin A that are largely lost when fish are filleted. Westerners throw that nutrition away.

A reader recently reminded me of the Japanese word kuchisabishii, translated literally as "lonely mouth". It describes eating out of boredom, not hunger. But if mindless snacking is the need, then little dried and crunchy fish are a great choice.

A modelling study published in BMJ Global Health estimated that replacing some red-meat consumption with forage fish – species such as sardines, anchovies, and herring – could prevent up to 750,000 premature deaths annually by 2050. These fish are exceptionally nutrient-dense, and in comparison to any other animal protein, have among the lowest environmental footprints, if one can say that of fish.

In North America, seafood choices tend to centre on large predatory fish such as salmon and tuna. These species are popular and nutritious, but they are also more expensive, accumulate more contaminants over long lifespans, and require greater ecological resources. Meanwhile, vast quantities of small forage fish are processed into animal feed.

There is a practical challenge, however. Achieving the levels of omega-3 fatty acids associated with cardiovascular benefit – particularly EPA and DHA – requires consistent intake. For many North Americans, eating small oily fish several times a week is a stretch, whether because of taste preferences, access, cost, or habit.

For that reason, supplementation can be a sensible adjunct. A high-quality fish oil provides concentrated, purified omega-3s without requiring major dietary overhaul. Readers can find the fish oil recommended by W. Gifford-Jones, MD, Certified Naturals Omega3X, in natural health food stores. It has earned the recommendation because it delivers high levels of EPA and DHA in a purified form that is tested for contaminants and formulated to enhance absorption.

None of this calls for dramatic change. It may simply mean replacing meaty meals with modest, more frequent servings of small fish. Imagine a tin of sardines on whole-grain toast, anchovies folded into pasta, or herring added to a salad. Frequency is better than occasional large portions.

Tokyo's markets do not advertise their bountiful fish sections with signs proclaiming "Eat fish. Lower the risk of death." But would it be a crime to encourage people to think about their mortality when grocery shopping? Fresh or tinned, little whole fish are affordable, accessible, and ordinary. Perhaps that is the lesson. Healthful patterns tend to endure when they are woven quietly into daily life, rather than announced as resolutions.



### GREAT NEWS FOR DARLINGTON

Darlington Unit 4 reached full power last night, marking the successful completion of the refurbishment 142 days ahead of schedule and \$150 million under budget. The original return-to-service date was August 2, 2026.

"This is a proud moment for Ontario, and a powerful reminder that our province continues to set the global standard for delivering large-scale nuclear projects such as OPG Darlington Unit 4 refurbishment nearly five months ahead of schedule and \$150 million under budget" said Todd McCarthy, MPP for Durham. "The completion of work on Unit 4 will be a major contributor in strengthening Ontario and Canada's energy security while supporting thousands of well-paying jobs for workers in the region. I would like to thank our project partners at OPG for their hard work in delivering clean, reliable, and affordable energy to the people of Ontario".

With Unit 4 now fully back on the grid, Ontario and OPG have completed the world's largest nuclear refurbishment, nearly five months ahead of schedule. It's a major milestone that showcases Ontario's nuclear advantage and the incredible work of the thousands of skilled workers and Canadian suppliers who helped deliver the project.

Advertisement for OCN #1 Durham's Newspaper. Includes a globe with 'OCN' text, a large '#1' graphic, and the website 'www.OCentral.com'. Slogan: 'Serving Durham For Over 30 Years'.

Advertisement for computer disposal. Features a woman at a computer, the word 'FREE' in large red letters, and the text: 'DISPOSAL OF OLD COMPUTERS LAP TOPS - CELL PHONES If you want to dispose of your computer, printer, scanner we repair them and DONATE THEM TO FAMILIES IN NEED Give us a call 905-432-2657'.

Advertisement for 'THE X-Files Mr. Files OFFICIAL T-SHIRTS!'. Shows a black t-shirt with 'THE X-Files' logo. Price: 'ONLY 26.99'. Slogan: 'Order Now! stickermule.com/backasore'.