

A romantic photograph of a bride and groom kissing outdoors. The bride is on the left, wearing a white wedding dress and holding a large bouquet of pink lilies, red roses, and purple flowers. The groom is on the right, wearing a white suit jacket. They are standing in front of a wooden fence and lush greenery. The background shows a residential area with houses and trees under a bright sky.

Tips for a
Stress-Free Wedding

and other

**Secret Wedding
Business**

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Your wedding ceremony is an opportunity to...

- make special promises to each other to help each other through times of difficulty and very importantly celebrate the good times together
- connect with family and friends
- acknowledge each other and the special people in your life
- relax and enjoy...(really)

Some people feel a little nervous about being the centre of attention and speaking in public. Yet your ceremony (and your wedding day) is a chance to express yourselves and have a great time too.

I hope you enjoy my **tips for a stress-free wedding** and the other secret wedding business I have included:

- things your **celebrant** really needs to know
- choosing **music** for your ceremony
- **eco-friendly** weddings
- how to include **children** in your ceremony
- changing your **name** after marriage

You're welcome to share the information in this ebook. Please keep my copyright information intact. I welcome feedback as well, including any errors or extra information that could be included. Please email me at: [ceremonies\(at\)heart2heartceremonies.com.au](mailto:ceremonies@heart2heartceremonies.com.au)

And all the best for your wedding day ... Kind regards, Marlee



Tips for a Stress-free Wedding Ceremony

1. *Drink plenty of water through the day –*

Stay **hydrated** and you'll feel comfortable throughout the ceremony and photographs afterwards.

2. *Choose what to **wear** according to the season and the place –*

Remember mountains can get cool in the evening so it is good to bring a wrap with you for the late afternoon and early evening. Beaches can be very windy places so a dress that isn't going to fly up can be a good choice...on the subject of beaches, there is some lovely jewellery for feet that can take the place of shoes. If you have a lace up dress, make sure you allow time to dress so that you don't miss out on photo opportunities before your ceremony—it can take up to 1/2 hour just to lace a dress.

3. *Consider your **venue** carefully.*

If marrying outdoors at sunrise or sunset, bring insect repellent with you. I had a dawn wedding last year and we were attacked by mosquitoes - dawn and dusk are problem times for them, especially here in Queensland. Have a **back up plan** for rain and ensure you are happy with that back up plan, in case it becomes the main plan. Ensure the venue is suitable for the guests you are inviting eg. family elders, children, any guests who have a disability. Check with the venue at least two weeks beforehand to ensure they haven't double booked or there hasn't been a change of ownership and no record of your booking (it has happened to a few of my couples).

4. Have a **rehearsal** at your ceremony venue if possible.

That way, when you arrive on the day, you'll know exactly where to arrive, when to start walking, where to stand for the ceremony and you can also practice any rituals included in your ceremony, for example, a sand ceremony or candle lighting.

If outdoors, you can check where the sun is to ensure that it won't be in your eyes during the ceremony. Your **photographer** can also make good suggestions as to the best place to stand for photos, for example, so that you are not standing half in shade and half in the sun.



5. **Delegate** –

Most people love helping out on the day and beforehand. You can ask trusted friends or relatives to help with various items, for example, playing the music CD for the ceremony, ushering guests to their seats, organising people afterwards for a group photo, helping with any ceremony items, for example, setting up the wine and glasses for a wine ceremony during the ceremony.



6. Pre-wedding celebrations—

Have your **bucks, hens or hucks* night** at least a week before, if you can – that way, you’ll feel fresh on your wedding day – have you seen the movie “The Hangover”, a cautionary tale about drinking too close to your wedding day? I have married grooms with black eyes and various injuries following their night with the boys!

(However, don’t stress if it has to be the night before—just threaten dire consequences if something happens to your partner—for example, the culprit gets to pay for the wedding reception!)

*a combined hens and bucks party

7. Photography—

Consult with your **photographer** about the best time to hold your ceremony for the light, the location and the time of year – that way you won’t be rushing for photos straight after the ceremony or missing out on the best wedding photos.

8. Factor in enough **time** for **arriving** at your ceremony and for guests’ **congratulations** afterwards, so that you can enjoy these special moments – making a relaxed entry and being able to connect with your family and friends afterwards and before you need to go for photos.

(If you can’t allow much time straight after your ceremony for guests, due to the amount of daylight available at the time of day or year you are marrying, let your celebrant know so that they can announce to guests that you’ll be back to receive their congratulations after photos.)



*9. Pack an **emergency kit** –*

Band-aids, bobby pins, safety pins of various sizes, insect repellent, a second pair of earrings, a small sewing kit, a pair of tweezers, a spare pair of shoes, a small torch, a pair of nail scissors, some florist or similar tape (for repairs to your bouquet). Your celebrant might also suggest bringing a copy of your ceremony and your identification documents (birth certificates etc) with you, in case another celebrant needs to take over unexpectedly.

*10. Surround yourself with **calm, caring people**.*

And if everything doesn't go completely to plan, don't worry – sometimes the page boy who runs away screaming provides a bit of light comic relief just at the right time. And **professional** helpers will be able to keep everything else running smoothly for you - celebrant, wedding planner, hair and makeup professionals, photographer, venue personnel, limousine drivers...



Five things to tell your celebrant before your wedding day

There are some things you really should share with your celebrant before your wedding day. Here are just a few.

1. **If you change your day or time**, please let your celebrant know. They really would like to be there! This may just be an urban legend but I have heard tell of a groom and guests waiting, a bride who arrived and walked up the aisle, only to discover...no celebrant! (it wasn't me 😊).

2. If you are **already married** or have undergone a **ceremony in another country**. Of course you can't get married if you are already married but did you know that Australia even frowns upon the same couple getting married twice? That's right - if you have already held a ceremony overseas, you may already be legally married under Australian law. You can always have a reaffirmation of vows ceremony but a celebrant cannot pretend to the guests that it is a legal wedding ceremony - sorry! We can get into big trouble if we do (including losing our appointment as a celebrant).

3. If you are feeling **nervous** about the day, your celebrant can usually make some suggestions to help. A rehearsal is a great idea too so that you know what to expect on the day - this can reduce your stress because you can see what happens and adopt ideas to help cope with nerves. For example, if you are worried about speaking in front of your guests, your celebrant can help you focus just on each other and use a microphone held to the side. If you are feeling really nervous, you can face each other instead of the guests. Some couples choose to be seated for the ceremony due to nerves or medical conditions. There are many ways of ensuring that the ceremony is not stressful for you.

Five things to tell your celebrant before your wedding day (continued...)

4. If family members are not speaking to each other or there are some **family tensions**, it can be a good idea to let your celebrant know so that he or she doesn't ask them to stand together. Any family circumstances that may impact on the ceremony can be discussed with your celebrant so that they can be tactful on the day or at any meetings beforehand. Knowing a little more about your personal circumstances can also help your celebrant to write a ceremony that is meaningful but which does not tread on any toes on the day.

5. **Second thoughts?** Sometimes couples have wedding day nerves and may feel apprehensive about getting married. However, if you are seriously not wanting to go ahead with your wedding but feel that you can't tell your partner or parents or the guests, talk to your celebrant. Once you are married, you can't get an annulment under Australian law. You need to apply for a divorce, undergo counselling and divide your property. Your celebrant may suggest asking a trusted friend to break the news to family and friends. You may just need some more time together first and could postpone the wedding to a later date too.



Here are some **useful websites** for choosing music:

Music can be an important part of your wedding day. You may have a live **band or a DJ** for your reception or for your ceremony or both. If so, they will have a large range of songs for you to choose from. Some DJs have websites where you can experiment with song lists for the day.



If you decide to have a playlist rather than live music for your ceremony, then you will generally want to pick at least four songs:

- One main song to walk in to (the processional). If you are both having a procession, then you will need two songs for this section of your ceremony. One of the classic wedding moments I have experienced is a groom and his attendants walking up the aisle to the song “I’m Too Sexy”, followed a couple of minutes later by the bride and her attendants with a wonderfully romantic song. Another wonderful moment was a Groom and his attendants riding in on their horses to a cowboy song, “The Cowboy in Me”, followed by the bride and her attendants to the song “Fields of Gold”. Sometimes you may want to stroll up the aisle together too.
- Two songs for signing the register. One is a back up song as the photographer may take some time arranging photographs of the signing, or the guests may also like to take a few pictures.
- A song to walk back down the aisle (the recessional). This song can be modern or in keeping with the rest of the music for your wedding ceremony, or it can be really different. For example, one couple who are fifties enthusiasts and car enthusiasts had “Highway to Hell” for their recessional song. Another couple had a Muppet song, “It’s time to start the party, it’s time to light the lights...” 😊.

Eco-Friendly Weddings

- use local suppliers where possible
- use ethical suppliers where possible - fair trade and environmentally responsible
- try a vegetarian feast - your local Buddhist organisation may be able to point you in the right direction for luscious vegetarian food or ask your reception venue if they are willing to use organic and vegetarian food or try using food in season and organic meat if you really want meat
- use recycled paper for invitations, place names and thank you cards
- you may like to hire a bus to transport your guests to and from the reception venue
- your wedding suppliers may offer gift vouchers that friends and family can purchase for you instead of a gift
- instead of wedding presents, you may like your guests to make a donation to your favourite cause, or to a major purchase such as an artwork, or ask them to contribute to a green gift for you - a water tank or front loading washing machine
- donate flower decorations at the venue to a retirement home after the wedding and use local and seasonal flowers
- use wedding attire that you can all wear again, vintage clothing from a pre-loved clothing shop or enquire about gowns made from natural organic or recycled materials



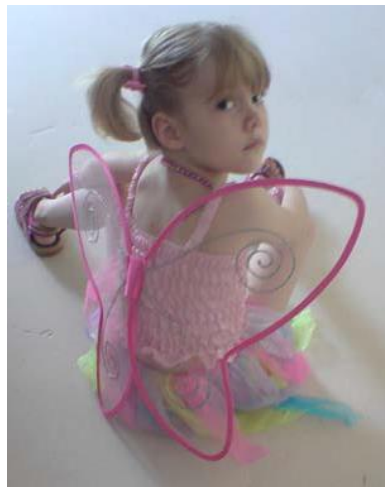
How to include children and catering for other children

1. Give them honorary or actual roles in your ceremony, according to their age – junior bridesmaid, page boy, flower girl, ring bearer, witness if over 18.
2. Include your children in your ceremony – they can be part of a sand or candle ceremony, a rose ceremony or help to ring a “truce bell” or toss pebbles in a nearby creek (not at the guests haha) – yes this is a ritual you can include.
3. Allow them, if old enough, to be ushers and assistants to guests, including those with special needs, for example, great-grandparents.
4. Sign a family wedding certificate that your celebrant can prepare for you.
5. Ask them to do a reading or write some special words to say at your ceremony.
6. Give them a gift in your ceremony or give each member of the family the same gift eg. a ring or necklace.
7. At the end of the ceremony, all join hands and step forward to be greeted by your guests as a family – sometimes children can feel left out at the end of the ceremony.
8. If you have small children, ask a trusted friend or family member to look after them for the whole of the ceremony if they don't want to stay with you – that way, you don't have to chase after them or call them back or worry that they are going too near the lake or pool, for example.

How to include children and catering for other children

9. Let them do their own thing, unless it is really getting on your nerves – some of the most magical moments of a wedding ceremony are those unexpected moments – the flower girl who dances onto the ceremony stage, twirls and sings, the young 10 year old son who can't stop crying because he is so happy his parents are finally getting married.

10. If your budget permits, hire a good fairy or other child entertainer to keep the children occupied for a few hours during your reception or have special segments for them during the reception such as musical chairs or other games, allowing them to feel a special part of the celebration too.



Changing your Name after Marriage

If you are changing your name after marriage, you will need to obtain a certified marriage certificate from the Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages in your State—ask your marriage celebrant for details.

You will need to pay them a fee (which varies between States) and may also need to provide evidence of identification unless your celebrant notifies the registry beforehand that you want a certificate, or applies on your behalf.

The Certificate you receive on the day is evidence of your marriage but not evidence of your identity for the purposes of changing your name.



There is an application form which you can download from the Registry website. They also have details of the current fees.

Search ‘births deaths and marriages’ and the name of your State or Territory to find the right website.

Some of the agencies and institutions you may need to contact to change your name:

- Medicare and any private health insurance funds
- Banks
- Electoral Rolls
- The Transport Authority in your State, eg. Transport Dept (Qld), RTA (NSW) etc.
- Insurance and utility companies, eg. Telephone, electricity, internet provider
- Passports Office (if you change the name in your passport within the first 12 months of marriage, they will not charge you an extra fee; after 12 months, you will need to pay for a new passport)
- ATO
- Centrelink if receiving benefits
- Car registration
- Library, Flybuys or other reward programs, store discount cards, Video store, other memberships
- Superannuation Fund
- Doctors, dentists etc
- Your employer or education provider
- Council or landlord
- You may wish to change your email address too—often your internet provider allows a few different email addresses—check with them
- This list is not comprehensive—you can find name change kits on line – just google ‘change of name kit’.

That's it! I hope you find the information here helpful.

If you live in south east Queensland or northern New South Wales and need a celebrant for your wedding, I'd love to assist! My contact details are on the next page.

I have been a civil marriage celebrant since 2005. I love my work, meeting new people & helping them to celebrate the important moments in their life in a way that is honouring yet still relaxed and heartfelt. I aim to create a ceremony with you that will reflect your wishes and ideas, your vision of your day, with my guidance as a professional celebrant, with joy & love.

Small and intimate, or large and festive, spiritual or non-religious, traditional or modern, or themed, together we craft a ceremony that is truly yours.

The wonder of a civil ceremony is that the variations on ceremony are endless. I can include just about anything you like as long as it's legal! I will give you resources to help you plan your ceremony & as much guidance as you need & incorporate your ideas into your ceremony.

Testimonial:

David & I wanted to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the most amazing ceremony. We would not have been able to achieve it without you. Thank you for all your help from the very beginning. You have been an absolute pleasure to deal with & we had such a great time planning it all. With your help, it was made so easy. Everything we needed was given to us in the book & from there it was a breeze. The day itself, well wow. It was so touching and so emotional. The vows were so special to us and so many people commented on how amazing the words you spoke were. Most of our friends have been to church weddings where it is all very formal with readings from the bible & we had people comment on how refreshing it was to have the ceremony all about us with words that relate to us & mean something to us. Many people also said to us later that you were so sweet, so caring & very professional. All of that David and I already knew, so we just said, yep she's the best. And you really are Marlee. You helped create the most amazing day for us. We could not have asked for anything to be done better or different. It was all better than we could have ever hoped for. Thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts for helping us to create the most magical day. ~ Nelly & David



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*for ceremonies to honour you body mind and spirit
as the unique individuals you are*



Ceremonies I perform

- **Weddings**—celebrate your love for each other with a ceremony that is written just for you—I specialise in relaxed stress-free ceremonies, whether formal or informal—I find out from you what you want and create the ceremony with you in mind
- **Naming Ceremonies**—to name a baby or child or an adult who has changed their name—these are a wonderful way to connect your community of family and friends with a new addition to your family or to introduce them to a change of name
- **Renewal or Re-affirmation of Vows Ceremonies**—often couples enjoy celebrating milestones they have reached together—eg. 5 or 10 year anniversary. Or if a couple has had a wedding overseas, they like to have a second celebration with family and friends in Australia
- **House Blessings**—when people move house, they might like to clear the energy of the previous occupants or the builders—I do these based on feng shui principles and using House of Life vibrational essences
- **Significant Birthday celebrations** eg. 40th, 50th, 60th—this involves planning with the family to find out significant events and achievements of the person, significant family and friends and generally includes a lot of involvement by family and friends—“This is Your Life” celebrations are also possible.
- **Memorial, Funeral, Scattering of Ashes and Celebration of Life**—to acknowledge the passing of a dear relative or friend or a pet. I specialise in alternative celebrations where there may be a spiritual but not religious element to the ceremony.
- **Commitment Ceremonies**—for couples not wanting to legally marry or unable to legally marry—this is similar to a wedding ceremony without the legal paperwork. Couples usually have attendants, witnesses, and a reception afterwards and also do many of the same things that are included in a wedding ceremony eg. Procession, readings, vows, signing certificates and celebrating afterwards.
- **Wisdom Ceremonies**—these are ceremonies acknowledging an elder—a rite of passage.
- **Coming of Age Ceremonies**—for young people about to embark upon the adult years, a handing over of responsibility for their own lives from their parents.

