



Australian Federation of
CIVIL CELEBRANTS

Australian Federation of Civil Celebrants

WEDDING RESOURCES GUIDE

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Introduction

WELCOME

Welcome to the AFCC Wedding Resources Guide! It has been produced for the benefit of experienced, new and aspiring Marriage Celebrants.

The Guide has been compiled from a variety of sources, including AFCC members, the AFCC National Committee and the AFCC Education Sub-committee.

Based on the success of and feedback from members about the AFCC Funeral Resources Guide in 2015, we knew it was only a matter of time before we created a similar guide for all things weddings.

Please note that this Guide does not cover any of the legal requirements and obligations as a Marriage Celebrant, but focusses on three main areas – the writing and creation of a wedding ceremony; the relationship between the celebrant and the couple; and the running of a successful celebrant business.

Regardless of how long you have been a celebrant, how many weddings you perform each year and the type of ceremony you like to perform, we hope that you find something in this Guide that will assist you in delivering a high level professional service.

As celebrants we all do things differently, so please remember that this is a Guide only.

I received my authorisation as a Marriage Celebrant at twenty-two years of age in 2008. I became an AFCC member that same year and truly value my membership and the association. After spending time on the National Committee, I believe you will not find another association that is as committed to serving its members and providing the best celebrant resources in the country. This Guide is testament to that.

Happy reading and I wish you the very best on your celebrancy journey.

Kirk Goodsell

AFCC member since 2008



APPRECIATION LIST

AFCC National Committee for their ongoing support during the project

AFCC Celebrant Education Sub-committee for their commitment and time

AFCC members for all their contributions

AFCC members Trevor Rice, Gillian Potter and Noelene Smith for their 'sample' ceremonies

AFCC member Sarah Aird for her efforts and time

Carol Marcroft and AssentTECS

Dr. Trish Vezgoff for her support

FOREWORD

Rites of passage have always played a vital part in any civilisation and the rite of marriage, the joining of couples and families has been perhaps the most vital of all throughout recorded history. Because of its central place in civilisation, rituals became the visible component of this uniting before the written word was available. Ritual and ceremony became integral to religion and have remained thus until relatively recently in the Western world, where civil ceremony has taken an increasing role as the power of the Church over the populace has diminished.

I think I first became aware of the Australian civil celebrancy movement in 1978 when my husband and I chose to marry in our home rather than in a church or Registry Office.

Our celebrant was an ex-priest and though, looking back, our ceremony followed fairly traditional lines, it suited us and those we loved and we knew no better. It was also our celebrant's own wedding anniversary, so his wife and children joined us for the day.

I applied to become a celebrant in 1987. By the time my invitation to become a celebrant arrived it was late in 1994. One of the first things I did on gaining my Authorisation was to join the AFCC and I believe it was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

From the very first meeting I attended I was greeted with warmth and made to feel welcome. In true collegiate form, discussions were open, opinions were varied but valued and knowledge freely shared.

At one time I was an active member of three different celebrant organisations, but always felt that the AFCC offered the best to its members.

The early conferences were truly vocational and inspirational in style. We learned and developed our skills together, and though nowadays we have many more formalities to accede to, we can still benefit greatly from the bounty of wisdom accrued over the years and freely available now in a variety of modes.

The AFCC Wedding Resources Guide is part of this spirit of collegiate warmth and wisdom accrued over the years. Its various chapters and sections can be both a refresher for established Celebrants and a valuable primer for those who are more recently appointed. From basic forms of ceremonies, to the bountiful suggestions for enrichment through music, poetry, prose and various cultural traditions it provides a written feast for those willing to maintain the dedication and enthusiasm needed to be a first rate celebrant.

Our future as celebrants is rich with possibilities and choices as our role becomes more important in society. With great possibilities, comes great responsibility and I believe that in this Resources Guide the AFCC is once again demonstrating its collective wisdom, professionalism and leadership in the field.

No doubt it will continue to be added to as time goes by, but its present wealth of suggestions and ideas will be of great assistance to any celebrant wishing to provide a superior service to their clients.

Dr. Trish Vezgoff

AFCC member since 1994



THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL CELEBRANT

In 1973, then Federal Attorney-General, Senator Lionel Murphy, had a vision for couples who preferred not to have a religious church ceremony or a registry office ceremony, but a secular celebration that could take place anywhere outside the church with the inclusion of music, rituals, prose and personalisation. As a result the Civil Celebrant program was born. According to Senator Murphy, “the essence of the Civil Celebrant Program was to give couples freedom of choice.”

Since the *Marriage Act* passed in 1961, there has been a growing preference for civil marriages and demand for Civil Celebrant appointments. On 19 July 1973, Murphy typed the first appointment letter making Lois D’Arcy Australia’s first Civil Celebrant.

On 13 August 1973, The *Sydney Morning Herald* ran an article that stated: *“The Federal Government has begun a crash course to double the number of private people able to perform civil marriages in Australia. A spokesman for the Attorney-General’s Department in Canberra said tonight that 100 men and women would be empowered by the Attorney-General Senator Murphy, to perform civil marriage ceremonies before the end of the year ... Senator Murphy was responding to an increase in the number of people seeking civil marriage ... The States will be able to alter the lists if they wish before Senator Murphy gives the authority to the people named. Once all of the new Celebrants have been appointed, the final number will be kept under review and increased if the demand for civil marriages continues to increase.”*

By 2015, the Civil Celebrant Program has enabled over 1.2 million couples to be married in civil ceremonies. Celebrants were originally appointed based on geographic location and the perceived need for a celebrant in the area, but since September 2003, prospective Marriage Celebrants have had to undergo Government-approved, accredited training in marriage celebrancy and meet specific criteria set by the Attorney-General’s Department to be declared a “fit and proper person” to hold the position of an “Authorised Marriage Celebrant”. Under the 2003 changes, all Civil Celebrant appointments were cancelled and re-appointed by the Registrar in the same category as clergy of small churches as “Commonwealth Authorised Celebrants”. In February 2010, further changes were made requiring all aspiring Celebrants to hold a Certificate IV in Celebrancy.

Registration provides the legal authority to practise as a Marriage Celebrant and once ‘registered’ (or ‘authorised’ as it is also known), the Marriage Celebrant can marry couples in any location in Australia (reception venues, historic buildings, galleries, private homes, parks and gardens, wineries, beaches, headlands, boats etc.) and at any time of the day or night.

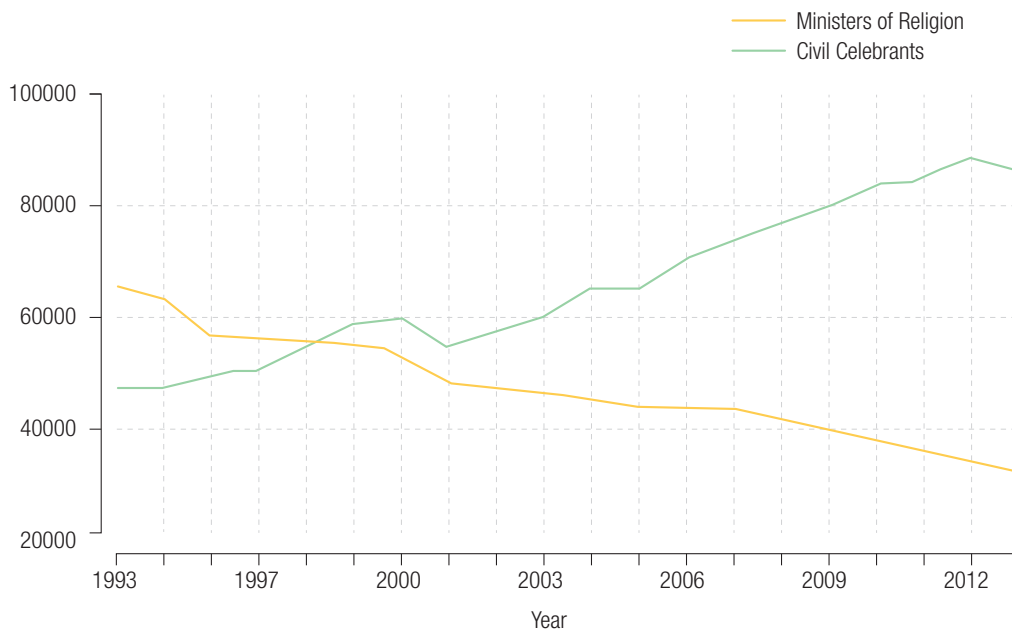
The use of Civil Celebrants has been growing since the 1970s and marriages solemnised by Civil Celebrants have continually outnumbered religious ceremonies since 1999. By 2009, two-thirds of marriages were performed by Civil Celebrants and in 2015, the proportion of marriages solemnised by Civil Celebrants increased to 74.9%, up from 71.9% in 2012.

Sourced from *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia: Celebrant (Australia)*
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celebrant_\(Australia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celebrant_(Australia))



Marriage Ceremonies

(Type of Celebrant, Australia, Selected Years, 1993–2013)



Graph supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

THE ROLE OF A MARRIAGE CELEBRANT

Almost 75% of wedding ceremonies in Australia are civil ceremonies conducted by Commonwealth-registered Marriage Celebrants. The role of Marriage Celebrants is to provide ceremonies in accordance with the legal requirements of the *Marriage Act 1961* and the *Marriage Regulations 1963*, as well as providing couples with the necessary information to choose or create a ceremony that suits their needs and expectations.

A Marriage Celebrant conducts and leads the ceremony in accordance with the couple's wishes, with the appropriate professionalism, dignity and presentation.

Marriage Celebrants must maintain a high standard of service in their professional conduct and practice.

Marriage Celebrants are permitted to solemnise marriages in almost any location in Australia and therefore their work takes them from beaches, to wineries, parks, restaurants, chapels... the list is endless.

As a Marriage Celebrant you must:

- Fulfil all the legal requirements outlined in the *Marriage Act 1961*
- Adhere to the *Marriage Regulations 1963* Code of Practice for Marriage Celebrants
- Meet with the couple to discuss their ceremony
- Provide the couple with varied and diverse ceremony options
- Provide couples with a choice of ceremonies that suit their needs and expectations or compose a meaningful, personal and tailored ceremony
- Liaise with anyone involved in the ceremony, from family members and friends to other wedding vendors and venue managers
- Offer support, assistance and information at all times to couples.

WEDDING CUSTOMS

Disclaimer: traditions have been created and reinvented since time began. While the origins are debatable, here are just a few wedding traditions so please enjoy!

♥ Traditionally, the bride would stand on the **left** because that is the side closest to the groom's heart. In Feudal times, the right arm was considered the sword arm of most fighting men. If a man had to protect his bride, he would hold her with his left hand, and fight off attackers with his right arm.


♥ "*Something **Old**, Something **New**, Something **Borrowed**, Something **Blue**, and a silver sixpence for your shoe.*" A Victorian tradition, where something *old* refers to the links with the bride's family and her old life. At that time, most brides wore something belonging to their mother or grandmothers. Something *new* usually referred to future good fortune and success and came to be something presented by the groom to his bride, such as a necklace or personal jewellery. Wearing something *borrowed* from a happily married woman was important, as was something *blue*, which in Biblical times represented purity,

modesty and fidelity. Blue also denoted the purity of the Virgin Mary and as religions consolidated, this sort of symbolism became increasingly important. Many Israeli brides wore a band of blue on their wedding attire and in modern times, many garters are blue for that reason. Placing a silver sixpence in the bride's left shoe is a symbol of wealth. This is not just to bring the bride financial wealth but also a wealth of happiness and joy throughout her married life.

♥ Traditionally, the **leap year proposal** was an anomaly of English law, where the leap year day had no recognition. The day was 'leapt over' and therefore as it had no acknowledgement the normal rules and traditions also didn't apply. So the woman could ask the man to marry her.

♥ The word 'bride' originally was the term for a 'cook'!



- 
- ♥ In olden times, the bride was expected to bring a substantial 'dowry' of money, jewels, animals and valuables to her marriage. However, the groom was not exempt – he paid a 'bride's price' to her family, indicative of his faithful support of the bride.
 - ♥ The **engagement ring** served as partial payment for the bride and some historians argue that it was the equivalent of branding the bride as taken or claimed property.
 - ♥ There are two strongly held beliefs about why the engagement and wedding ring are worn on the third finger, left hand. The first is a Christian belief dating back to the 17th century, where during the marriage, the priest would symbolically touch thumb and first finger together (the Father), middle finger and thumb (the Son) and the ring finger and thumb (and the Holy Spirit). Medieval bridegrooms placed the ring on each of the bride's fingers in turn, to symbolise God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, with the ring then remaining on the third finger. The second belief refers to the ancient Egyptians however, who believed that the "vein of love" runs between the ring finger and the heart. Therefore the ring on the ring finger, left hand, symbolised the heartfelt love and commitment to one another. Although modern medicine has disproved this belief, showing that the veins in the ring finger are

no more and no less important than any other veins, the tradition of the left hand ring finger still dominates.

- ♥ The **bridal party** was a Roman tradition. There was concern that evil spirits might jinx the poor married couple, so friends of both the bride and groom got equally as dressed up, so the confused spirits would not know who was marrying. Therefore they could not cast an evil spirit over the happy couple.
- ♥ The Romans believed that the bride should wear a **veil** for if the evil spirits could not see the bride, they would not be floating around on her wedding day. The tradition of the groom lifting the bride's veil prior to the ceremony starting refers to the groom just checking which woman he was actually marrying, and to confirm that the one he paid for, was the one he was marrying! However, if the bride took the initiative of lifting her veil, apparently it meant the bride was presenting herself to him, thereby showing independence.
- ♥ In ancient times, it was believed that strong smelling herbs and spices would ward off and drive away bad spirits, bad luck and ill health. Garlic and chives were popular first choices. A bride of the time usually carried stinking garlands of flowers to keep evil spirits away which has led to the infamous bride's **bouquet**.

Chapter One – The Ceremony

ORDER OF SERVICE

Please note this is a guide to a basic, traditional order of service. Couples and celebrants are welcome to add, change, reorder and/or omit any parts as long as the Monitum and minimum legal vows are said by the celebrant and the couple in accordance with the Marriage Act 1961.

Introduction

Celebrant welcomes all the guests and provides any applicable housekeeping announcements (phones on silent, 'unplugged' info, what's happening after the ceremony – group photo etc.)

Processional

The bride walks down the aisle to music with the bridal party and her nominated escort (father, mother etc.) Sometimes the bride and groom may choose to enter together.

Giving Away

If desired, the bride can be given away. Traditionally the father gives the bride away but the bride can choose her mother, a sibling, a friend... anyone! An alternative option here is a family blessing/acknowledgement, where the parents of both the bride and groom are asked to confirm their love and support of the marriage.

Welcoming

The celebrant welcomes everyone, talks about love, the meaning of marriage and the couple's story. The welcoming can include any particular thanks (parents, people who have travelled) and acknowledgements (loved ones who are no longer with us or absent family and friends).

Reading

The couple may choose to include some readings or poems. These can be read either by the celebrant or a guest, or even the bride or groom.

Rituals/Blessings

The couple may include any particular wedding rituals or blessings. These can be traditional, religious or multicultural.

Monitum

The legal wording from the *Marriage Act 1961*, stated by the celebrant.

The Asking

This is where the celebrant asks the couple to confirm their intentions to marry. It's the non-legal part that ends with the couple saying "I do!" or "I will!"

Vows

The couple state their vows to each other (including the legal minimum vows from the *Marriage Act 1961*).

Ring Exchange

The couple usually exchange rings, often accompanied by a short ring verse.

The Declaration

The celebrant concludes and announces the couple as husband and wife. If the couple would like they can kiss!

Signing of the Register

The couple sign their wedding documents with their celebrant and two witnesses.

Presentation

The celebrant presents the newly married couple, usually as "Mr and Mrs..." or the "newly married couple".

Recessional

The couple walk back down the aisle to music, sometimes followed by their bridal party.



MUSIC

For a ceremony there are usually three specific parts for music:

The Processional

The Signing
of the Register

The Recessional

If the ceremony features any rituals, then a piece of music may be played to accompany the ritual. Most ceremonies will also include some background music before and after the ceremony.

Some Points:

- Many couples choose to hire live music (quartet, singer, violinist, harp etc.) whilst others will want to play pre-recorded music. If the couple has a family member or friend who is a musician and willing to perform in the ceremony, this can be a personal and meaningful addition.
- Some brides like to walk down the aisle to a separate song to their bridesmaids so you may need to accommodate for one song to be faded down and the second song to be faded up.
- It is recommended to choose two songs for the signing in case one song is not enough. Some photographers like to take their time getting photos so you may need that additional time.
- Most celebrants own a PA system that allows the couple to play music through their system. Make sure you make it clear to the couple how long you are planning on staying after the ceremony so they don't expect to be able to play an hour's worth of music through your system when you are only planning on staying for 15 minutes.
- If you are providing a PA system for the couple to play their music, ensure you give them clear instructions on what device/s are compatible with your system. It may be a good idea to have them bring it to the rehearsal (if applicable) to ensure compatibility. Ensure whoever is coordinating the music on the day is there with plenty of time before the ceremony so you can run through the music directions with them.

Below is a list of popular wedding ceremony songs:

1000 Years by Christina Perri
500 Miles by The Proclaimers
A Beautiful Day by U2
A Whole New World from Aladdin
All I Want is You by Barry Louis Polisar
All My Days by Alexi Murdoch
All My Life by K-Ci and JoJo
All Of Me by John Legend
All You Need Is Love by The Beatles
Annie's Song by John Denver
At Last by Etta James
Au Revoir by One Republic
Ave Maria by Beyonce
Barefoot and Beautiful by The Tealeaves
Beautiful Day by U2
Beautiful in White by Shane Filan
Because You Loved Me by Celine Dion
Belle by Angus and Julia Stone
Better Together by Jack Johnson
Bonfire Heart by James Blunt
Buicks to the Moon by Alan Jackson
Butterfly Kisses by Bob Carlisle
Can You Feel the Love Tonight? by Elton John
Canon in D by Pachelbel
Can't Help Falling In Love by UB40
Chasing Cars by Snow Patrol
Come Away With Me by Norah Jones
Crazy In Love by Beyonce
Crazy Little Thing Called Love by Michael Buble
Crosses by Jose Gonzalez
Dance Me to the End of Love by Leonard Cohen
Down to my Soul by Paul Kelly
Dream Come True by Frozen Ghost
Dreams Come True by Rebecca Holden
Eight Days a Week by The Beatles
Endless Summer by Josh Pyke
Eternal Flame by The Bangles
Even When I'm Sleeping by Leonardo's Bride
Even When I'm Sleeping by Washington
Everlong by Foo Fighters
Everybody by Justice Crew
Everything by Michael Buble
Everything I Do by Bryan Adams
Everytime We Touch by Cascada
Feels Like Home by Chantal Kreviazuk
Fields of Gold by Sting
Fields of Gold by Eva Cassidy
First Day of my Life by Bright Eyes
Fool for You by John Butler
Forever by Jaheim
Forever and Ever, Amen by Randy Travis
Forever and For Always by Shania Twain
Forever by Ben Harper
Found Each Other in the Dark by City and Colour
Free by Donavon Frankenreiter
From Eden by Hozier

From This Moment by Shania Twain
Georgia by Vance Joy
Give me Love by Ed Sheeran
Go Do by Jonsi
Green Eyes by Coldplay
Groovin' Slowly by John Butler
Hallelujah by Jeff Buckley
Halo by Beyonce
Happy by Pharrell Williams
Have I Told you Lately by Van Morrison / Rod Stewart
Heaven by DJ Sammy Heaven
Hey Ya by Obadiah Parker
Higher and Higher by Jackie Wilson
Higher Love by James Vincent McMorrow
Ho Hey by Lennon and Maisy
Ho Hey by The Lumineers
Hold You in my Arms by Ray Lamontagne
Home by Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros
How Long Will I Love You by Ellie Goulding
How Sweet It Is by Marvin Gaye
How Sweet It Is To Be Loved By You by James Taylor
I Do by Westlife
I Don't Want to Miss a Thing by Aerosmith
I Fell Good by James Brown
I Found You by Alabama Shakes
I Love NYE by Badly Drawn Boy
I Love You Always Forever by Donna Lewis
I Love You by Celine Dion
I Loved Her First by Heartland
I Wanna Grow Old With You by Adam Sandler from The Wedding Singer
I Want To Hold Your Hand by Beatles
I Want To Know What Love Is by Foreigner
I Won't Give Up by Jason Mraz
I'll Be by Edwin McCain
In Your Light by Gotyre
Into my Arms by Nick Cave
Is This How You Feel by The Preatures
It's Only Time by The Tealeaves
Just the Way You Are by Billy Joel
Just The Way You Are by Diana Krall
Just the Way You Are by Bruno Mars
Kiss From a Rose by Seal
Kiss Me by Ed Sheeran
Kiss Me by The Fray
Kiss The Rain by Yiruma
Knights in White Satin by Moody Blues
Lego House by Ed Sheeran
Let's Stay Together by Al Green
Lines on Palms by Josh Pyke
Little Things by One Direction
Love Love Love by Avalanche City
Love me Tender by Norah Jones
Love of My Life by Jim Brickman
Love Story by Taylor Swift
Lovesong by Adele

Magic by Coldplay

Make You Feel My Love by Bob Dylan /
Billy Joel / Adele / Garth Brooks

Make You Happy by Josh Pyke

Making Memories of Us by Keith Urban

Marry Me by Neil Diamond

Marry Me by Jason Durulo

Marry Me by Train

Marry You by Bruno Mars

Maybe I'm Amazed by Paul McCartney

Me and You by Kenny Chesney

Mess is Mine by Vance Joy

Mirrors by Justin Timberlake / Boyce Avenue

More Than Words by Extreme

My Best Friend by Tim McGraw

My Little Girl by Tim McGraw

My Romance by Ella Fitzgerald

My Wish by Rascal Flatts

Next To You by Chris Brown

On Bended Knee by Boyz II Men

On Top of the World by Imagine Dragons

One Love by Bob Marley

Only Girl by Rihanna / Boyce Avenue

Only You by Joshua Radin

Our Song by Taylor Swift

Overjoyed by Matchbox Twenty

Penguin by Christina Perri

Perth by Bon Iver

Power of Love by Luther Vandross

Resolution by Matt Corby

Riptide by Vance Joy

River Love by Angus Stone

Save Tonight by Eagle Eye Cherry

Sea of Love by Cat Powers

She is Love by Oasis

She's the One by Robbie Williams

Sicily by Forever Young

Signed, Sealed, Delivered by Stevie Wonder

Slide by Goo Goo Dolls / Boyce Avenue

Smile by Uncle Cracker

Somewhere Over the Rainbow by Harold Arlen

Somewhere Over the Rainbow by Israel Kamakawiwo'ole

Songbird by Christina McVie

Songbird by Eva Cassidy

Songbird by Oasis

Soul Bossa Nova by Quincy Jones

Stand By Me by Ben E King

Stay With You by John Legend

Steal My Kisses by Ben Harper

Stealing Cinderella by Chuck Wicks

Storybook Love Theme from Princess Bride by Mark Knopfler

Such Great Heights by Joy Kills Sorrow

Sweet Disposition by The Temper Trap

Tangled Up In You by Staind

Never Tear Us Apart by INXS

Teenage Dream by Katy Perry / Boyce Avenue

Thank You For Loving Me by Bon Jovi

The Adventure by Angels and Airwaves

The Best Day of My Life by America Authors

The Blowers Daughter by Damien Rice

The Book of Love by Peter Gabriel

The Look of Love by Diana Krall

The Luckiest by Ben Folds

The Ludlows by James Horner

This Old Love by Lior

The One I Love by David Grey

The Power of Love by Gabriel Alpin

The Power of Love by Jennifer Rush

The Voyage by Christy Moore

The Wild Mountain Thyme by Ronan Keating

Then by Brad Paisley

Thinking Out Loud by Ed Sheeran

This I Promise You by NSYNC

This Years Love by David Grey

Those Sweet Words by Norah Jones

Til Kingdom Come by Coldplay

Time to Smile by Xavier Rudd

Today by Willamette Stone

Two Little Words by Reuben Koops

Unchained Melody by The Righteous Brothers

Unforgettable by Nat "King" Cole

Use Somebody by Kings of Leon / Boyce Avenue

Video Games by Lana Del Ray

Want You to Want Me by Cheap Trick

Watermark by Enya

Wedding Day by Seal

What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong

What I Wouldn't Do by Serena Ryder

When She Walks by Wedding Music Central

When You Got a Good Thing by Lady Antebellum

When You Say Nothing At All by Ronan Keating

Whiter Shade of Pale by Procol Harum

Wings by Birdy

Without You by Christina Aguilera

Woman by John Lennon

Won't Let You Go by James Morrison

Wouldn't It Be Nice by The Beach Boys

XO by Beyonce

XO by John Mayer

You and Me by Lifehouse

You Are the Sunshine of My Life by Stevie Wonder

You by Chris Young

You Got It by Roy Orbison

Young and Beautiful by Lana Del Ray

Your Everything by Keith Urban

Your Raise Me Up by Josh Groban

You're My Best Friend by Queen

You're My Best Friend by The Once

Yours Mine and Ours by Wedding Music Central

You've Got the Love by Florence and the Machine

READINGS

Every effort has been made to identify and acknowledge the original authors of the material that follows:

The Keys to a Loving, Lasting Relationship

Casey Whilson

Love one another with all your hearts;
give more than you take;
don't ever take your relationship for granted;
have heart-to-heart talks and really communicate;
be trusting, playful, intimate and kind;
appreciate all the little, special things;
recognise that time spent together is a treasure;
make the most of what each day brings;
know that nothing is sweeter than the warmth
of one hand within another;
walk together in the direction you want to go;
be supportive and sharing and open to changes;
always continue to grow;
cherish this blessing which so few truly find;
have dreams to reach out for through the years;
share one another's smiles through the good times;
be everything to one another through the tears;
what your time together lacks in quantity,
make up for in quality;
call to say "I love you", in the middle of the day;
keep your sense of humour and hold on to your hopes;
don't let work or worries get in the way;
make love a sanctuary and a celebration;
make each moment more precious and each session
more glad;
realise how lucky you are to be two ... together;
and make the best memories any two people ever had.

A Love That's Meant to Be

Ju.D.G.

Love has led us here today
Along a path – that was meant to be
What started as a friendship
Grew to love for you and me.

We bring together different worlds
Where all around us see
That we are one – upon this earth
And our love was meant to be.

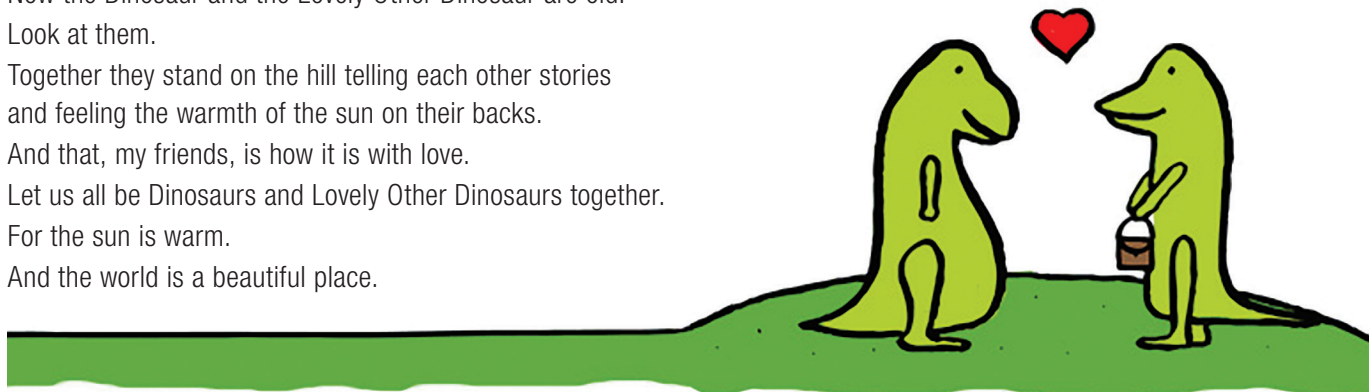
So on this day – each year from now
With all – we'll share the key
For with you my friend – my love one
Our love was meant to be.



A Lovely Love Story

Edward Monkton

The fierce Dinosaur was trapped inside his cage of ice.
Although it was cold he was happy in there. It was, after all, his cage.
Then along came the Lovely Other Dinosaur.
The Lovely Other Dinosaur melted the Dinosaur's cage with kind words and loving thoughts.
I like this Dinosaur thought the Lovely Other Dinosaur.
Although he is fierce he is also tender and he is funny.
He is also quite clever though I will not tell him this for now.
I like this Lovely Other Dinosaur, thought the Dinosaur.
She is beautiful and she is different and she smells so nice.
She is also a free spirit which is a quality I much admire in a dinosaur.
But he can be so distant and so peculiar at times, thought the Lovely Other Dinosaur.
He is also overly fond of things.
Are all Dinosaurs so overly fond of things?
But her mind skips from here to there so quickly thought the Dinosaur.
She is also uncommonly keen on shopping.
Are all Lovely Other Dinosaurs so uncommonly keen on shopping?
I will forgive his peculiarity and his concern for things, thought the Lovely Other Dinosaur.
For they are part of what makes him a richly charactered individual.
I will forgive her skipping mind and her fondness for shopping, thought the Dinosaur.
For she fills our life with beautiful thoughts and wonderful surprises.
Besides, I am not unkeen on shopping either.
Now the Dinosaur and the Lovely Other Dinosaur are old.
Look at them.
Together they stand on the hill telling each other stories
and feeling the warmth of the sun on their backs.
And that, my friends, is how it is with love.
Let us all be Dinosaurs and Lovely Other Dinosaurs together.
For the sun is warm.
And the world is a beautiful place.



Marriage Means Being In Love for the Rest of Your Life

Chris Ardis

Marriage is love walking hand in hand together. It's laughing with each other about silly little things, and learning to discuss big things with care and tenderness. In marriage, love is trusting each other when you're apart. It's getting over disappointments and hurts, knowing that these are present in all relationships. It's the realisation that there is no one else in this world that you'd rather be with than the one you're married to. It's thinking of new things to do together; it's growing old together. Marriage is being in love for the rest of your life.

The Day Has Arrived

Linda Footer

The day has arrived
We are now Groom and Bride
Together before you we stand.
We can hardly believe
We are about to receive
A ring placed on each other's hand.

We give thanks to our parents
For all their hard work
And the money they had to spend too.
Not just for today
But a lifetime away
We thank you for all that you do.

For friends who have gathered
To us you have mattered
In each individual way.
Thank you for coming
Celebrate with us now
This, our wonderful wedding day.

Wedding Day

Adrian Lomas

This day of days
Your separate ways
Become one.

This ring, this vow,
Tell you that now
A new life's begun.

Two roads converging
Then, finally merging
Under the sun.

Good luck holding
A future unfolding
That can't be undone.

A Reading from 'The Notebook'

Nicholas Sparks

I didn't plan on falling in love with you and I doubt you planned on falling in love with me. But once we fell, it was clear neither of us could control what was happening to us. We fell in love despite our differences and once we did, something rare and beautiful was created. For me, love like this has only happened once and that's why every minute we have spent together is seared in my memory. I'll never forget a single moment of it.

I love you, I am who I am because of you. You are my every reason, every hope and every dream I've ever had. And no matter what happens to us in the future, every day we are together is the greatest day of my life. I will always be yours.

The best kind of love is the kind that awakens the soul and makes us reach for more, that plants a fire in our hearts and brings peace to our minds. And that's what you've given me, that is what I hope to give you forever. I want you, I want all of you, you and me, every day.



The Art of Marriage

Wilferd Arlan Peterson

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens. A good marriage must be created.

In the art of marriage, the little things are big things...

It is never being too old to hold hands.

It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day.

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is never taking the other for granted; the courtship should not end with the honeymoon, it should continue through all the years.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.

It is standing together facing the world.

It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.

It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.

It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have wings of an angel.

It is not looking for perfection in each other.

It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humour.

It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.

It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is finding room for the things of the spirit.

It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.

It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.

It is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.

Marriage Joins Two People in the Circle of its Love

Edmund O'Neill

Marriage is a commitment for life, the best that two people can find and bring out in each other.

It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other relationship can equal. It is a physical and an emotional joining that is promised for a lifetime. Within the circle of its love, marriage encompasses all of life's most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other's best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener and critic. And there may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child. Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller, memories are fresher, commitment is stronger, even anger is felt more strongly and passes away more quickly. Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences and new ways of expressing a love that is deeper than life. When two people pledge their love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique unto themselves which binds them closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, a potential made in the hearts of two people who love each other and takes a lifetime to fulfil.

True Friendship

Judy Bielicki

It is often said that it is love that makes the world go round. However, without doubt, it is friendship which keeps our spinning existence on an even keel. True friendship provides so many of the essentials for a happy life – it is the foundation on which to build an enduring relationship; it is the mortar which bonds us together in harmony; and it is the calm, warm protection we sometimes need when the world outside seems cold and chaotic. True friendship holds a mirror to our foibles and failings, without destroying our sense of worthiness. True friendship nurtures our hopes, supports us in our disappointments and encourages us to grow to our best potential. Bride and Groom came together as friends. Today, they pledge to each other not only their love, but also the strength, warmth and most importantly, the fun of true friendship.

What is Love?

Walter Rinder

Love is just not looking at each other and saying “You’re wonderful”.

There are times when we are anything but wonderful.

Love is looking out in the same direction.

It is linking our strength to pull a common load.

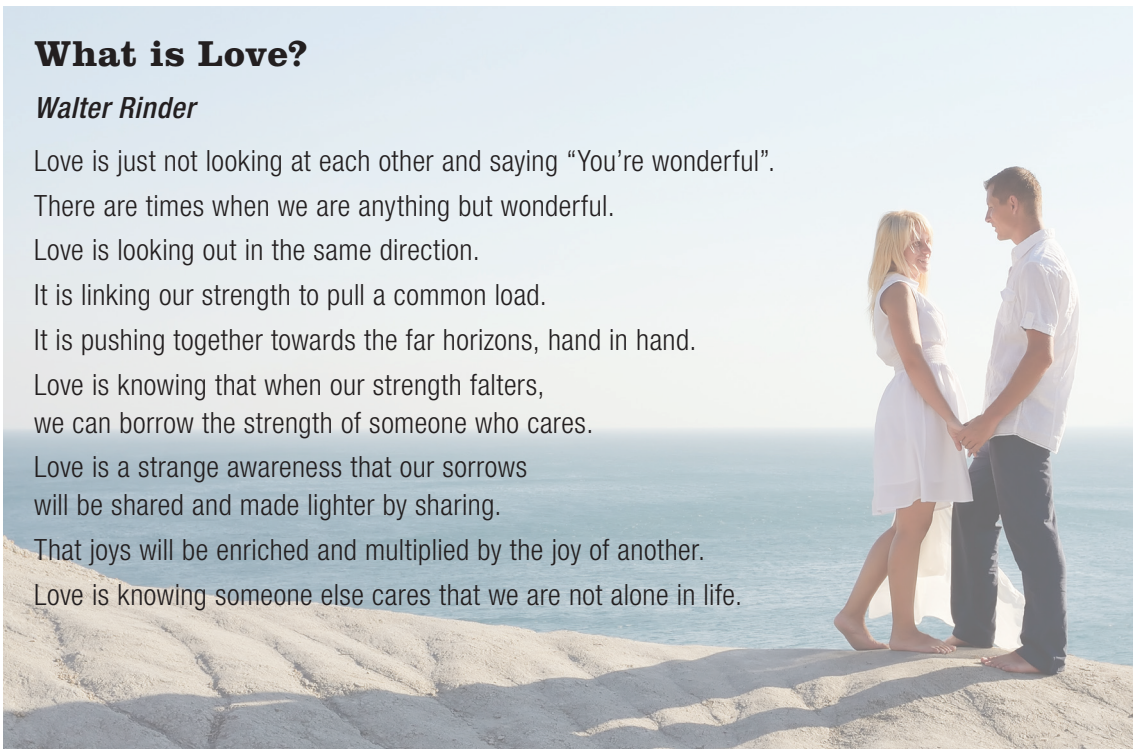
It is pushing together towards the far horizons, hand in hand.

Love is knowing that when our strength falters, we can borrow the strength of someone who cares.

Love is a strange awareness that our sorrows will be shared and made lighter by sharing.

That joys will be enriched and multiplied by the joy of another.

Love is knowing someone else cares that we are not alone in life.



Blessing For a Marriage

James Dillet Freeman

May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring and may life grant you also patience, tolerance and understanding. May you always need one another – not so much to fill your emptiness as to help you know your fullness. A mountain needs a valley to be complete; the valley does not make the mountain less, but more; and the valley is more a valley because it has a mountain towering over it. So let it be with you and you. May you need one another, but not out of weakness. May you want one another, but not out of lack. May you entice one another, but not compel one another. May you succeed in all important ways with one another and not fail in the little graces. May you look for things to praise, often say, “I love you!” and take no notice of small faults. If you have quarrels that push you apart, may both of you hope to have good sense enough to take the first step back. May you enter into the mystery which is the awareness of one another’s presence – no more physical than spiritual, warm and near when you are side by side and warm and near when you are in separate rooms or even distant cities. May you have happiness and may you find it making one another happy. May you have love and may you find it loving one another!

The Union

Robert Fulghum

You have known each other from the first glance of acquaintance to this point of commitment. At some point, you decided to marry. From that moment of yes, to this moment of yes, indeed, you have been making commitments in an informal way. All of those conversations that were held in a car, or over a meal, or during long walks – all those conversations that began with, “When we’re married” and continued with “I will” and “you will” and “we will” – all those late night talks that included “someday” and “somehow” and “maybe” – and all those promises that are unspoken matters of the heart. All these common things and more, are the real process of a wedding.

The symbolic vows that you are about to make are a way of saying to one another, “You know all those things that we’ve promised, hoped and dreamed – well, I meant it all, every word.”

Look at one another and remember this moment in time. Before this moment you have been many things to one another – acquaintance, friend, companion, lover, dancing partner, even teacher, for you have learned much from one another these past few years. Shortly you shall say a few words that will take you across a threshold of life and things between you will never quite be the same.

For after today you shall say to the world – This is my husband. This is my wife.

When Two People Join

Regina Hill

When two people join together and bond their lives forever because they are certain they have something special that will make their commitment last...this is the first act of faith. Upon this act of faith these two people will build a life.

And as long as their determination stays with them this life will always be their hope, their dreams, their truth, their being, their inspiration and their source of strength.

Through their life together, they will hurt and laugh.

Together they will feel all of life’s up and downs.

They will learn and grow through trial and error.

The lessons will show them the meaning of true love.

And the difference between a love that lasts and one that just gives up.

These two people will face each failure together and discover the strength to go on.

They will encourage each other’s dreams and forgive each other’s faults.

Through a labour of love, these two will become as one, fighting against the odds and ultimately creating a commitment that will grow into an infinite love.

Blessing of the Hands

These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow and forever.

These are the hands that will work alongside yours, as together you build your future. These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years and with the slightest touch, will comfort you like no other. These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief fills your mind. These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes; tears of sorrow, and tears of joy. These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children. These are the hands that will help you to hold your family as one. These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it. And lastly, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged, will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch.

Love

Helen Steiner Rice

Love is like magic and it always will be,
For love still remains life's sweet mystery.
Love works in ways that are wondrous and strange,
And there's nothing in life that love cannot change!
Love can transform the most commonplace
Into beauty and splendor and sweetness and grace.
Love is unselfish, understanding and kind,
For it sees with its heart and not with its mind.
Love is the answer that everyone seeks;
Love is the language that every heart speaks.
Love can't be bought, it is priceless and free.
Love, like pure magic, is life's sweet mystery!

I Carry Your Heart

E.E. Cummings

I carry your heart with me (I carry it in my heart)
I am never without it (anywhere I go you go, my dear;
and whatever is done by only me is your doing, my darling)
I fear no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet)
I want no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you
here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;
which grows higher than the soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart
I carry your heart (I carry it in my heart).

He Never Leaves the Seat Up

Pam Ayres

He never leaves the seat up
Or wet towels upon the floor
The toothpaste has the lid on
And he always shuts the door!

She's very clean and tidy
Though she may sometimes delude
Leave your things out at your peril
In a second they'll have moved!

He's a very active person
As are all his next of kin
Whereas she likes lazy days
He'll still drag her to the gym!

He romances her and dines her
Home cooked dinners and the like
He even knows her favourite food
And spoils her day and night!

She's thoughtful when he looks at her
A smile upon his face
Will he look that good in 50 years?
When his dentures aren't in place?!

He says he loves her figure
And her mental prowess too
But when gravity takes her over
Will she charm with her IQ?

She says she loves his kindness
And his patience is a must
And of course she thinks he's handsome
Which in her eyes is a plus!

They're both not wholly perfect
But who are we to judge
He can be pig headed
Whereas she won't even budge!

All that said and done
They love the time they spent together
And I hope as I'm sure you do
That this fine day will last forever.

He'll be more than just her husband
He'll also be her friend
And she'll be more than just his wife
She'd be his soul mate – till the end.



I'll Be There For You

Louise Cuddon

I'll be there my darling, through thick and through thin
When your mind's in a mess and your head's in a spin
When your plane's been delayed and you've missed the last train
When life is just threatening to drive you insane
When your thrilling whodunit has lost its last page
When somebody tells you, you're looking your age
When your coffee's too cool and your wine is too warm
When the forecast said "Fine", but you're out in a storm
When your quick break hotel, turns into a slum
And your holiday photos show only your thumb
When you park for five minutes in a resident's bay
And return to discover you've been towed away
When the jeans that you bought in hope or in haste
Just stick on your hips and don't reach round your waist
When the food you most like brings you out in red rashes
When as soon as you boot up the bloody thing crashes
So my darling, my sweetheart, my dear...
When you break a rule, when you act the fool
When you've got the flu, when you're in a stew
When you're last in the queue, don't feel blue
'cause I'm telling you, I'll be there.

Excerpt from Captain Corelli's Mandolin

Louis de Bernieres

Love is a temporary madness, it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides.

And when it subsides you have to make a decision.

You have to work out whether your roots have so entwined together
that it is inconceivable that you should ever part.

Because this is what love is.

Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of eternal passion.

That is just being "in love", which any fool can do.

Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away,
and this is both an art and a fortunate accident.

Those that truly love, have roots that grow towards each other underground,
and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from their branches,
they find that they are one tree and not two.

Today I Marry My Friend

Bertrand Russell

Today I marry my friend,
The one I have laughed and cried with,
The one I have learned from and shared with
The one I have chosen to support and encourage,
And give myself to, through all
The days given us to share.
Today I marry the one I love.

On Your Wedding Day

Nicholas Gordon

On your wedding day, as you trade vows,
No ordinary moment hurries by.
You partake, as far as time allows,
Of something more than time and Earth and sky:
Unknowable, invisible, yet there;
Resplendent to the heart if not the face;
More than both of you, yet less than air;
A transcendental act conferring grace.
Reason might say, how can this be true?
Return then to the heart, for this is love.
In making vows, you make one out of two,
A mystery beyond what words can prove.
Go then as one flesh, one home, one heart:
Each still a whole, yet also now a part.

Marriage Is Love

Gloria Matthew

If two are caring as they are sharing life's hopes and fears.
If the music of laughter outweighs sadness and tears. Marriage is togetherness.
If both derive pleasure from the mere presence of each other, yet when parted
no jealousies restrict, worry or smother. Marriage is freedom.
If achievements mean more when they benefit two and consideration is shown
with each point of view. Marriage is respect.
And if togetherness, freedom and respect are combined with a joy that words
can never fully define, then marriage is love.

A Marriage

Michael Blumenthal

You are holding up a ceiling with both arms.

It is very heavy, but you must hold it up, or else it will fall down on you.

Your arms are tired, terribly tired, and, as the day goes on, it feels as if either your arms or the ceiling will soon collapse. But then, unexpectedly, something wonderful happens:

Someone, a man or a woman, walks into the room and holds their arms up to the ceiling beside you.

So you finally get to take down your arms.

You feel the relief of respite, the blood flowing back to your fingers and arms.

And when your partner's arms tire, you hold up your own to relieve them again.

And it can go on like this for many years without the house falling.



Excerpt from the Bridge Across Forever

Richard Bach

A soulmate is someone who has locks that fit our keys, and keys to fit our locks. When we feel safe enough to open the locks, our truest selves step out and we can be completely and honestly who we are; we can be loved for who we are and not for who we're pretending to be. Each unveils the best part of the other. No matter what else goes wrong around us, with that one person we're safe in our own paradise. Our soulmate is someone who shares our deepest longings, our sense of direction. When we're two balloons, and together our direction is up, chances are we've found the right person. Our soulmate is the one who makes life come to life.

From A Natural History Of Love

Diane Ackerman

Love. What a small word we use for an idea so immense and powerful. It has altered the flow of history, calmed monsters, kindled works of art, cheered the forlorn, turned tough guys to mush, consoled the enslaved, driven strong women mad, glorified the humble, fuelled national scandals, bankrupted robber barons and made mincemeat of kings. How can love's spaciousness be conveyed in the narrow confines of one syllable? Love is an ancient delirium, a desire older than civilization, with taproots spreading into deep and mysterious days. The heart is a living museum. In each of its galleries, no matter how narrow or dimly lit, preserved forever like wondrous diatoms, are our moments of loving and being loved.



The Promise

Heather Berry

Within this blessed union of souls, where two hearts intertwine to become one, there lies a promise. Perfectly born, divinely created and intimately shared, it is a place where the hope and majesty of beginnings reside. Where all things are made possible by the astounding love shared by two spirits. As you hold each other's hands in this promise and eagerly look into the future in each other's eyes, may your unconditional love and devotion take you to places where you've both only dreamed. Where you'll dwell for a lifetime of happiness, sheltered in the warmth of each other's arms.

Love Is Friendship Caught Fire

Laura Hendricks

Love is friendship caught fire; it is quiet, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. It is loyalty through good and bad times. It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weaknesses. Love is content with the present, hopes for the future and does not brood over the past. It is the day-in and day-out chronicles of irritations, problems, compromises, small disappointments, big victories and working toward common goals. If you have love in your life, it can make up for a great many things you lack. If you do not have it, no matter what else there is, it is not enough.

Oh, the Places You'll Go

Dr Seuss

Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You're off to Great Places! You're off and away!
You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself any direction you choose.
You're on your own. And you know what you know.
And YOU are the couple who'll decide where to go.

You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care.
About some you will say, "We don't choose to go there."
With your heads full of brains and your shoes full of feet,
You're too smart to go down, any not-so-good street.
And you may not find any you'll want to go down.
In that case, of course, you'll head straight out of town.

It's opener there in the wide open air,
Out there things can happen and frequently do
To people as brainy and footsy as you.
And when things start to happen, don't worry. Don't stew.
Just go right along. You'll start happening too.

OH! THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!
You'll be on your way up!
You'll be seeing great sights!
You'll join the high fliers who soar to great heights!
You won't lag behind, because you'll have all the speed.
You'll pass the whole gang, and you'll soon take the lead.

Wherever you fly you'll be best of the best.
Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.
Except when you don't.
Because sometimes, you won't.
You'll get mixed up of course, as you already know.
You'll get mixed up with so many strange birds as you go.

So be sure when you step.
Step with great care and great tact
And remember that Life's a Great Balancing Act.
Just never forget to be dexterous and deft.
And never mix up your right foot with your left.

And will you succeed?
Yes! You will indeed!
(98 and $\frac{3}{4}$ percent guaranteed.)
KIDS, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS!
So, be your name Buxbaum or Dowrie
or Bass or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea,
You're off to great places!
Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting. So ... get on your way!



The Prophet

Kahlil Gibran

You were born together and together you shall be for evermore.
You shall be together when white wings of death scatter your days.
Aye, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.
Love one another, but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup, but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread, but eat not from the same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,
Even as the strings of the lute are alone though they quiver with the same music
Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together, yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.

Celebration

The Rev. Carl Thitchener

We celebrate the love that brought you to this day.
With love that deepens through many years, may they know its meaning and its mystery – how we become truly one in sharing ourselves with one another and yet, remain truly two in our own uniqueness. May your house be a place of happiness for all who enter it, a place where the old and the young are renewed in each other's company, a place for growing, a place for music, a place for laughter. And when shadows and darkness fall within its rooms, may it still be a place of hope and strength for all who enter it, especially for those who may be entrusted in your care. May no person be alien to your compassion. May your larger family be the family of all humankind. And may those who are nearest to you and dearest to you constantly be enriched by the beauty and the energy of your love for each other.
Amen.

I Promise

Dorothy R. Colgan

I promise to give you the best of myself and to ask you no more than you can give.

I promise to respect you as your own person and to realize that your interests, desires and needs are no less important than my own.

I promise to share with you my time and my attention and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship.

I promise to keep myself open to you, to let you see through the window of my world into my innermost fears and feelings, secrets and dreams.

I promise to grow along with you, to be willing to face changes in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting.

I promise to love you in good times and in bad, with all I have to give and all I feel inside, in the only way I know how.

Completely and forever.



The Perfect Love, The Perfect Friend

Renee Duvall

Because you are my love... I know the joy that comes from feeling closer to someone than I've ever felt before.

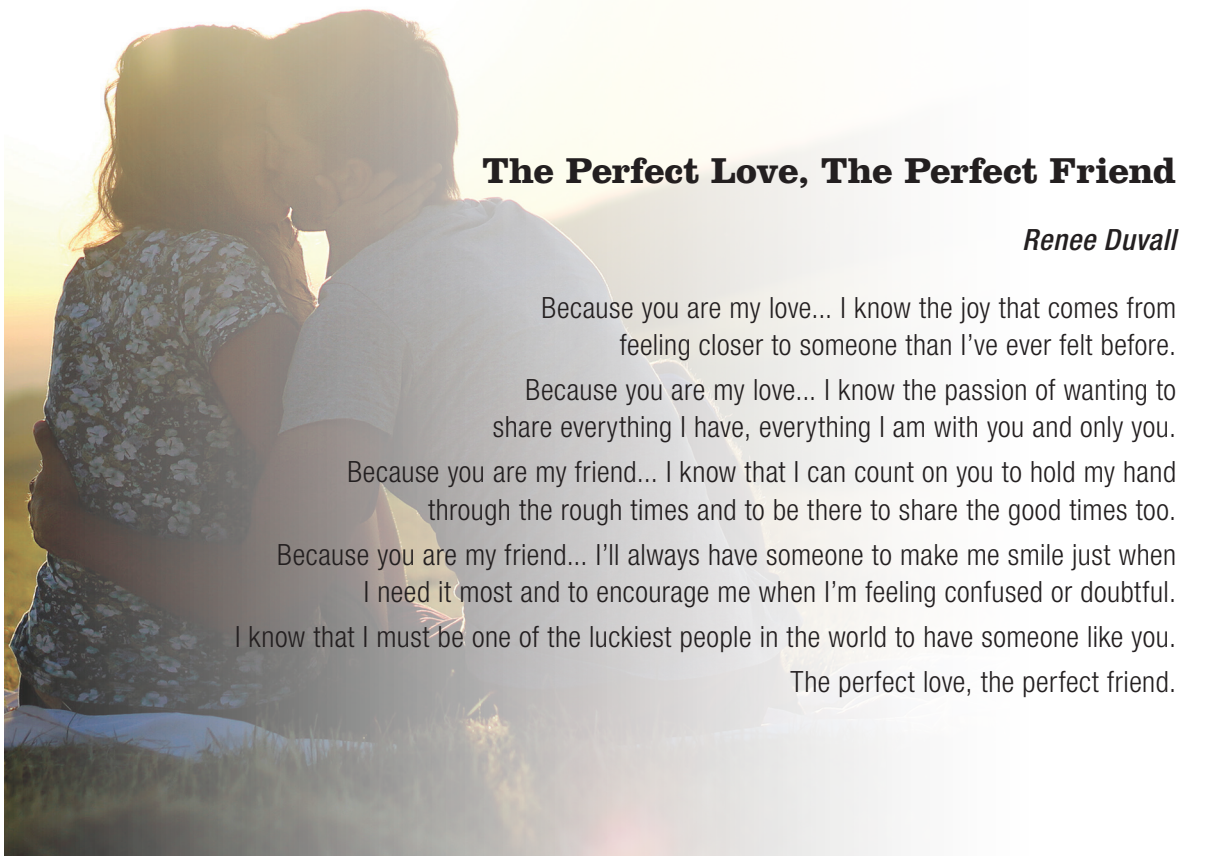
Because you are my love... I know the passion of wanting to share everything I have, everything I am with you and only you.

Because you are my friend... I know that I can count on you to hold my hand through the rough times and to be there to share the good times too.

Because you are my friend... I'll always have someone to make me smile just when I need it most and to encourage me when I'm feeling confused or doubtful.

I know that I must be one of the luckiest people in the world to have someone like you.

The perfect love, the perfect friend.



WEDDING CEREMONY RITUALS

All celebrants should have a detailed knowledge of different wedding ceremony rituals that they can offer couples to include in their ceremony. A ritual can add a very personal touch to a wedding ceremony. Below is a list of traditional wedding ceremony rituals with sample wording included. See page 40 for more information on cultural and religious inclusions. Please note that most rituals can take many different forms and celebrants will have their own interpretation for each one.

Rose/Flower Ceremony

After the vows, the bride and groom can give each other a flower as their first gift as husband and wife. It can be a promise that whenever they argue through their marriage they will always present each other with a flower to say sorry. Alternatively the bride and groom can present their mothers with a flower as a token of their thanks and love. In fact, a flower can be given to anyone at the ceremony!

Rose ritual for bride and groom

Bride and Groom have chosen a Rose Ceremony as a symbol of their love for each other. Your gift to each other for your wedding today has been your wedding rings, which shall always be an outward demonstration of your vows of love and respect; and a public showing of your commitment to each other. You now have what remains the most honourable titles that may exist between a man and a woman – the titles of “husband” and “wife.” In the past, the rose was considered a symbol of love and a single rose always meant only one thing – it meant the words “I love you.” So it is appropriate that your first gift as husband and wife would be a single rose. Please exchange your first gift as husband and wife. That rose says the words: “I still love you.” The other should accept this rose for the words which cannot be found and remember the love and hope that you both share today.

Rose ritual for mothers

*Long before our bride and groom were standing here, they were loved and nurtured by two very special ladies. Can our two mothers please come forward and stand next to their children?
Bride’s Mother and Groom’s Mother, our bride and groom wanted to acknowledge you on their wedding day with a gift of a single rose as their way of saying thank you for everything you have done to make them the person they are today. Thank you mums!
(Bride and groom give their mothers a rose)*



Sand Ceremony

The bride and groom pour coloured sand (or salt) from individual glasses into a larger centre glass as a symbolic act of the blending of their lives and families. As the grains of sand will never be able to be separated, so the couple are bonded for life.

Two variations on a wedding sand ceremony:

- A **parents'** variation of the sand ceremony is a great way to involve the couple's parents. Each set of parents, the bride and the groom have a vase with different coloured sand. The parents take turns to pour their sand into the central vase before the couple, creating a layered effect. This symbolises their support of the couple in marriage.
- A **children's** variation of the sand ceremony is perfect if the couple have children together already, or have children from a previous relationship. Each child, the bride and the groom have a small vase with coloured or white sand and they pour this into the central vase just before the couple finish pouring in their sand. This provides a layer where the couple's and children's sands are mixed. The children can then pour the rest of their sand on top of the couple's sand.

Bride and Groom, the individual urns of sand represent your two families and your separate lives. As these urns of sand are poured into the family urn, the individual urns of sand will no longer exist, but will be joined together as one. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual urns, so will your marriage and family be, united as one for all of your days. Please unite your sand.

OR

Bride and Groom today you are making a life-long commitment to share the rest of your lives with each other. Your relationship is symbolised through the pouring of these two individual containers of sand; one, representing you, Bride and all that you were, all that you are and all that you will ever be; and the other representing you, Groom and all that you were and all that you are and all that you will ever be.

As you each hold your sand, the separate containers of sand represent your lives to this moment; individual and unique. As you now combine your sand together, your lives also join together as one.

You may now blend the sand together symbolising the uniting of the Bride and Groom into one.

Lovers' Knot / Hand Fasting

The bride and groom's hands are tied with ribbon or rope (usually when they say their vows) and then their hands are removed and the knot is fastened. The tied knot symbolises their eternal tie.

Bride and Groom have chosen to have a hand fasting.

Hand fasting is a Celtic ritual that involves tying together the hands of the Bride and Groom, to symbolise the coming together and staying together of the couple throughout their lives.

Bride and Groom will you link your hands please?

(Celebrant drapes a ribbon over the hands)

As this ribbon is tied, so are your lives bound together.

With the entwining of this ribbon, we tie all the dreams, love and happiness wished here in this place to your lives, for as long as love will last. Woven into this ribbon, into its very fibres, are all the hopes of your family and friends as well as your own dreams, for your new life together.

OR

This silken ribbon entwines two hearts in love together.

Friendship's dearest pledge is made in joy forever.

United you will walk through life sharing Earth's pain and pleasure.

Hand in hand you shall strive for achievement in life together.

Should the path be rough and thorny let love sustain and guide you.

Should the way be strewn with roses let the joy of life sustain you.

Now I tie this lovers' knot, you two are joined in oneness. Gentle are the bonds of this union, pull one way and the bonds are strengthened, pull the other way and they are loosened.

OR

Seven coloured ribbons will now be loosely tied around Bride's and Groom's joined hands, each with a separate blessing:

Red – for strength and courage, good health, prosperity, and longevity;

Orange – for open hearts, sensitivity and understanding;

Yellow – for enthusiasm, spontaneity and equality;

Green – for compassion, affection and caring;

Blue – for sincerity, easy self-expression and honest communication;

Purple – for clear vision and wisdom, for peace and harmony in all ways; and

Gold – for unity, divine blessing and presence in your lives.

Release of Butterflies

The bride and groom release butterflies and the celebrant invite guests to make a wish for the couple.

This is an old American Indian legend.

If anyone desires a wish to come true they must first capture a butterfly and whisper that wish to it. Since a butterfly can make no sound, the butterfly cannot reveal the wish to anyone but the Great Spirit who hears and sees all. In gratitude for giving the beautiful butterfly its freedom, the Great Spirit always grants the wish. So, according to legend, by making a wish and giving the butterfly its freedom, the wish will be taken to the heavens and be granted. We have gathered to grant this couple all our best wishes and are about to set these butterflies free in trust that all these wishes will be granted.



Candle Lighting Ceremony

Despite having religious significance, candle-lighting is quite common as a symbolic act of blending and binding. Whilst this ceremony can take many forms, it's common that the bride and groom light individual small candles and together light a larger centre candle as a symbolic act of their union.

A candle lighting ceremony can also be performed as a memorial to acknowledge a family member or close friend who is no longer with us.

Bride and Groom, the two individual candles represent your two families and your separate lives. They also represent the brightness and warmth of your love that you bring into your relationship. Bride and Groom, please light your candles.

(Bride and Groom light individual candles)

I ask that each of you take your candles and that together you light the centre marriage candle.

(Bride and Groom light marriage candle)

The individual candles represent your lives before today. The flame from the first candle is not diminished when it lights the marriage candle but is made stronger and brighter. May this marriage candle represent the joining of your love, your lives, families and cultural heritage.



Ring Warming Ceremony

The wedding rings are passed around the guests (all or just the immediate family) and each person makes a wish for the couple. This ritual is especially touching if the bride and groom have young children from a previous relationship – it involves them in the ceremony and asks for their blessing.

(To CHILDREN) I ask you to bless these rings and as you hold them in your hands, may the warmth from your hearts bring warmth to the rings.

(CHILDREN pass the rings to Bride and Groom)

(To Bride and Groom) These rings, now warmed by those you love the most, will forever show the world that you are one and they will carry with them the eternal love and blessing of your children.



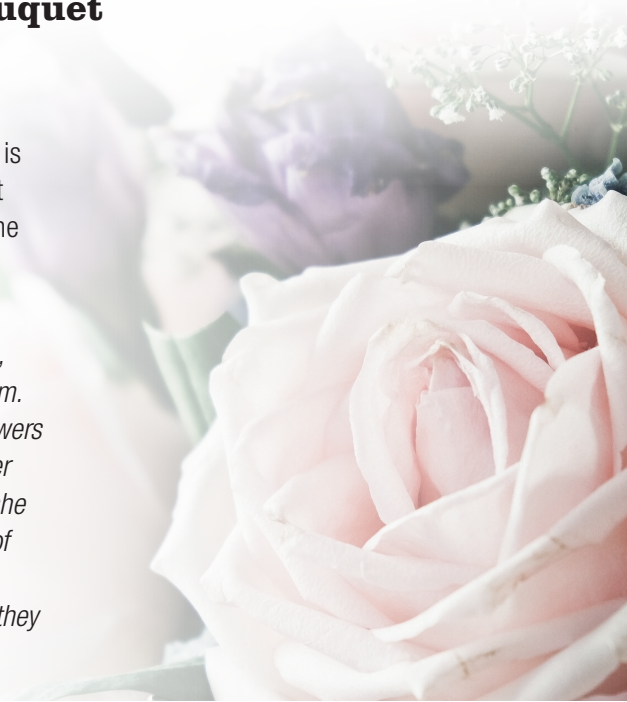
Time Capsule

This ritual can take many forms. The couple can ask guests to bring something on the day to place in a time capsule. It can be opened on any anniversary (1st, 5th, 10th etc...) Some nice ideas are photos, wish notes, letters, a bottle of wine (fitting if at a winery) and newspaper clippings from that day.

Adding Flowers to the Bouquet

The bride collects flowers from all or certain guests (special individuals) and places them in her bouquet as she walks down the aisle. This is a nice idea to include someone when you can't think how else to! The flowers can represent the support from her family and friends.

For many people, flowers are something special in their lives. As family and friends, you are very special to the Bride and Groom. That is why they asked people to bring flowers today so Bride can use these flowers in her bouquet. The gathering of the flowers as she walked down the aisle is like a gathering of the people important in their lives, joined together, to stand with her and Groom as they exchange their marriage vows.



Wishing Stones

Before the ceremony starts the celebrant hands out wishing stones or marbles to all the guests who during the ceremony hold the stone in the palm of their hands and make a wish for the couple. After the ceremony the guests are invited to place their stones into a glass jar. When all the stones are in the jar, the jar is sealed and becomes a keepsake for the couple representing the wishes of all their family and friends.



Honouring Deceased Loved Ones

It can be quite touching for the bride and groom and their families if any special deceased loved ones are acknowledged during the ceremony. This can be done through lighting a candle, flowers or having a framed photo of the deceased on the signing table.

Invoking the Four Directions

In many cultures it is believed that the human soul shares characteristics with all things divine. It is this belief which assigned virtues to the four cardinal directions: east, south, west and north. It is according to this belief that we align ourselves with these elements. Each of these blessings forms the four cardinal directions, which emphasise those things that will help to build a happy and successful union.

(Bride and Groom to face each of the four directions)

*Please turn to the **East**...*

*May this union be influenced with the gifts of the East and the element of **Air**, for openness and breath, communication of the heart, and purity of the mind and body.*

From the east you receive the gift of a new beginning with the rising of each Sun and the understanding that each day is a new opportunity for growth.

*Please turn to the **South**...*

*May this union be influenced with the gifts of the South and the element of **Fire**, for energy, passion, creativity and the warmth of a loving home. From the fire within you generate light, which you will share with one another in even the darkest of times.*

*Please turn to the **West**...*

*May this union be influenced with the gifts of the West, the element of **Water**, for your capacity to feel emotion. In marriage you offer absolute trust to one another, and vow to keep your hearts open in sorrow as well as joy.*

*Please turn to the **North**...*

*May this union be influenced with the gifts of the North, the element of **Earth**, which provides sustenance, fertility and security. The earth will feed and enrich you and help you to build a stable home to which you may always return.*

As above, so below. As within, so without. May the four elements converge as the centre of this union.

VOWS AND RING VERSES

Vows are the one part of the ceremony where couples usually require the greatest assistance. Every couple wants to say the perfect words to each other. Some couples like to write their own vows, others like to select standard template vows and some just want to say the legally required words. For those couples writing their vows, feel welcome to encourage them to use the below samples as a starting point. For those who wish to select sample vows, you may like to provide them the option to look at a few, take some lines from one and some from another to create their own unique vows.

Please note the legal vows that are required according to the *Marriage Act 1961* have not been included in these samples.

Vows can be presented in the following ways:

- Recited after the celebrant
- Read off a palm card
- Memorised by the couple (note: if the couple choose to memorise, always be there on standby in case wedding day nerves set in and the couple forget).

Some tips you may like to pass on to your couples to help them create and write their own vows:

- What would you like to promise to your partner (serious and light-hearted)?
- Are there parts of your relationship you would like to emphasise?
- Feel free to use attributes in your vows to describe your love, your partner and your relationship.
- Do you have special names, words or sayings that are just between you and your partner?
- What does marrying this person mean to you? How does it make you feel?

Remember the following:

- This is a public declaration of your commitment, so others will be listening!
- Try not to talk for too long! Quality not quantity.
- Don't stray from your personality – serious, fun, light-hearted – stay true to yourself.
- Above all, make sure your vows are sincere.



Template Vows

It is with much love and great happiness that I stand with you today to be married. In doing so, I join my life with yours, encompassing all sorrows and joys, all hardships and triumphs.

As I stand by you today it is with the knowledge that our lives together will realise the promises that were made today and it is to this future that I humbly submit.

I Bride take you Groom to be my friend, my lover and my wife/husband. I choose you above all others to share my life with me in marriage. I love you for yourself and I want you to become all that you can be. I will love and respect you all the days of my life. I make this pledge today in the presence of my family and friends.

I love you and want you to share my life with me in marriage. I promise to always be there for you and to accept you as you are. I shall honour this pledge as long as I live.

I pledge to share my life openly with you, to speak the truth to you in love. I promise to honour and tenderly care for you, to cherish and encourage your own fulfilment as an individual for the rest of my life.

Bride/Groom, I choose you above all others, to share my life with me in marriage. I promise to love and cherish you always, forever increasing over the passage of time. I promise to stand by you in all things and provide for your warmth, tenderness, understanding and protection. I promise to nurture a home environment filled with love, light and laughter. I promise to speak to you lovingly, with an open heart and to always honour the divine within you, your heart, your body and your spirit. I promise to fully appreciate your presence in my life and to accept you fully as you are. I promise to support and encourage you in the fulfilment of your hopes, your dreams, your life purpose, your highest good. This is my pledge and my commitment to you and our life together as wife/husband and wife/husband for all the days we shall live.

I affirm my love for you Bride/Groom as I invite you to share my life. I promise always to respect your needs and individuality. I will endeavour through kindness, unselfishness and trust to achieve a warm rich life we will now share.

I will be faithful to you in thought, word and deed. I will respect you as an individual and be true to you through good times and bad. To these things I give my word.

In doing so I affirm my love for you, as I invite you to share my life. I promise always to speak the truth to you; love you and care for you. This is my commitment to you, made in love, kept in faith, lived in hope and eternally made new.

In declaring my love for you today, as we begin our married life, I make this commitment to share my life with you. I will always be there as your partner, lover, friend and buddy as we embrace the experiences of life together. Bride/Groom, I know my love for you will continue to grow, and that we will enjoy our lifetime together.

Bride/Groom, I want to be with you always just as you are. I choose you above all others, to share my life with me in marriage. I love you for yourself and I want you to become all that you can be. I promise to honour this pledge as long as I live.

I Bride/Groom wish you Bride/Groom to be my devoted wife/husband as I will be your devoted wife/husband from today and forever more, through all the highs and lows that life has to offer, while we both shall live.

Bride/Groom I promise to always respect your needs and to try to understand your feelings. I will be unselfish and trusting and will strive for a happy life together.

I Bride/Groom promise to be good to you Bride/Groom in good times and bad, in sickness and in health. I promise to be patient and understanding. I promise to listen to you and support you at all times. I will love you and honour you, all the days of my life.

I will try to be a loving wife/husband. I promise to respect you as an individual. I intend to develop as a person in partnership with you. I want to love you through good fortune and adversity, while we both shall live.

In doing so I vow to do my utmost to make our lives together a true partnership. I commit to being motivated in our marriage and I will observe and act on your needs. I vow to care for your wellbeing and show my love in all I do throughout our lives together. I will endeavour to comfort you and enrich you with my love. I will show you I can be an equal partner and with my support build a stable foundation for our lives together.

I, Bride/Groom, take you, Bride/Groom, from this day forward and into the long forever, to be my beloved, my sweetheart, my darling, my wife/husband. I promise always to love you, to honour you, to adore you, to give thanks for the gift of your presence. You are the one I admire; you are the one I adore. You are the one I choose to go on with forever, from now until the end of my life.

I, Bride/Groom take you, Bride/Groom, to be my wife/husband. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

I promise to trust you, to tell you the truth and treat you gently and with respect, in my thoughts, words and actions, whether or not you are present. Bride/Groom, today we make a commitment to one another. I want you to know that you are a precious gift and that you bring so much joy into my life. I affirm the special bond between us and promise to keep it alive always. I promise to be your confidant, your best friend and to share in your hopes and dreams. With this vow we face new responsibilities together. I will be trustworthy as your husband/wife and will love you in all circumstances.

I, Bride/Groom, take thee, Bride/Groom, to be my cherished husband/wife, to be my faithful partner, and to share my love from this day forward. I will always love you without reservation, give you comfort, support you in each and every way, laugh, cry and share experiences with you, grow with you in every way, always be open, honest and forgiving, cherish and support you as long as we both shall live.

I, Bride/Groom, take you, Bride/Groom, always knowing in my heart that forever you will be my loyal best friend, my partner in life and my one and only true love. On this special day, I happily give you, in the presence of family and friends, my promise to always be by your side as your truly devoted husband/wife both in sickness and in health, both the good and the bad times, every day and night, I pledge.

I will always love you without reservation, give you comfort, support you in each and every way, laugh, cry and share experiences with you, grow with you in every way, always be open, honest and forgiving, cherish and support you as long as we both shall live.

To laugh with you in joy, to hold your hand in sorrow, to grow with you in love, to live with you in peace and hope, as long as we both shall live.

I promise to always love you, to be faithful and understanding, through all the days given to us to share.

Together we will share all things, face the world with courage and be open with one another in every way. I want to walk beside you for the rest of my life. Because of your love and trust, my life is fulfilled and has new meaning. I look forward to facing the challenges of marriage and our future together.

I offer everything I am, everything I have and everything I hope to be. I entrust myself completely to you today and forever. I promise you my heart, my hopes and my dreams. Most of all I promise to be your loving wife/husband and always your best friend.

Bride/Groom, you are my greatest love and my last love. Until I met you I didn't give true love much thought, but since you came into my life, I struggle desperately to find the words to tell you how much I love you – how I adore you. It is difficult for me to verbalise my feelings for you, because mere words can't begin to express my deep love. I pledge myself to you now, to be your ever-faithful wife/husband. I give you my mind, my body and my heart and I promise to love you and cherish you for as long as we both shall live.

Where there has been cold, you have brought warmth; where my life was dark, you have brought light. Let us make of our two lives, one life, and let us always honour and respect each other.

Bride/Groom, I join my life with yours. Wherever you go, I will go; whatever you face, I will face. For good or ill, in happiness or sadness, come riches or poverty, I take you as my husband/wife, and will give myself to no other.

As I stand here today with the world as my witness,

I pledge to you my undying and everlasting love.

I will stand beside you as your partner,

I will stand before you as your protector,

And I will stand behind you as your solace.

Please spend and end your life with me.

Rings

Whilst not a legal part of the wedding ceremony, the majority of couples will want to exchange rings. Occasionally, just the bride may want to receive a ring and sometimes there may be no ring exchange. The ring exchange has countless meanings and some are provided below in the ring introductions for a celebrant.

A celebrant does not need to explain the significance of the ring exchange and you may offer to the couple whether they would like to include it before the exchange or not. In addition to the ring introduction are ring verses for the couple to say when exchanging rings. The bride and groom may say the same ring verse or they might say different ring verses (or they might not say anything at all, instead exchanging the rings immediately after the vows have been said). Usually a ring verse is recited after the celebrant as opposed to reading off a palm card, as the bride and groom need their hands free for the ring exchange.

Ring Introductions for Celebrant

The custom of giving and exchanging wedding rings comes from ancient Egypt. The Egyptians believed the circular and unbroken shape of the ring symbolised an eternity of love, a love that had no beginning and no end. The precious metal used to make the ring symbolises the value to be placed on life-long love and the need to protect and guard it.

The third finger on the left hand was chosen for the wedding ring because the Egyptians and Romans believed it contained a vein that ran straight to the heart and wearing the ring prevented the love from escaping. This is a wish we have for Bride and Groom.

These rings symbolise your union, an unbroken circle of love to be worn all the days so long as you both shall live. May they be a true symbol of the love of the one who gives it and the one who wears it.

The promises that you have made to each other today, are inscribed forever in your minds and in your hearts. Words are fleeting, however, so those who marry wear rings as visible and tangible symbols of their commitment and emotional connection to each other.

These rings are symbols of the commitment you are making to each other. They are sacred circles, a symbol of wholeness, peace and unity, with no beginning and no ending. They are symbols of the growing relationship you have come here to celebrate and confirm.

This is the point in the ceremony where we usually talk about the rings being a perfect circle, with no beginning and no end. But we all know that the rings that Bride and Groom will exchange today do have a beginning. Rock is dug up from the earth. Metal is liquefied in a furnace at a thousand degrees, then moulded, cooled, and painstakingly polished. Something beautiful is made from raw elements. Love is like that. It's hot, dirty work. It comes from humble beginnings, made by imperfect beings. It's the process of making something beautiful where there once was nothing at all.

Ring Verses for the Couple

With this ring I thee wed and I make you a promise that from this day forward you shall not walk alone. My heart will be your shelter and my arms will be your home.

With this ring I thee wed. Please wear it always as a pledge of my love for you and as a symbol of all we share.

I give you this ring as a sign that I choose you as my lover, partner and best friend.

I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness. As I place it on your finger, I commit my heart and soul to you. I ask you to wear this ring as a reminder of the vows we have spoken today, our wedding day.

This ring is a token of my love. I marry you with this ring, with all that I have and all that I am.

I give you this ring to wear with love and joy. As a ring has no end, neither shall my love for you. I choose you to be my wife/husband this day and forevermore.

This ring I give to you as a token of my love and devotion to you. I pledge to you all that I am and all that I will ever be as your husband/wife. With this ring, I gladly marry you and join my life to yours.

I give this ring as my gift to you. Wear it and think of me and know that I love you.

I give you this ring as a symbol of all that we have promised and all that we shall share.

I give you this ring as a visible and constant symbol of my promise to be with you as long as I live.

I give you this ring as a symbol of my love for you. Let it be a reminder that I am always by your side and that I will always be a faithful partner to you.

I give you this ring as a symbol of my love, my faith in our strength together and my covenant to learn and grow with you.

Let this ring be a symbol of my promises to you and a reminder of my devotion to you. I am honoured to call you my wife/husband.

With this ring, I thee wed and with it, I bestow upon thee all the treasures of my mind, heart, and hands.

I give you this ring as a symbol of my love. As it encircles your finger, may it remind you always that you are surrounded by my enduring love.

I have for you a golden ring. The most precious metal symbolises that your love is the most precious element in my life. The ring has no beginning and no ending, which symbolises that the love between us will never cease. I place it on your finger as a visible sign of the vows which have made us husband and wife.

Because this ring is perfectly symmetrical, it signifies the perfection of true love. As I place it on your finger, I give you all that I am and ever hope to be.

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL INCLUSIONS

With such a diverse and multicultural population in Australia, most celebrants will perform wedding ceremonies for couples with different multicultural backgrounds. It is ideal for celebrants to have some basic understanding of common multicultural wedding traditions. In addition, while most couples that engage a Civil Celebrant may not be looking for religious components, occasionally you may have couples from different religious backgrounds and so have opted for a civil ceremony. In these cases, sometimes couples may still like to include some religious elements into their ceremony. Please find some brief information below on possible multicultural and religious inclusions in wedding ceremonies.

Wine Sharing Ceremony

Wine sharing has origins in many religious and European traditions, but can really be done by any couple! The bride and groom drink wine from the same cup and agree to share all the sweetness and bitterness that their marriage brings. The celebrant usually invites a guest forward to pour and present the wine to the couple; however, this can be done by the celebrant. Parents or family members can also be involved in this ritual.

Jewish Traditions

There are many different Jewish traditions that can be incorporated into civil ceremonies including:

- **The procession.** The bride and the groom walk down the aisle accompanied by both parents. Traditionally, the celebrant walks out first, followed by the groom and his parents, the grandparents, the groomsmen, the bridesmaids, the flower girl and ring bearer and the bride and her parents.
- **The chuppah.** The wedding ceremony takes place under the chuppah, which is a canopy on four poles that is sometimes decorated. The chuppah symbolises that the bride and groom are creating a home together and that it will always be open to guests.
- **The circling.** Under the chuppah, the bride traditionally circles around her groom either three or seven times, some say to create a magical wall of protection from evil spirits, temptation and the glances of other women. Others believe the bride is symbolically creating a new family circle. Today, the bride and the groom can circle together or around each other, demonstrating independent and complementary orbits.
- **Wine under the chuppah.** The bride and groom become betrothed and a blessing is recited over a cup of wine that the bride and groom drink.
- **The ketubah.** The ketubah is a Jewish wedding contract. The celebrant or a guest reads it under the chuppah after the ring ceremony. Many couples frame their ketubah and display it in their home. Traditionally, the ketubah was written in Aramaic, but today many Jews use Hebrew instead. The Ketubah is a statement of the couple's loyalty not only to each other, but also to their faith.
- **The breaking of the glass.** At the conclusion of the ceremony, the groom (and in some modern ceremonies, the bride as well) smashes a glass with his foot. The meaning of this act is disputed. One interpretation is that the marriage will last as long as the glass is broken – forever. Some say it is to frighten away evil spirits who might spoil this joyous occasion with their mischief, while others say it is the last time that the groom will be able to put his foot down! After the breaking of the glass, the guests yell, "Mazel Tov!" which means good luck and congratulations.

Acknowledgement of Country

Some couples may like to have an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of their ceremony. A sample script has been included below:

Before we begin the ceremony today, I'd like you all to imagine what this land was like over 200 years ago. A wild land with towering escarpments, flowing rivers, and undisturbed forests. Aboriginal people travelled through this valley, hunted here, lived here and enjoyed these lands. Perhaps, like us, they also met here at this place, to dance and sing, to share their stories and food and to celebrate momentous life events as we do today. As a sign of respect, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today. I would like to pay my respects to the Elders past, present and future.

Please do not confuse this with a "Welcome to Country" – only Indigenous elders may perform a Welcome to Country.

Further information can be found here: http://www.australiaday.org.au/event-organisers/australia_day_events_protocol/welcome-to-or-acknowledgment-of-country/

Greek Traditions

Greek weddings are highly religious in nature and there are restrictions as to what you can and can't do. It is forbidden to marry in a Greek Orthodox Church if either the bride or groom are not Greek Orthodox. If either one is not then they must convert. Furthermore, the best man (koumbaro) and the maid of honour (koumbara) must also be Greek Orthodox.

In the Greek tradition, the bride and groom are honoured as Queen and King for the day and so during the ceremony they wear crowns that are connected with a ribbon to signify their union. The ceremony involves the best man leading the crowning ceremony along with the celebrant. The best man is the one who places the crowns on the couple's heads. He also exchanges the rings between the bride and groom three times to remind the couple that in married life, the weaknesses of one are compensated by the strengths of the other and vice versa.

Now we will be having the Greek Crowning Ceremony. This is an Ancient Greek marriage tradition and symbolises the glory and honour of the bride and groom's sacrament. I ask for the crowns, which are formally known as 'stefana' to please be presented by the koumbaro...

You will see that the wedding crowns are joined by ribbon symbolising the unity of the couple and establishes them as the King and Queen of their home, which they will rule with wisdom, justice and integrity.

The koumbaro will now interchange the crowns between the Bride and Groom three times to symbolise the sealing of their union.

**Koumbaro steps behind Bride and Groom and exchanges the crown three times*

These crowns will be worn by the bride and groom for the remainder of the ceremony and after today, the stefana will be kept in a safe place representing the couple's commitment.

Chinese Tea Ceremony

The tea ceremony is the most significant event in a modern Chinese wedding. The bride is formally introduced to the groom's family through the Chinese wedding tea ceremony. It will usually take place on the wedding day when most of the family members are present. Often the couple will have this before their ceremony at their home; however, some couples request to incorporate it into their civil ceremony. The bride's family is always served first, but there are different traditions in terms of whether it is the most senior in the family that is served first or the parents.

The order of service is usually:

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Grand-uncles and grand-aunties
- Uncles and aunties
- Elder brothers and sisters
- Elder cousins

Usually a short blessing or prayer is said as each person drinks their tea. The tea in the ceremony should be sweet to represent sweetness in marriage. A number of Chinese dried fruits in the tea can help make the tea sweet (for example, lotus seed, red dates or dried longan).



A COLLECTION OF VARIOUS MULTICULTURAL POEMS AND BLESSINGS

Irish Blessing (Traditional)

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields,
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand,
May green be the grass you walk on,
May blue be the skies above you,
May pure be the joys that surround you,
May true be the hearts that love you,
May God be with you and bless you,
May you see your children's children,
May you be poor in misfortune, rich in blessings,
May you know nothing but happiness,
From this day forward.

Hindu Marriage Poem

You have become mine forever.
Yes, we have become partners. I have become yours.
Hereafter, I cannot live without you.
Do not live without me.
Let us share the joys.
We are word and meaning, united.
You are thought and I am sound.
May the night be honey-sweet for us.
May the sun be all honey for us.
May the mornings be honey-sweet for us.
May the plants be honey-sweet for us.
May the earth be honey-sweet for us.

Cherokee Prayer

God in heaven above,
please protect the ones we love
We honour all you created as we pledge
our hearts and lives together
We honour mother-earth – and ask for our
marriage to be abundant and grow stronger
through the seasons
We honour fire – and ask that our union be
warm and glowing with love in our hearts
We honour wind – and ask we sail though life
safe and calm as in our father's arms
We honour water – to clean and soothe our
relationship – that it may never thirsts for love;
With all the forces of the universe you created,
we pray for harmony and true happiness as we
forever grow young together.
Amen

Norito (Japanese blessing)

Bless them as unmoving and eternal
May their lives flourish like luxuriant trees.
May they, bride and groom, together with
heaven and earth, with the sun and the moon,
continue to give out light and radiance.
Thus we do reverently pray.



POPULAR RELIGIOUS READINGS

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.

Adapted version of Corinthians 13:4-8a

Love is patient, Love is kind,
It does not envy, it does not boast,
It is not proud, it is not rude,
It is not self-seeking,
It is not easily angered,
It keeps no record of wrongs.
Love does not delight in evil,
but rejoices with the truth.
Love always protects, always trusts,
always hopes, always perseveres.
Love bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never ends.
Love never fails.

Romans 12:9-18

Love must be sincere. Look away from what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

CEREMONY NUTS AND BOLTS

All celebrants should create their own personal and unique questionnaires so here are some things you might like to include...

- Will the bride have a veil over her face? If so, will her father or the groom lift it? At what point of the ceremony will it be lifted (e.g. at the end of the processional or after the vows)?
- Who will hold the rings? Best man? Flower girls/page boys? Will they be in a bag or a box, or on a cushion?
- Does the bride have an engagement ring on her wedding finger? If so, recommend that she wears it on her right hand during the ceremony so her wedding finger is free to receive her new wedding ring. After she receives her wedding ring, she can transfer her engagement ring back to her left hand if she plans on wearing them together.
- Does the couple have a permit for their ceremony location, if applicable?
- Is there a colour theme for the wedding?
- Will the guests be provided with something to throw as the couple walk back down the aisle (rose petals, bubbles, confetti etc.)? If yes, check that is allowed at the venue.
- Are there any relations in the wedding party or witnesses so you can introduce them by their relationship?
- Will the bride (and/or groom) be given away? If so, by whom?
- How will the couple present their vows? Repeat after you, read off a card or memorise?
- Do the couple want to kiss (not all do)? If not, would they prefer to shake hands, bump fists, high five, do a backflip, anything else?
- How do the couple want to be presented? Mr and Mrs? The married couple? Newlyweds?
- Any special thanks or acknowledgements during the ceremony? Guests who have travelled?
- Does the bride want to hold her bouquet during the ceremony or hold hands with the groom?
- Honouring/blessing of support from the parents?
- A blessing or good wishes from the guests?
- Any cultural requirements or inclusions?
- Any guests with special needs? Ensure the couple have informed their venue, particularly if there are any wheelchair users.
- What housekeeping information is required at the beginning of the ceremony and at the end? For example, unplugged wedding, turn your phones to silent, group photo instructions, what happens for the guests while the bridal party are having photos taken?



INVOLVING FAMILY, FRIENDS AND CHILDREN

Involving family, special friends and/or children in a wedding ceremony can be a meaningful and personal addition. Here are some ideas on ways to do it:

- Include them in the bridal party
- Ask them to be a flower girl or page boy (this is a lovely way to incorporate children, nieces and nephews, or even grandmothers!)
- They can be a witness (as long as they are over 18 years)
- Do a reading in the ceremony
- Help with the planning of the wedding
- Sing a song or play an instrument before, during or after the ceremony
- 'Ring bearer' – someone to hold and present the rings
- Coordinate the music
- Greet and usher guests at the venue
- Be part of any rituals in the ceremony (there are many rituals that are wonderful ways to incorporate children especially if there is a blending of families including a sand ceremony, warming of the rings or a release of butterflies.)
- Hand out anything applicable (programs, bubbles, petals etc.)



SAMPLE CEREMONIES

Below are three sample ceremonies. Please note that the legal wording required as per the *Marriage Act 1961* has not been included in these ceremonies.

Note that names have been changed for privacy and confidentiality.

CEREMONY ONE – KATIE AND KANE

Welcome

(Kane's entrance with Mum and Dad from side)

Beloved family and friends – on behalf of Katie, Kane and their families, I would like to welcome you here as we gather for the celebration of a very special occasion. Today we honour the commitment that Katie and Kane are about to make to each other, the public declaration of their love for one another and to wish them joy and happiness for their future life together.

I feel privileged to be given the opportunity to share in this special moment in time.

We respectfully ask that you turn your mobile phones to silent. We also hope that you enjoy taking photographs of this beautiful occasion but ask that you give the professional photographer room to do her work unhindered. Thank you.

Would you kindly stand, turn to welcome Katie on the arm of her father.

(Katie arrives and settles)

This moment is very special. It heralds the dawn of a new phase in the lives of Katie and Kane. You have been invited here as dear family and friends to be a part of this very special moment. I ask you all to be witnesses with me to the marriage between Katie and Kane.

Please be seated.

The Giving

Jim, as Katie's father, you hold a very special place in her life. Today you proudly escorted her here. I would like to ask you now – Do you bring Katie to be married to Kane?

Jim: Yes, I do. (Places Katie's right hand in Kane's left, shakes Kane's right hand and returns to seat)

Honouring Parents

Jim and Jill, Sahil and Anaya, you are all extremely special in the lives of Katie and Kane. You have created a wonderfully inclusive and loving environment in which these two adult children of yours love to be in. When time and distance permit, they treasure celebrating important occasions with you and always feeling welcome. They feel blessed and most grateful for the values and character traits that they have developed under your guidance but most of all, they thank you for the way in which they have been accepted and loved in each other's families. Today they would like to publicly say "Thank you" and honour the coming together of their two families who, until today, have been separate.

Honouring Family

Family is very dear to Katie and Kane and they are grateful that so many of you were able to be here with them today to celebrate with them and to share the joy of their marriage. Thank you for coming.

Honouring Friends

Katie and Kane feel very lucky to each have wide circles of friends who have accepted their relationship and welcomed each into the fold. They greatly value your friendship and the fun that you all share. Thank you sincerely for coming today to share in their special day. Katie and Kane treasure their family and friends and are delighted that their nearest and dearest are all here, in this place sharing in and celebrating this day with them.

Reading

The Art of Marriage, written by Wilferd A Peterson is an enlightened text about what he believes should happen to make a marriage work.

This text will be read to us today by Maggie.

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens.
A good marriage must be created
In the art of marriage, the little things are the big things.
It is never too old to hold hands,
It is remembering to say "I love you" once a day,
It is never going to sleep angry,
It is at no time, taking the other for granted,
It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.
It is standing together to face the world.
It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.
It is doing things for each other,
not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice but in the spirit of joy.
It is speaking words of appreciation and
demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.
It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo
nor the wife to have wings of an angel.
It is not looking for perfection in each other.
It is cultivating flexibility, patience,
understanding and a sense of humour.
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.
It is finding room for the things of the spirit.
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.
It is establishing a relationship, in which the independence is equal,
dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.
It is not only marrying the right partner.
It is being the right partner.



Personal Story

Katie and Kane grew up on opposite sides of the world; Adelaide and Mumbai, separated by both distance and culture. (Mumbai as one city has more people than the entire population of Australia).

However, they were both drawn to similar early careers and a thirst to discover the world. This led them to work in the same organisation and eventually the same office in The Netherlands.

The timing was far from perfect. Katie was packed up and ready to leave on an adventure (having reduced her belongings to a 9kg backpack) ... Kane was only just arriving (along with his 5 suitcases including a blender, a wok, rollerblades, and a bicycle...) ... clearly not going anywhere.

Although their paths had just collided, they diverged again – Katie to India on her professional adventure and Kane in Rotterdam, on his.

Once Katie returned to Adelaide, Kane followed her here. You might conclude that he was a determined fellow on a mission! This was their first common home but was not to be the last. Their adventure continued in Mumbai and beyond... and, after much moving across continents, they finally ended up in Berlin – now home to both of them.

Around this time last year, Katie planned a trip to Paris for the French Open, but little did she know that Kane had bigger plans. While she was organising the tickets, he was organising... family approval and a ring! He asked, she said yes. Game, set, match!

Since that time, they've celebrated in Mumbai and, of course, they have another celebration in Berlin to look forward to. But today, they are so pleased to be here in Adelaide – a special place for both of them – to celebrate this special day with you most special people in their lives.

So it gives me much joy to be here today when Katie and Kane come to be married to each other – each their best friend and chosen partner in life.

The Asking and the Exchange of Vows

Katie and Kane, you are about to make promises to one another. Today these vows are beautiful words representing even more beautiful intentions. But you will find that as you live these vows over the years, investing your time and your love in your commitment to one another, the happy times of your life will be twice as joyous because there will be someone to share those joys with. And when life gets tough, it will only be half as bad because there will be someone by your side to help carry the burden.

It is a union made to provide love, friendship, help and comfort for each other. It should not be entered into lightly nor lightly put aside.

Katie, marriage is a precious gift between a man and a woman. Together, you will build a lifelong partnership of love, trust, loyalty, friendship and respect. Will you cherish and honour Kane? Will you stay at his side through good times and bad? Will you laugh and dream together? Will you always be loyal and true to him? Do you take Kane to be your lawful husband?

Katie: I do

Will you make your vow to Kane please?

Katie:

To have and to hold,
From this day forward,
For better for worse,
For richer for poorer,
In sickness and in health,
To love and to cherish
As long as we both shall live.
I give you my promise.



Kane, marriage is a precious gift between a man and a woman. Together, you will build a lifelong partnership of love, trust, loyalty, friendship and respect. Will you cherish and honour Katie? Will you stay at her side through good times and bad? Will you laugh and dream together? Will you always be loyal and true to her? Do you take Katie to be your lawful wife?

Kane: I do.

Will you make your vow to Katie please?

Kane:

To have and to hold,
From this day forward,
For better for worse,
For richer for poorer,
In sickness and in health,
To love and to cherish
As long as we both shall live.
I give you my promise.

Pheras: tea light candle in lantern

To symbolise the vows according to Hindu tradition, there is a walking ritual in the presence of sacred fire. Fire represents energy and the Sun.

The circular walks that Katie and Kane will take represent four oaths.

- The first walk promises: duty to each other, to family and society
- The second walk promises: providing for the material needs of the family
- The third walk promises: unconditional love and
- The fourth walk promises: striving for enlightenment

The bride and groom will alternate in leading the circles around the fire, symbolising their experience in different spheres of life and in consulting one another as they establish a successful family life.

I invite Katie and Kane to commence their walk around the fire.

The Exchange of Rings

In the light of their love for and commitment to each other I would like to ask Katie and Kane to exchange rings.

Katie and Kane, your wedding rings are an outward symbol of the love and respect you hold for each other. These rings signify to all, your union and your commitment to one another. The roundness of the rings is a symbol of the unbroken circle of love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end. Their pure metal speaks of the purity of love. And their value reminds us that we should defend and protect that which we hold most valuable in life.

Katie, please offer this ring to Kane

Katie: Kane, please accept this ring with which I commit myself to our life-long partnership in marriage. Please wear your ring with pride; it is a symbol of my love and respect for you.

Kane, please offer this ring to Katie

Kane: Katie, please accept this ring which I give to you with love, respect and commitment to our life-long partnership in marriage. From this day forward, you shall not walk alone; my heart will be your shelter and my arms will be your home.

Katie and Kane please wear your rings with love and pride.

Kane would you offer Katie the Mangal Sutra? Please accept it from your Grandfather.

(Kane walks to Grandfather and returns)

Katie, this is a sacred necklace that symbolises Kane's promise to you to take care of you as long as he lives. Traditionally this sacred necklace is made of black thread dyed with turmeric but today Kane presents you with a golden necklace with black beads. This is an auspicious necklace with three symbolic "knots" or gold beads representing the three key aspects of a married woman's life – your husband, your family and your contribution to the world. It is a symbol of a new, strongly – held bond between you both. It is worn to protect your marriage for life.

Placing Sindoor on Bride

I would like to invite Kane's Grandmother now to present Sindoor to Kane. Kane please accept this from your Grandmother.

(Kane walks to Grandmother)

For this first time, Kane will place Sindoor on Katie's forehead. The Sindoor is worn in the hair and signifies a married woman. It is worn for the first time during the marriage ceremony for protection and for bringing peace. From this day forward, Katie may place the vermilion Sindoor herself.



Announcement

Katie and Kane, you have made your vows today and exchanged rings, surrounded by your family and friends who share in the joy of your marriage. Celebrate your union while maintaining your sense of freedom and individuality. Uphold and affirm the other – who they are and what they want to be. Nurture your marriage, your love and your friendship. The best is yet to come.



Reading

I would like to invite Katie's grandparents to offer Katie and Kane a blessing for their marriage. This blessing has been adapted from the text "Blessing for a Marriage" written by James Dillett Freeman.

May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitement marriage should bring, and may life also grant you patience, tolerance, and understanding.

May you always need one another – not so much to fill your emptiness as to help you to know your fullness. A mountain needs a valley to be complete; the valley does not make the mountain less, but more; and the valley is more a valley because it has a mountain towering over it.

May you need one another, but not out of weakness.

May you want one another, but not out of lack.

May you entice one another, but not compel one another.

May you embrace one another, but not encircle one another.

May you succeed in all important ways with one another, and not fail in the little graces.

May you look for things to praise – often say, "I love you!" and take no notice of small faults.

If you have quarrels that push you apart, may both of you hope to have good sense enough to take the first step back.

May you have happiness, and may you find it, making one another happy.

May you have love, and may you find it, loving one another.

Pronouncement

Katie and Kane, you have come freely this day, before your families and friends, to publicly declare your love and commitment to each other and to marriage. You have made a solemn and binding promise with each other in our presence, today. It now gives me great pleasure to pronounce you husband and wife. Congratulations to you both.

Kane, you may share your first kiss with your wife.

Signing of the Register

Family and friends, we will now proceed to the signing of the Register. While we are signing the Register, please enjoy the music being played for you by Andy. He is playing a wonderful instrument called a Chapman Stick and interestingly, this has connections with Katie's mother's family – the Chapmans. After the ceremony Katie and Kane invite you to come forward and congratulate them, celebrating their joy with bubbles and the waving of your wands.

All guests are then warmly invited to enjoy drinks and canapés on the Palm House Lawns.

I invite Katie's mother, Jill and Kane's mother Anaya to join us as witnesses to the signing. These two beloved women have offered unconditional love, strength and support to Katie and Kane, throughout their lives. There could be nobody more special to witness the signing of the Marriage Documents.

Thank you. We will re-join you shortly. Please enjoy the music.



Presentation

Friends and family, on your behalf I would like to congratulate Katie and Kane on their marriage and present to them, their Marriage Certificate.

Katie and Kane,

May this marriage be blessed with love, laughter, peace and happiness.

May you find peace in your space together and in your time apart.

May true contentment and happiness be yours.

Every day, keep sight of the pleasure and friendship that you share in each other's company.

Go forward into your married life with our love and best wishes.

I would like to be the first to introduce to you, the newly married Katie and Kane.

CEREMONY TWO – SAM AND SALLY

Welcome and Introduction

Good afternoon everyone and a very warm welcome to you all, the families and friends of Sam and Sally, as you share with them today this very special and happy occasion for them both.

It is my delightful pleasure and privilege to have been asked to present Sam and Sally's wedding ceremony as their Marriage Celebrant.

How appropriate that our loving couple would not only choose this beautiful venue for its location which has echoes of a past conversation that Sam and Sally had which I quote, began "One day we will be married". So now surrounded by the people Sam and Sally hold most dear to their hearts, this is certainly one day that will be like no other – one of shared love, happiness and beautiful memories to last a lifetime.

Your presence today is not only a show of your love and support for Sam and Sally but also as witnesses to their public and very personal commitment to one another in marriage. It is also a day which includes their dearly loved and beautiful children. For them both, their family are their number one priority giving each child their time and most importantly, their unconditional love and care. No doubt all four children feel blessed to have such devoted and loving parents who share with them all the joy and happiness each of the children bring into their lives.

Being introduced to a partner's family can be a daunting experience sometimes, however when Sally met Sam and his parents, they greeted her with welcome arms and instantly embraced Sally's son as their grandchild which meant a great deal to Sally. Sam's parents also recognised in Sally someone who would be a great asset to their business and soon afterwards she began and remains still, working in the family company. Could there be a more loving and trusting acceptance of their son's life partner?

A significant part of Sam and Sally's lives has also been shared with their wonderful friends, both of whom would like to acknowledge the many years of friendship, memories, support and love received from them all and the special place they have for each in their hearts.

Sam and Sally intentionally chose today the 25th April 2015 as the day they would exchange their special promises to each other. Today's very happy event is also shared with the Centennial Anniversary of the birth of the legendary ANZAC's and their place in our country's young history. It is a day on which we take a moment to reflect and remember the spirit of the ANZACs and the many other thousands of men and women who have fought for Australia during the past 100 years and to whom we all owe a great debt of gratitude for the peace and freedom we enjoy every day. Sally's father was such a man who served in the Australian Army as a soldier during WWII and in recognition of his courage and service and fellow comrades, I would now like to invite Sally's sister to please come forward to share with you all a poem written by an Australian poet and author from Sydney. John Le Gay Brereton wrote his poem entitled "ANZAC" in 1919 following the end of WW1.

(Reader comes forward)

ANZAC

Within my heart I hear the cry
Of loves that suffer, souls that die,
And you may have no praise from me
For warfare's vast vulgarity;
Only the flag of love, unfurled
For peace above a weeping world
I follow, though the fiery breath
Of murder shrivel me in death.
Yet here I stand and bow my head
To those whom other banners led,
Because within their hearts the clang
Of Freedom's summoning trumpets rang,
Because they welcomed grisly pain
And laughed at prudence, mocked at gain
With noble hope and courage high,
And taught our manhood how to die.
Praise, praise and love be theirs who came,
From that red hell of stench and flame
Staggering, bloody, sick but still
Strong with indomitable will,
Happy because, in gloomiest night,
Their own hearts drummed them to the fight.

Personal Story

I often regard it as a privilege of being a celebrant that I have the opportunity to share in a happy couple's own personal "love story" and it is always a heart-warming experience for me. Each story is unique and the journeys varied as their committed relationships lead to marriage.

Today I would like to share with you Sam and Sally's special story which, to quote Sam, "Like all good relationships, it began with a drink".



It was 2004 and a jubilant Sally decided to celebrate the conclusion of her midyear exams at university while working towards her Social Work Degree which she undertook whilst also raising her baby son. The destination was the CBD with a girlfriend and where, as it happened, Sam was also enjoying a drink with friends. Unfortunately their first encounter had not gone well with Sam attempting to strike up a conversation a few weeks earlier at the same location and Sally giving him the cold shoulder. So on this particular night as Sally approached Sam to apologise her line to him was, "You will never pick up with that look on your face!" This time the conversation became a night of long discussion and was the beginning of a friendship that continued over the next two years.

By 2007 Sam and Sally decided that the relationship had become very serious and Sally and her son moved into the beautiful home that Sam had built and lived in with his daughter. The four became a strong family unit and happily welcomed the arrival of their own child in 2010 followed by a second in 2011.

In the later part of 2013 and six months prior to the date, Sally began thinking about a party she wanted to give Sam for his 40th birthday in April 2014 and began putting her excellent organisational skills into practice. The party was planned in great detail with invitations to a 100 guests sent out with the theme of "Viva Las Vegas" as Sam's surprise gift was a trip to Las Vegas. Sally had thought of everything from arranging and booking the trip, the "Viva Las

Vegas" themed cake, Elvis' famous movie playing on a screen in the background, to their home and backyard transformed and decorated to match. A week before the party Sally told Sam of her surprise gift so he could make arrangements while overseas.

The night of the party came around and time was moving on so Sally gathered their guests to make her special speech to Sam and the opportunity for him to cut his cake. However at that point Sam suddenly disappeared from the party into the backyard. When he reappeared, Sally began her specially prepared 40th birthday speech including the arranged trip and quipping that "maybe we'll get married in Las Vegas but someone has to propose first!" Perfectly timed, Sam took this as his cue, stepping forward and derailing Sally's speech by suddenly producing her magnificent engagement ring and a marriage proposal! Amid shrieks and squeals as the 100 guests suddenly realised they were witnessing a proposal, a totally surprised and delighted Sally accepted. Sam had managed to quietly and unknowingly reverse the surprise! I think you would agree it was a stroke of brilliance on Sam's part that he knew Sally well enough that he could anticipate and plan his moment.

The past 11 years that Sam and Sally have shared together is in itself a testament of the commitment and strong love they have for each other and is indeed a firm foundation for a marriage that I am sure, will continue to strengthen into their future as husband and wife.

Introduction of Second Reading

Sam and Sally have chosen a second very appropriate reading for their ceremony today entitled "The Key to a Happy Marriage" by an anonymous author and I would now like to invite Sally's bridesmaid to please share it with you all.

(Reader steps forward)

The key to a happy marriage is giving as much as taking;
for always sharing a dream in the making;
for talking things through and working problems out;
for having a friendship that's never in doubts;
and for the many ways two hearts discover that through life's journeys they can count on each other.

The Asking

Will you Sam, take Sally to be your wife,
To be her constant friend,
Her partner in life, and her true love.
To love her without reservation,
Honour and respect her,
Protect her from harm and
Comfort her in times of distress,
As long as you both shall live?

Sam: I will

Will you Sally, take Sam to be your husband,
To be his constant friend,
His partner in life, and his true love.
To love him without reservation,
Honour and respect him,
Protect him from harm and
Comfort him in times of distress,
As long as you both shall live?

Sally: I will

Vows

Sam and Sally, as you make your solemn and heartfelt promises to each other, I would ask you to please take each other's hands and turn to face each other.

(Sally hands bouquet to bridesmaid)

Sam please repeat after me:

Sam: I come to you Sally in marriage with great joy and excitement in my heart.
I feel honoured to be loved by such a kind, generous and loving person.
I make these vows with complete faith that we can make a wonderful life together.
I declare my love for you and my desire to be with you always as your husband.
I will honour this promise as long as we both shall live.

Sally please repeat after me:

Sally: I come to you Sam in marriage with great joy and excitement in my heart.
I feel honoured to be loved by such a kind, generous and loving person.
I make these vows with complete faith that we can make a wonderful life together.
I declare my love for you and my desire to be with you always as your wife.
I will honour this promise as long as we both shall live.



Exchange of Rings

Sam and Sally have a very special ring bearer today in their youngest son and I would now like to ask him to please hand the best man, Peter their wedding rings. Thank you.

Peter could you please pass Sam his ring for Sally.

Sam please place your ring over Sally's finger and repeat after me.

Sam: With this ring, I Sam, take you Sally as my wife.

In doing so I give you my love, support and devotion, as your husband, friend and partner in life.
I will love you always.

Paul could you please now hand Sally her ring for Sam.

Sally please place your ring over Sam's finger and repeat after me:

Sally: With this ring, I Sally take you Sam as my husband.

In doing so I give you my love, support and devotion, as your wife, friend and partner in life.
I will love you always.

The roundness of these rings represents the endlessness of love. Their pure metal speaks of the purity of love and their value reminds us that we should defend and protect that which we hold most valuable in life. Sam and Sally may you wear them with love and with honour.

Declaration of Marriage

Sam and Sally, your love has spoken. You have made your commitment to each other in lawful marriage and made special promises to each other in the presence of your family and friends. This has been symbolised by the joining of hands and taking of vows. The sincerity of your promises to each other gives confidence that you will continue to develop a partnership that supports and enhances you both separately and together. May you look for things to praise, to cheer, to encourage and too often say "I love you".

It is now my pleasure to declare you husband and wife! Sam you may kiss your bride!

Signing of Marriage Documents

Sam and Sally now need to complete the formal proceedings of their wedding and will take a few moments to sign their marriage documents. Once the documents have been completed I will then conclude the ceremony, after which you will have the opportunity to congratulate the happy couple and take photos. So please have your cameras ready!

(Bridal party move towards the table and chairs for signing documents. At the completion of the signing, bride and groom to move back to original positions and face guests).

Introduction of Married Couple and Presentation of Marriage Certificate

Thank you all for your patience. I would now like to conclude Sam and Sally's wedding ceremony and on their behalf thank you all for your attendance and sharing this wonderful day for them both. Our newlyweds are now looking forward to you joining them for the celebrations.

But please now join me in congratulating Sam and Sally on their marriage and wishing them all the happiness as they begin a new chapter in their lives together.

It is now my great pleasure to introduce to you the new Mr and Mrs Smith.

CEREMONY THREE – CHARLIE AND CASEY

Introduction

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, I'm a Civil Celebrant and I've been invited by Charlie and Casey to conduct their marriage ceremony. I welcome you to Bluestone Lane Winery to be a witness with me in this marriage between Charlie and Casey.

I will now read the 'The Hands Ceremony' by an unknown author

Please face each other and take each other's hands, so that you may see the gift that they are to you.

These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow and forever. These are the hands that have worked alongside yours as together you build your future.

These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch will comfort you like no other. These are the hands that have held you when fear or grief temporarily came to you. These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes, tears of sorrow and tears of joy.

These are the hands that have tenderly held your children, the hands that have joined your family as one. These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it, support and encouragement to pursue your dreams, and comfort through difficult times.

And lastly, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch.

We have gathered together to share with Charlie and Casey one of the most important moments in their lives. They have formed a strong friendship and partnership as devoted parents to Olivia and Henry and have learned to know and to love each other. They have now decided to formalize their union by becoming husband and wife. May their friendship and the love between them be a solid base on which their marriage will grow strong.

Charlie and Casey believe that marriage is founded on mutual ideals, sincere hearts and understanding attitudes. If each partner is tolerant and trusting, then they can expect a calm and happy marriage. In a stable marriage they feel there must be respect for each other's individuality and a certain freedom to express those individual traits.

Charlie and Casey have asked me to read Love is Patient adapted from the Corinthians:

Love they say is patient
Love they say is kind
It sees beyond another's faults
For love they say is blind
Love takes away the me and mine
Instead it's us and we
Yours and mine is ours now
For love is unity
Love will not diminish
Or rust or fade with years
But it will gain its strength from
Time, from laughter, joy and tears.

Personal Story

So how did Charlie and Casey's romance begin? Charlie and Casey met in December 2002 when they worked together at the Mentone RSL when they were both the tender age of 19. Charlie was working in the bar and Casey the Bistro.

When Casey pulled up at the RSL to start her first shift she was overcome by nerves and almost drove home. Charlie parked his car and walked into the RSL and Casey noticed him and thought he was cute and that things weren't that bad and immediately got out of the car and followed Charlie and started work. Charlie who'd been working there for a while immediately noticed Casey as she was gorgeous and told a work colleague that 'one day she'll be mine'.

He didn't waste any time and asked her if she'd like to go to the Sandringham Hotel with him one evening. Casey agreed and they had a fantastic night and had their first kiss in the very crowded foyer of the hotel. Soon after that evening they were spending every night together and a year later decided that they'd move in together. Their first child, Olivia was born in 2007 and Henry followed in 2009.

The success of their relationship is that they are each other's best friend, lover and confidant. They value each other's friendship and sense of humour. Friends believe that they still show the same level of affection as they did on day one. They are both very energetic and hands on parents and strive to bring up Olivia and Henry to be the best versions of themselves that they can be.

As in most relationships there are a few niggles as Casey thinks that Charlie is obsessed with work while he neglects to do housework though he tends to be hyperactive and sometimes feels sorry for himself. Charlie thinks that Casey has OCD and is a food and wine thief.

These niggles are really small in the scheme of things so Charlie proposed at home on Casey's 31st birthday. The family had been out to dinner for the occasion and Charlie had already given Casey a present so when they returned home he opened a bottle of Champagne and presented her with a beautiful ring and asked Casey to marry him. Apparently Casey said yes so here we are today.

Charlie and Casey would like to thank their bridesmaid Sophie and best man Andrew for their continued support and for being fantastic friends. They would also like to thank Casey's parent's Jill and Peter for being great friends and supporting them through the years.

Peter has tenderly walked Casey to stand with Charlie to be married today. Jill and Peter will you bless this marriage and offer the family your continued love and support.

Jill and Peter: Yes we do

The Asking

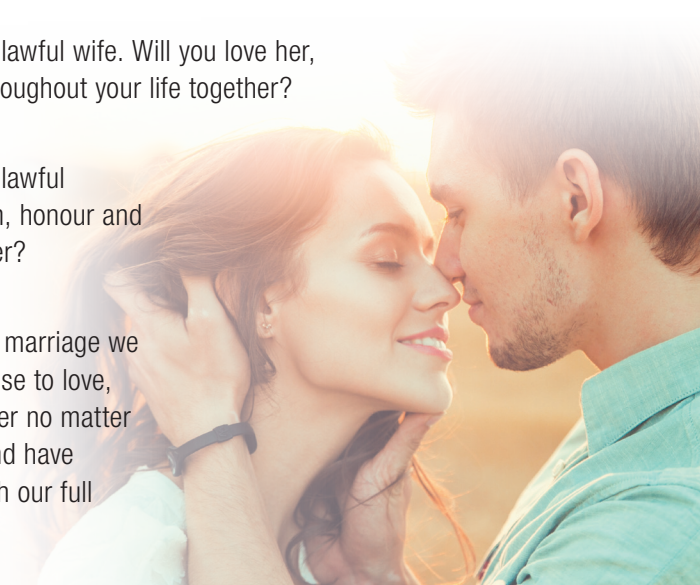
Will you Charlie, take Casey, to be your lawful wife. Will you love her, comfort her, honour and respect her throughout your life together?

Charlie: I will

Will you Casey, take Charlie, to be your lawful husband. Will you love him, comfort him, honour and respect him throughout your life together?

Casey: I will

Charlie and Casey please join hands. In marriage we make promises to each other. We promise to love, learn from and be honest with each other no matter what. Because of this we feel secure and have the opportunity to grow in order to reach our full potential, both in good and bad times.



We change and shape ourselves according to these promises and knowing that we are secure we can transcend our insecurities. We can take chances and make mistakes along the way, knowing that we won't be rejected and through making these mistakes we can learn and grow.

Creating a successful marriage takes more than love. It takes trust, faith and dedication. Trust to know that you only want the best for each other. We need faith, in order to go forward in an uncertain future and dedication to stay open in order to learn and grow even when the times are difficult. As love is a natural state of being, we must work towards gaining these other qualities.

The Vows

Now it's time for Charlie and Casey to exchange vows.

Charlie: I love you and want you to share my life with me in marriage. I promise to always be there for you and to accept you as you are. I shall honour this pledge as long as I live.

Casey: I love you and want you to share my life with me in marriage. I promise to always be there for you and to accept you as you are. I shall honour this pledge as long as I live.

Ring Exchange

It's now time for the exchange of rings.

A wedding ring is a treasured and valued possession. It is a circle that has no beginning and no end. It demonstrates a continuing bond and symbolizes equality and an infinite commitment which are the foundation stones of married life.

Charlie: Casey ... with this ring, I marry you today.

Take it and wear it as a pledge of my love, and as a symbol of the life we share.

Casey: Charlie ... with this ring, I marry you today.

Take it and wear it as a pledge of my love, and as a symbol of the life we share.

Announcement

Charlie and Casey as you have promised to share your lives and have exchanged your vows and rings I now declare that you are husband and wife and wish you much happiness for the years ahead. Charlie you may now kiss Casey!

Ladies and gentlemen it is now time for Charlie and Casey to sign the certificates of marriage. Could Andrew and Sophie come forward to bear witness?

Friends after the photographer has taken their photos I'll ask you to come forward to take some brief photos.

Ladies and gentlemen please return to your places. On conclusion of this ceremony a group photo will be taken. After that Charlie and Casey will have more photos taken so please make your way to the restaurant where you can have a well-earned drink and some canapés before the reception commences.

I would now like to present Charlie and Casey with their Certificate of Marriage. Ladies and Gentlemen I would like to introduce Charlie and Casey! Please congratulate the happy couple!

WEDDING REHEARSAL CHECKLIST

If possible, an on-site rehearsal can be integral to a smooth and successful wedding ceremony.

Here is a checklist of things to cover at a rehearsal:

- ✓ Discuss and rehearse the entrance of the bridal party and couple, ensuring there's enough music to get everyone down the aisle
- ✓ Work out placement of guests, bridal party and celebrant
- ✓ Discuss transitions and choreography throughout the ceremony
- ✓ Take note of any possible drawbacks (noise, size, sunlight if outside etc.)
- ✓ Meet the venue manager
- ✓ Discuss placement of PA system, signing table and chairs etc.
- ✓ Confirm arrival times for the wedding day (celebrant, groom, bride and guests)
- ✓ Go through the legal certificates that you will be signing on the day to ensure there are no errors
- ✓ Sign and witness the Declaration of No Legal Impediment to Marriage
- ✓ Payment for any outstanding fees
- ✓ Meet the readers and bridal party
- ✓ If applicable, the readers and/or musicians can rehearse
- ✓ Rehearse any applicable rituals
- ✓ Whilst most celebrants would advise not rehearsing the vows and leave that 'moment' to the actual day, if the bride and groom are extremely nervous, this may be a good chance for them to build up confidence in a safe and private space before standing in front of all their family and friends.

Who can attend?

- ✓ Celebrant
- ✓ Couple
- ✓ Bridal party (bridesmaids/groomsmen)
- ✓ Aisle escort (bride's parent/s etc.)
- ✓ Readers
- ✓ Witnesses
- ✓ Anyone else who is involved in the wedding ceremony

Make sure the couple have booked the rehearsal date and time with the venue manager. The rehearsal is best conducted no more than a week prior to the ceremony so no one forgets what you have covered at the rehearsal!

If an on-site rehearsal is not possible, a rehearsal in any space is still helpful for it allows you to act out the ceremony to find your feet, positioning and confidence.

LEAVING THE HOUSE CHECKLIST

- ✓ PA system
 - ✓ PA system stand
 - ✓ Microphones
 - ✓ Batteries (always have spare!)
 - ✓ iPod/CD (if you provide the music)

 - ✓ Marriage Register Folder
 - ✓ Marriage Certificates x 3 (Celebrant copy, BDM copy and Presentation Certificate)
 - ✓ Pen for signing (and a spare!)
 - ✓ Envelope for Presentation Certificate
 - ✓ Folder for couple (if you provide a keepsake copy of the ceremony)
 - ✓ Spare certificates in case the originals get wet/damaged

 - ✓ Printed ceremony
 - ✓ Folder to read ceremony from
 - ✓ iPad/Kindle (some celebrants prefer to read from these devices)
 - ✓ Any readings or vows printed on cards
 - ✓ Ritual items (if you are providing them or have been given them at the rehearsal – sand, candles etc.)

 - ✓ Signing table*
 - ✓ 2 x chairs*
 - ✓ Table cloth*
- *Some celebrants provide these, some don't. It's a personal choice.

WHEN ARRIVING AT A VENUE

Below is a list of things to check when arriving at a wedding ceremony venue:

Ceremony space

- Chairs – are they clean and arranged neatly?
- Signing table and chairs – is it set up in an appropriate place? Ask the photographer if the positioning and lighting will be suitable for their photos?
- Are any applicable ceremonial ritual items set up and ready for the ceremony?

People

- Introduce yourself to the wedding coordinator (if applicable and not already done so at the rehearsal)
- Confirm arrangements for the processional (who will cue the bride?)
- Confirm arrangements for the music (who will be giving music cues and when?)
- Say hello and if you have not met, introduce yourself to the bridal party that are already on-site.
- Are there any guests who have special needs? Any guests in wheelchairs who should be seated first?
- Introduce yourself to other suppliers – photographer, videographer, musicians – and give them a brief rundown of the ceremony, particularly if there will be any readings, rituals or anything “out of the ordinary”.

Weather

- Is it going to rain? Will the ceremony need to be shifted inside? Will you need umbrellas on standby?
- Is it too hot? Should guests stay in the shade until the bride arrives? Does water need to be provided (if possible)?
- Is it windy? Could anything possibly blow away or over? Always make sure your wedding documentation is safely secured, for example, there is no chance it could blow into a river!

PA system

- Which way is the wind blowing? It's best to place your PA system so the sound will travel with the wind to the guests, not away.
- Test your PA system (microphones and music, if applicable).

The venue

- Where are the toilets?
- What are the fire safety and evacuation procedures?
- Where are the smoking areas?
- Is there a First Aid Kit available?

Other things!

- Are the rings here (unless arriving with the bride)?
- Are there any important guests missing?

Note: every venue is different and will have different things that need to be checked but the greater attention to detail and diligence you have, the smoother the ceremony will run!



'UNPLUGGED' WEDDINGS

There is a growing trend in the wedding industry to have 'unplugged' weddings. An 'unplugged' wedding is where the couple request that guests put away all digital devices (phones, iPads etc.) during the ceremony and/or reception. As a result an 'unplugged' wedding can prevent guests from uploading photos onto social media from the wedding day if the bride and groom wish for this not to happen.

The issue with many weddings in today's digitally-consuming society are:

- Guests get in the way of photographers with their own digital devices. Photographers can be quite costly and at the end of the day are getting paid to capture the wedding day, not the guests.
- Some photos of the couple may not be flattering and the couple may wish to review which photos they make public on social media.
- Couples often look to their guests for support and interaction during their ceremony and reception and often see a sea of digital devices rather than faces.
- It allows the guests to be fully present in the moment.

It is important to clarify exactly what the bride and groom want said. Some couples prefer photos not to be taken during the ceremony, but are happy for the guests to take photos and upload to social media during the reception.

It is common for couples to advise guests if their wedding is unplugged before the big day as well as through some signage at the ceremony and reception. However, as a celebrant you can also make a friendly and polite small announcement usually before the bride walks down the aisle. A sample announcement can be:

Family and friends, I believe our beautiful Bride will soon make her entrance. Before that happens, we have a small request... The Bride and Groom would like to invite you to be truly present at this special time and request that you please put down your cameras and phones and place your phones on silent.

They wish to encourage you to capture how the ceremony feels with your hearts, without the distraction of technology. Our amazing photographer will capture every aspect of today's ceremony and the Groom and Bride will be happy to share these photos with you at a later date.

I'm sure you can understand as this is their wedding they would like the opportunity to be the first to post photos and comments on social media. Thank you!

OR

Bride and Groom have requested that you put your cameras away and just sit back and enjoy today's ceremony and leave it to the photographer and videographer to capture their ceremony.

Chapter Two – The Couple

THE CELEBRANT AND CLIENT JOURNEY

First Consultation

The majority of celebrants offer a free, no-obligation consultation where the couple can meet the celebrant. Here the couple can tell the celebrant some information about themselves and what they are looking for, and in turn, the celebrant can tell the couple about themselves and what services they provide.

This first consultation can range from thirty minutes to two hours! This is the 'sales pitch' and where you need to be on your game to try and secure the booking. The most important goal during this consultation is to build rapport.

Choosing a celebrant is a very personal choice, one usually based on how the celebrant made the couple feel. So build rapport by asking the couple about their journey – how did they meet? When and how did they get engaged? How are the plans going for the wedding? You need to make each couple feel that you are genuinely interested in their story.

Some couples might book you at this first meeting and others will want to go away to think about it. Many couples will meet with a few celebrants. If they choose to book you at this first meeting, congratulations!

You move onto the next stage of the celebrant and client journey.

If the couple choose to think about it, follow up with an email afterwards to thank them for their time. Keep in touch with them every few weeks so they remember you until they have made their decision either way.

If they choose not to book you, take that opportunity to grow and reflect upon that meeting. Do you think you could have done something differently? Did you build rapport? Remember, you will not get every single booking no matter what you do! Maybe it was a price factor? But always try to find ways to improve yourself and deliver a better sales pitch.

Never be afraid to ask for the booking. Sometimes a couple may want to book you at that first meeting but unless you ask them upfront "would you like to book me as your celebrant?" you may have missed an opportunity!





First Official Meeting

This meeting may be a continuation from your first consultation or a separate meeting. There are usually two main objectives of this meeting – complete the *Notice of Intended Marriage* and provide the couple with some sort of ‘wedding ceremony information pack’.

You complete the *Notice of Intended Marriage* in accordance with the *Marriage Act 1961*. Most celebrants sight the appropriate identification documents at this meeting plus any applicable Divorce or Death Certificates. Then you pick up from what you discussed in your first consultation and discuss their wedding ceremony.

If you haven’t already, go through your wedding ceremony information pack with the couple. This may include samples of readings, music, vows, ring verses, rituals etc. A checklist of what this information pack could include is outlined on page 68 and most of this information can be found in this Wedding Resources Guide.

Some celebrants provide a hard-copy package and others provide an electronic package that they either email or have available on their website. Whichever you choose, ensure you provide your couples with plenty of ideas, information and inspiration so they feel equipped to make well-informed choices.

Usually the celebrant provides the couple with their invoice and client agreement and the couple pay a booking fee.

The Planning Process

The ceremony planning process is unique to each celebrant and usually this process takes years to develop and is constantly evolving.

Some celebrants meet with their couples once they have had a chance to look over the information you provided at your first meeting to discuss options and start creating the ceremony. Other celebrants ask couples to return questionnaires and then they write and create the ceremony based on their answers. Some celebrants write their ceremonies months in advance, others weeks before. There is no right or wrong way to go about this process.

Above all, make sure you provide your couples with lots of ideas, inspiration and information and let them make as many of their own choices as possible. When you have put together the ceremony, send a copy to the couple with enough time for them to review and give feedback before you have your rehearsal or final meeting.

Rehearsal/Final Meeting

Some celebrants provide an on-site rehearsal; others prefer to have a final meeting with just the bride and groom. Regardless of which you prefer, it’s ideal to meet the couple the week or so before their wedding, to run through and confirm all ceremony details.

In Chapter One, there is a checklist of things to cover at a rehearsal.

At this stage, the *Declaration of No Legal Impediment to Marriage* can be signed by the couple and witnessed by the celebrant. Any outstanding monies can be paid or payment arranged and any identification documents that you have not yet sighted can be provided by the couple (Birth Certificates, Passports, and Divorce Certificates etc.)

The Ceremony

This is the best part of being a celebrant! The big day!

Chapter One outlines a checklist of things to make sure you have with you when leaving for the ceremony. Most celebrants arrive between one hour and half hour before the ceremony.

Upon arriving...check everything! Ceremony set-up, weather, audio, music etc.! Introduce yourself to the wedding coordinator (if you have not met) and touch base with all applicable parties (groom, bridal party, musicians, photographer etc.) As the start time gets closer, usher people to their seats. Some celebrants do a pre-introduction before the bride walks down the aisle. This is a great time to cover any housekeeping points such as for phones to be placed on silent and if this is an 'unplugged' wedding.

There is no set way for a wedding to start. Some wedding coordinators like to be more involved than others, sometimes you may be in a park where there is no one but you coordinating the ceremony. It is advisable for a celebrant to go see the bride before she walks down the aisle, so you can calm any nerves she may have and provide a reassuring smile.

Then it's show time! Get ready to cue the music and begin the ceremony! Enjoy this moment...! This is the best part of your job.

After the ceremony, it is polite to stay for an appropriate amount of time and then you can pack up your PA system, say goodbye and leave. Even if you have another wedding or commitment to attend, never look like you are rushing off. Remember, every wedding is also an advertising opportunity and the guests will be taking notice of all your actions before and after the ceremony.

After the Ceremony

Send off the couple's paperwork to be registered in accordance with the *Marriage Act 1961*.

Touch base with your couple a few weeks after their wedding. It's professional to thank them again and wish them all the best for their married life together.

At this time you can also provide the couple with information on how to apply for their Official Marriage Certificate from the local BDM.

Take this time to ask the couple for a review (perhaps on social media) or a testimonial for your website and kindly ask them to send you some photos from their ceremony when they receive them for your marketing purposes.

See the Feedback page on page 69 for more ideas on receiving client reviews.



COUPLE INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Below is a list of questions to ask your couples. You can ask some of these questions at the first meeting or you can give your couples some of these questions to take away and answer in their own time. This is a guide only; you are welcome to add as many other questions as you like!

- ✓ When and where did you meet?
- ✓ How did you meet?
- ✓ What impressed you most about your partner when you met them?
- ✓ Describe the first few weeks/months of your relationship.
- ✓ List the major milestones in your relationship (travel, moving in together, buying a house etc.)
- ✓ When and where did you get engaged?
- ✓ How did the proposal unfold?
- ✓ What do you love most about your partner?
- ✓ How does it feel to be in love with your partner?
- ✓ How do you display your love for your partner?
- ✓ When did you know that your partner was 'the one'?
- ✓ What do you believe are your strengths in the relationship?
- ✓ What is it about being married that you look forward to the most?
- ✓ What would you never change about your partner?
- ✓ What does your partner do that drives you crazy?
- ✓ What do you dream of doing with your partner one day?
- ✓ What do you and your partner enjoy doing together?
- ✓ What would be your ideal night with your partner?
- ✓ What does marriage mean to you?
- ✓ What does love mean to you?
- ✓ Why did you choose your wedding ceremony space?
- ✓ Is there anything meaningful about your wedding date?

WEDDING CEREMONY INFORMATION PACK

The majority of celebrants provide their couples with some sort of wedding ceremony information pack. Some celebrants provide this as a hard copy and some provide it electronically either via email or on their website. Below is a guide to what information you could cover in this pack. The majority of this information is available within this Wedding Resources Guide!

Ceremony Information

- A sample order of service
 - Samples of:
 - > Readings
 - > Music
 - > Vows
 - > Ring verses
 - > Rituals (traditional, multicultural and religious)
 - > Other wording to use in ceremonies
 - Ideas to involve family, friends and children
 - A questionnaire for the couple to complete (ideas for this questionnaire can be found on page 67)
-

Legal Information

In accordance with the *Marriage Act 1961*, the celebrant must provide the couple with the *Happily Ever Before and After* Brochure. The Code of Practice, information on relationship education services and on how to make a complaint about your Marriage Celebrant could also be included.

Miscellaneous Wedding Information

Some celebrants provide their couples with other wedding information that may not be directly related to the ceremony. You are welcome to include as much or as little as you like. This may include:

- A wedding planning checklist
- Recommendations for other wedding vendors (photographers, DJs, make-up artists etc.)

You might also like to include your **invoice** and **client services agreement**.

FEEDBACK

Obtaining feedback from your couples is critical so you can improve and grow as a celebrant. There are a number of ways of getting feedback from your couples. Many wedding directories and social media platforms allow couples to do a review directly on their site. However, many celebrants email their couples after the wedding asking for a testimonial for their website. Another option is to devise your own feedback form that you can send to couples, which they can complete and return to you.



Here is a list of possible questions you can include on your form:

- How would you describe your overall experience with me as your Marriage Celebrant?
- At your time of booking, how would you describe the service I gave you?
- At the rehearsal, did I provide you with all the knowledge you needed before your wedding day? Did I have everything prepared to your liking at the rehearsal?
- On the day, did I perform the ceremony exactly how you imagined it, how we had prepared and planned it?
- Do you have any feedback on how I could have performed the ceremony more to your liking?
- Did I provide you the service that I promised I would provide when you first contacted me?

There are many websites out there that allow you to build your own survey online and send couples the link. These are really efficient and quick ways for couples to give you feedback. Remember, reviews and feedback are best obtained by making them as easy and quick as possible for the couples to complete! Couples should be able to complete it within 2-3 minutes.

SUPPORT LETTERS

Immigration Support Letter

Occasionally, you may have a couple who request a support letter to accompany their Prospective Marriage Visa with the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection. Below are two template support letters you can use.

[DATE]

Re: Immigration Letter for Prospective Marriage Visa

To Whom It May Concern,

This is to advise that [BRIDE FULL NAME] and [GROOM FULL NAME] plan to marry in Australia, according to the provisions of the Marriage Act 1961.

The marriage is planned to be held [DATE, TIME and LOCATION].

A 'Notice of Intended Marriage' form, in accordance with the above Act, has been completed and received by me on [DATE].

I have agreed to solemnise their marriage according to Australian Law.

[CELEBRANT FULL NAME]

Authorised Commonwealth Marriage Celebrant

[DATE]

Re: Immigration Letter for Prospective Marriage Visa

To Whom It May Concern,

I, NAME, Commonwealth Registered Marriage Celebrant, Commonwealth of Australia, do hereby certify that I have on this day received:

- *a Notice of Intended Marriage for the planned marriage between Groom and Bride (the Notice remains valid for 18 months from today, the date of lodgement)*
- *a non-refundable booking fee to secure my services as celebrant for their planned marriage.*

This marriage is intended to take place on DATE (or such other date as may be arranged in compliance with visa conditions) at VENUE, SUBURB, STATE. The Notice of Intended Marriage has been signed by Groom/Bride and has not yet been signed by Bride/Groom as she is residing in CITY, COUNTRY.

The foregoing information is in support of an application for Bride/Groom to obtain a Prospective Marriage Visa to enter this country in order to marry. I understand that Groom/Bride is a Citizen/Permanent Resident of Australia. To the best of my knowledge, this information appears to be true and correct.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

[CELEBRANT FULL NAME]

Authorised Commonwealth Marriage Celebrant

The signed original of this letter should be provided, on your official letterhead, to the couple to make their own arrangements with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. Do not provide the original or a copy of the completed Notice of Intended Marriage form to the couple or to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. The Notice should always remain with you.

Shortening of Time Support Letter

Whilst not legally required, some celebrants provide a support letter to the couple when applying for a 'Shortening of Time' with their Notice of Intended Marriage. Below is a sample template.

[DATE]

To Whom It May Concern,

This is to confirm that if a Shortening of Time is approved, I am available to perform the wedding ceremony between BRIDE and GROOM on the DATE at VENUE.

The Notice of Intended Marriage has been signed by both parties and witnessed by myself. I have also sighted the appropriate identification documents for both parties.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any further questions.

Regards,

[CELEBRANT FULL NAME]

Authorised Commonwealth Marriage Celebrant



Chapter Three – Your Business

SAMPLE CLIENT SERVICES AGREEMENT (CSA)

Please note that this is a sample 'standard' agreement and may not suit all celebrants and clients.

A few tips:

- *Ensure your agreement clearly states your refund and cancellation policy as well as any possible 'waiting' fees if the ceremony is delayed through no fault of the celebrant*
 - *A copy of the Code of Practice needs to be attached with this CSA and marked "Annexure A"*
 - *With experience your CSA may change from time to time.*
-

This Agreement is made this _____ day of _____ 20_____

BETWEEN Full name and address of celebrant (the Celebrant)

AND Full names of bridegroom and bride (the Parties)

The Parties and the Celebrant agree to the terms and conditions set out below.

Marriage Ceremony details:

DATE: _____ **TIME:** _____

VENUE: _____

Alternative venue if weather inclement:

Ceremony script: As agreed in writing by the Parties and Celebrant prior to the above wedding day.

The Celebrant agrees:

1. To provide Registered Marriage Celebrant services to the Parties in accordance with the Code of Practice for Marriage Celebrants ("Annexure A").
2. To attend and conduct the marriage ceremony at the agreed time, date and place.
3. If the Celebrant is unable to conduct the ceremony for any reason, the parties will be advised as soon as practicable and all reasonable efforts will be made by the Celebrant to assist the parties to arrange for the ceremony to be completed by another Authorised Marriage Celebrant.
4. If the Celebrant is unable to perform the marriage ceremony:
 - 4.1 any refund or part refund of fees paid by the Parties to the Celebrant will be made in accordance with the terms and conditions on the Celebrant's invoice; and
 - 4.2 the Celebrant will pass the Notice of Intended Marriage to the replacement Marriage Celebrant, in a timely and appropriate manner (Refer to Clause 19).

The Parties agree:

Celebrant's fees

- 5 To pay the Celebrant's fee in accordance with the invoice provided, namely:
 - 5.1 Deposit/booking fee at time of lodging the Notice of Intended Marriage;
 - 5.2 Balance of fee in clear funds by direct deposit to Celebrant's nominated bank account no later than 14 days prior to the wedding day, or in cash no later than 48 hours prior to the ceremony; and
 - 5.3 Acknowledge that if full payment has not been made to the Celebrant in accordance with these terms then the Celebrant will not attend the ceremony.

Documentation

- 6 To provide the Celebrant with all original documentation requested no later than 48 hours prior to the wedding day, including any accredited translation documentation requested by the Celebrant.
- 7 That if the Parties fail to provide all documentation requested to the Celebrant no later than 48 hours prior to the wedding day, the Celebrant will not attend the ceremony.

Ceremony

- 8 To advise the Celebrant immediately in writing of any change to the time, date or place of the marriage ceremony. The Celebrant reserves the right to terminate the agreement and retain the booking fee/deposit should he/she be unable to conduct the ceremony due to the change.
- 9 If the ceremony is to be changed to the alternative venue due to inclement weather, then one of the Parties is to inform the Celebrant personally by telephone by a time nominated previously by the Celebrant in writing to ensure the Celebrant has sufficient time to travel to the alternative venue.
- 10 To advise the Celebrant as soon as practicable if either of the parties is taking prescribed medication which may change their demeanour during the marriage ceremony.
- 11 Notice of cancellation of ceremony must be given to the Celebrant in writing, and the Celebrant reserves the right to retain the booking fee/deposit and other amounts paid.
- 12 That the Celebrant reserves the right to leave the place of the marriage ceremony 20 minutes after the agreed start time if both parties have not arrived or the ceremony cannot proceed for any reason outside the Celebrant's control.
- 13 That if the ceremony is delayed through no fault of the Celebrant which results in the Celebrant incurring extra charges such as parking fees, the Parties will pay the Celebrant's further costs prior to the ceremony commencing.
- 14 That in the event of the delays set out in clauses 12 and 13 above, the Parties will liaise with the Celebrant to mutually agree on a later time and place for the Celebrant to solemnise the marriage for an extra fee payable in advance.

Equipment

- 15 That the use of the Celebrant's PA system is subject to favourable weather conditions and will not be used in any circumstances where the PA unit may be exposed to harm, either by person or persons or the elements. Judgment to be at the Celebrant's sole discretion.
- 16 That where the Celebrant's PA system is used, the Celebrant undertakes to use his/her best endeavours to ensure that the PA is fully charged, functional and tested prior to the ceremony, however the Parties acknowledge that inanimate equipment may malfunction from time to time and should the PA fail at any time prior, during, or after the ceremony, the Celebrant will not be held responsible.

Undertakings

- 17 The parties undertake to provide the Celebrant with accurate information, and acknowledge that there are penalties for making false declarations.

Acknowledgements:

18 *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011*

18.1 The Parties acknowledge that:

18.1.1 under the Celebrant's responsibilities contained in the Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011, the Celebrant will not conduct the ceremony at a location which, in the Celebrant's sole opinion, is dangerous or would place any person attending the ceremony at risk of harm or injury; and

18.1.2 following receipt of the signed Notice of Intended Marriage (NOIM) the Celebrant will inspect the site as soon as practical and confirm to the Parties in writing not later than two weeks from the date of the NOIM whether the site is safe or poses a risk; and

18.1.3 if it is impractical (impossible) for the Celebrant to inspect the site within two weeks from the date of the NOIM, the Celebrant and the Parties will mutually agree in writing a revised extended date for inspecting and reporting on the safety of the site; and

18.1.4 if the Celebrant fails to advise the Parties in writing within two weeks of receiving the signed NOIM, or agreed extended period, that the site poses a risk to any person attending the ceremony, the site will be deemed to be safe.

19 *Replacement Marriage Celebrant*

19.1 The Parties acknowledge that before the marriage can be solemnised by a replacement Marriage Celebrant, the replacement Marriage Celebrant is required to sight all original documents that the Celebrant sighted, such as Birth Certificates, Divorce and/or Death Certificates as appropriate, passport and/or driver licences;

19.2 The Parties undertake to ensure that their original documents are available at the venue to ensure a change of celebrant on their wedding has access to their documents, the minimum documents being their passports and any Divorce or Death Certificate as appropriate;

19.3 If the replacement Marriage Celebrant is not able to sight the required original documentation, the marriage cannot be solemnised, and an alternative ceremony such as a commitment ceremony may be offered instead with the marriage being solemnised at a later time once all original documents have been sighted.

20 The Parties are not to arrive at the ceremony appearing to be inebriated or under the influence of any other substance, otherwise the Celebrant is lawfully not authorised to solemnise their marriage; and

20.1 judgment as to inebriation or the Parties being under the influence of alcohol or any other substance is at the **Celebrant's sole judgment**; and

20.2 their two official witnesses must be aged 18 or over and appear sober and not under the influence of any other substance in the sole judgment of the Celebrant, otherwise alternative official witnesses must be used.

21 The Celebrant has explained, and the Parties understand, the legal requirements for entering into a valid marriage, and they agree to comply with their obligations as requested by the Celebrant.

22 The signature of one marrying party alone to this Agreement shall be binding on the Parties.

Bridegroom

Bride

Celebrant

Authorship of CSA: Carol Marcroft, AssentTECS trainer/assessor



MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND NETWORKING TIPS

Like with any industry or profession, there is no 'right' way of marketing and advertising. What works for some, may not work for others. Below is a range of marketing and advertising tips across a number of platforms. Make sure you ask every single enquiry where they found you or how they heard about you, so that you can figure out which marketing sources are working best for you. If you discover something isn't paying dividends, drop it and try something else. There are many marketing options out there but if you collect the data you'll soon figure out what works for your business (and remember this will constantly change! What worked last year may not be the best marketing solution this year!)

Social Media

- Have a presence on all relevant social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram. Twitter and Pinterest are less relevant for celebrants but if you enjoy using those platforms, then there is no harm with additional exposure!
- When doing a wedding post find out as many vendors' names as possible and tag them in your post. Tag the photographer, venue, florist, wedding planner etc. That will allow them to see and share your post resulting in greater exposure and likes/followers.
- Facebook has many different wedding groups set up for brides and vendors in each city/area. Have a search through Facebook and join as many groups as you can. The groups have restrictions and guidelines on which days vendors can promote themselves so take note of these and adhere to them.
- Answer as many questions and be as helpful as you can in the Facebook groups you join. If you become known as helpful and knowledgeable, you might have other members in the group start to recommend you when someone asks for a celebrant.
- If a bride asks for recommendations for a band on a Facebook group, for example, don't hijack the post by saying "if you need a celebrant you can give me a call" and then providing your details. This is unprofessional and frowned upon by most group admins (not to mention the members). But do feel free to be helpful by suggesting any bands you know are awesome!
- Try to post on the social media platforms you use at least once a week – it's good to keep your audience engaged and updated with what you're doing.
- As well as joining Facebook groups for brides, join as many wedding industry and general business networking groups as you can. They often have face-to-face meetings as well as just being useful places to go for information and assistance, whether celebrancy or general business related.

Online Wedding Directories

- When creating a profile on any wedding directory ensure you constantly update the page with new photos, text, videos etc. This will keep your profile fresh but also assist with your SEO (search engine optimisation). It is easy to forget so put quarterly reminders in your calendar and keep a list of the directories you're listed on.
-

Face-To-Face

- You can't beat a referral from a venue!
But for a venue to refer you they must know you!
Do some ground work and contact all your local wedding venues to make a time to pop down and introduce yourself to the wedding coordinator. Leave some business cards and keep in touch! Every so often drop them a line so they remember you and can refer you or place you on their recommended supplier list.
- Many celebrants see each other as competition (and in theory we are!) and whilst they say a little healthy competition is good, you will do yourself a disadvantage if you isolate yourself from other celebrants. Having celebrant friends and networks has two main advantages. Firstly they will help you grow; you can bounce ideas, questions and information off each other. Secondly, you can refer each other when you get an enquiry that you are not available for. It looks much more professional if you respond to a bride and can help her find a suitable celebrant.
- Go to as many wedding industry networking events as you can. It's great to meet suppliers from the wider industry, not just other celebrants, as they may refer you as well. Keep a list and follow up with those you really click with – you might want to start a referral page on your website or refer suppliers you love to your couples. It's always a pleasure to work with suppliers you're already familiar with. Whilst you will travel far and wide for weddings, it's handy to know your local wedding suppliers. Drop in for a coffee and build rapport!
- Give business cards to anyone and everyone – you never know who they'll know that's getting married and they might just think of that lovely celebrant they met one day.



Website

- Make it as easy as possible for clients to contact you. Your contact details should be easily seen and accessible on your website. And remember that many brides prefer different methods of communication. Some like phone, others prefer email, and many these days prefer a direct message on Facebook. Have all your methods of communication on display.
- It's worth investing the money on getting your website set up properly in the first place, rather than trying to do it yourself. It will get you more work and save you time, energy and money in the long run.
- Make friends with the photographers you meet at weddings and ask them nicely if they wouldn't mind sending you a photo or two to use on your website (credited of course). Make sure you follow up with an email after the wedding.
- Take the time to learn and understand SEO (search engine optimisation). This is critical for couples to find you via search engines.
- Have testimonials on your website.

Marketing Collateral

- Make sure your branding is standard across all your printed collateral, website, social media pages, expo stands etc. Consistency is key here – you want people to remember you and your brand will help with that.
- Many celebrants have their head shot on their business card – people are far more likely to remember your face than your name in our line of work. If you decide to have a photo ensure you use a high-res professional photo of yourself.

Email

- Have a professional email address. For example: betty@lovelyweddings.com.au rather than betty@hotmail.com.

Join A Celebrant Association!

- There are numerous benefits of joining a celebrant association such as the Australian Federation of Civil Celebrants. As a member you have access to insurance, copyright protection, celebrant resources and education, celebrant software as well as invaluable networking and learning opportunity with other celebrants.

Think outside the box!

Many celebrants don't just provide your typical Saturday afternoon ceremonies, others do registry-style ceremonies, pop-up weddings... even destination weddings! So don't limit your imagination to how a wedding ceremony should look! This is the same with networking, marketing and advertising. Be as creative as you can!

PRESENTATION TIPS

You have most likely heard them all...

- *Dress for success...*
 - *First impressions are lasting impressions...*
 - *You never get a second chance at making a first impression...*
-

Your image and presentation as a celebrant are crucial for success in this industry. Image and presentation is not just about one thing, it entails many including your:

- Appearance
 - Clothing
 - Grooming
 - Body Language
 - Communication
 - Personality
-



The first time your image and presentation needs to be at its best is the initial meeting with the couple. As discussed earlier in this Guide, this is the sales pitch. This is where you need to exude professionalism and confidence as well as warmth, flair and creativity. Remember the goal of this meeting is to make the couple feel comfortable and build rapport, so while you should always dress and present smartly, if you come across as too formal at this meeting you may risk the possibility of alienating the couple.

The ceremony is where you need to present the sharpest. There is absolutely no excuse for not looking and presenting your best at the ceremony (even if the wedding is casual, you still need to appear as a professional). With the rise of social media, many couples upload photos and videos so your appearance at their wedding ceremony will be on display for the world to see each and every time you do a ceremony.

Your body language is on show as soon as you park at the ceremony venue. Many celebrants forget that when videographers film a bride walking down the aisle, they also have a camera on the groom. It's fascinating to see some celebrants when they don't think that anyone is looking at them. People are always looking at you... even when the bride is making her big entrance. You need to be positive, happy, professional and engaged the whole time while at the ceremony venue. When in doubt, 'fake it 'til you make it'!!

Your voice will dictate the energy, vibe and pace of the ceremony. Some celebrants talk faster than others and that is perfectly okay. However, all celebrants need to have a range of speed, pitch, tone, volume and shade – avoid speaking in a monotone!

A few tips to improve your public speaking:

- Lots of practice! Be familiar with your script. Rehearse difficult names and write them phonetically to help with pronunciations.
- Make eye contact – pick out smiling faces amongst the crowd!
- Use pauses and the power of silence.
- Attend public speaking classes and workshops.

There is another element to consider... as a celebrant you run your own business so in theory you are always 'on show' – whether at the shops, your child's football practice, even at the gym, so while you obviously will be dressed according to the environment, you should always have your 'game face' on. A professional celebrant is always polite, inviting, kind, social and supporting. You never know who you might meet who is looking for a celebrant for a wedding, funeral, baby naming...anything! Your **personal image** always makes a statement about your **professional image**.

In summary, a very wise celebrant once said, "people often won't remember what you said but they'll remember *how* you made them feel". How you make them feel is a result of your image and presentation. As an Authorised Marriage Celebrant you have an obligation to provide a high standard of service and "appropriateness" as to how you present yourself at a ceremony. The goal is that after the ceremony, the guests are talking about how wonderful and professional you were and they recommend you to their family and friends. So always be aware of your image and presentation and how it may be perceived by others.



Australian Federation of
CIVIL CELEBRANTS

The National Association of Professional Celebrants

In July 2015 the AFCC National Committee implemented a “Code of Ethics”. Compliance with the AFCC Code of Ethics is seen as a condition of membership and provides our members with an edge over celebrants who are not AFCC members for our clients can expect a celebrant with the highest level of professional and ethical standards. The Code of Ethics is available on the AFCC website for members to download and, if preferred, printed, signed and made available for display or to provide a copy to prospective clients and others.

CODE OF ETHICS

While I remain a member of the Australian Federation of Civil Celebrants Inc. (AFCC), I agree to comply with the spirit, intent and provisions of this Code of Ethics and accept the responsibilities of such implied by membership of the association:

- To maintain the highest levels of business, professional and personal standards;
- To respect in all circumstances the privacy, confidentiality and trust expected by clients and members of the public;
- To provide sufficient, timely, transparent and accurate information about the range and extent of services available, the costs of those services and the functions and responsibilities accepted for and on behalf of clients;
- To respect the personal choices of clients, having due regard to the diversity of beliefs, cultural backgrounds and practices;
- To ensure that all personal advertising is in good taste and directed at informing the public without indicating any conflicts of interests;
- To be conversant with relevant legislation and regulations directly or indirectly applicable to celebrancy and to comply with such;
- To respect the ethical expectations of other professionals with whom I interact in my celebrancy activities; and
- To inform and provide access to relevant client advisory services and authorities to facilitate mediation or resolution of any disputes that may arise and to co-operate with the resolution of any such disputes.



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