

# Cooperative Funeral Fund Inc.

Minding Your Own Business

as seen in:



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# MINDING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

by Ann Marie St. George

When coming up with ideas on subjects to write about I never know which experience will bring inspiration. Today I was speaking with a funeral director who was explaining how a family had come to her regarding a prearrangement that had been set up with another funeral home. When the person died, the money they had given the funeral director had never been deposited. Fortunately, for that family, the funeral director who took care of the funeral covered the costs. It was more important to him that word didn't get out that a funeral director took someone's preneed trust money than it was for him to get paid.

Collectively, we are not bad people and who's to say it wasn't an honest mistake. Here is the thing: When the funeral director reached out to the state's governing body to explain what had happened, they were told to "mind their own business!" Okay?!? Maybe they were already aware of the situation and had it under control; All I am saying is a better choice of words would have been more appropriate, something like "we are working on it and thank you for the phone call."?!? A "Miss Manners" course on phone etiquette would go a long way. Trust me, there are plenty of things we would all love to "actually" say when speaking with consumers, but if we want to be successful we don't.

So, I got thinking about the expression "mind your own business" and how it affects us as we perform our duties as funeral directors. How many of you have been personally insulted when told to "mind your own business?" Hey, we are naturally curious and as such it may or may not make us prone to being what some call a "Butt-in-ski". Originally, Buttinski was a short, loudmouthed Polish man very famous for giving advice. While giving advice to the royal family, he convinced them to join a war. After Poland lost numerous soldiers to the war, Buttinski told them it was a mistake to join the war. The queen blew up and ordered her husband to have him executed. After his execution the nickname "Buttinski" was used as a warning. However, as the 17th century started it became more of a "sarcastic" label letting someone know that their "comments" were not welcome in the conversation that was being held.

If you are in denial as to the degree or acceptability of your meddlesomeness, here are a few clues as to the level of your butt-in-ski-ness:

1. You can't resist getting involved in other people's personal conversations
2. You love the spectacle of getting involved in people's personal lives
3. You adore entangling yourself into everyone's problems

4. You are not happy unless you are surrounded by drama, drama, drama
5. You ignore people when they tell you they don't want your advice
6. You enjoy showing up to events you were not invited to thinking it was just an oversight
7. You absolutely have to be the first person to tell others juicy gossip
8. You revel in knowing every scandalous matter that is going on with your competition
9. You feel it is your right to intervene when helping families that don't get along
10. You have an ornately framed poster hanging proudly in your office referencing a common funeral stereotype:

*Telegraph  
Telephone  
Tell a Funeral Director*

We need to look closely in the mirror, can we honestly say we aren't a trocar tip away from being a true "Buttinski"? It is genuinely tempting to get over-involved in the trials and tribulations of the families we serve, in other words, the "drama". Try to refrain from your natural desire to go above and beyond when it comes to putting yourself into the middle of the commotion, because in the long run you may find yourself mentally and physically drained. Putting ourselves in a position of being pulled in many directions cannot be advantageous to our business. We are all guilty of being a well-intentioned buttinski only to be bitten in the proverbial butt. I'm not referring to our involvement as it pertains to performing our jobs as funeral directors, I'm referring to the stuff that really isn't "any of our business." You totally know who you are and right now you are shaking your head and making excuses. Like my dad used to say, "denial ain't a river in Egypt."

Offering love and support while minding our own business is not always easy. It is something that we all need to work on. We need to find ways to "mind" our own businesses, in other words focus on what we need to do to be successful both personally and professionally. "Minding" our own business is a strategic key to success. As painful as it may sound, we need to forget what our competitor is doing and focus on "our own business" with regard to what is working and what is not. Now, if the competitor is doing something that is "killing it" than by all means, mind their business, just try and not be such a buttinski!!! **FBA**



*Ann Marie St. George, CPC, a first-generation funeral director has worked for the past 20 years as a Regional Manager for Cooperative Funeral Fund, a preneed and cemetery care fund management company. Thriving in the industry for over 35 years as a funeral director/embalmer she was pulled into the world of national disasters starting with 9/11 where she lived 11 blocks north of the World Trade Center. She is a Mortuary Officer for both DMORT Region II and Kenyon International Emergency Services. She encourages anyone reading her articles to reach out by email at [annie@cffinc.com](mailto:annie@cffinc.com) Suggestions for topics are always encouraged. You may also visit [www.CooperativeFuneralFund.com](http://www.CooperativeFuneralFund.com) or call (800) 336-1102.*



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