



## The Manchester Celebrant

### Writing meaningful wedding vows

#### A step by step, easy guide....

As a celebrant, I find one of the things that my couples need most help with is writing personal wedding vows. Your vows are the most special part of your wedding ceremony, so you want them to be genuine and heartfelt, not just something you copied from an example on the internet.

Most people have an idea of what they want to say, they just don't know how to execute it into the format of a vow. With this in mind, I have written a simple step by step guide to help you write the perfect vows for your special day.

- 1. Make a date in your diary at least a month before your wedding your wedding date to create your vows.**

This isn't something that you should do with time pressure. Leaving the writing of your vows till the days before the wedding will just make it even harder to get this just right. Stress can be a big barrier to your creativity so make sure you allow yourself plenty of time to do this.

- 2. Discuss with your partner the tone, length, and the style you both want.**

There is no right or wrong when it comes to writing your own wedding vows, *HOWEVER* there is nothing worse than having mixed matched wedding vows at your wedding ceremony. If one partner is writing war and peace and declaring deep heartfelt love whilst the other has written four lines and two of them are promises to keep the toilet seat down and put laundry in the basket, then it can be a rather tense and embarrassing moment on the big day.

In terms of length, as a guide I recommend writing at least 200 words or five promises that you would like to make to each other.

- 3. Reflect on your relationship and make a list of important moments that have happened between you.**

This isn't about just making a note of the big moments like when you proposed or moved in together for the first time. It might be something like the first time you really laughed out loud together, a holiday you really enjoyed or the movie that you love to watch with each other over and over again. The purpose of this step in the process is to flood your mind with great memories and feelings to put your brain into the right mode to begin writing your vows.

**4. Make three lists, under the following headings:**

**List one - Things I love about them as a person**

**List two - How our relationship makes me feel personally**

**List three - Things I love about our relationship**

Go wild at this point and scribble whatever words come to mind, fill the page if you want to, you won't need it all but it will be a great starting point to begin writing your vows.

**5. Take a break!**

Don't try to create your vows in just one session, you want to feel energised and passionate when you are writing your vows, not overwhelmed and tired. You have already done lots of the work, now take a well-deserved rest!

**6. Pick out the key themes from your three lists -**

With fresh eyes look again at your lists and see which words stick out to you. You will probably notice that the words in the lists have some cross over and this will be because the three aspects are linked to each other. If you see these patterns highlight them and now make a smaller list for each heading with the words that you feel most drawn to or that evoke the most emotion when you revisit them.

**7. Start writing and don't worry about getting it perfect on the first try.**

A great vow will have three components, it will start by recognising your partner for why they are the perfect person for you, then you will acknowledge how it makes you feel, and finally you will make a promise about how you can repay the love your partner gives you.

Example, you have written in list one that your partner is kind and thoughtful. On list two you have written that they make you feel special. List three you may have said something like its effortless and never boring.

You could then link these three things together,

*Name, you are one of the kindest and most thoughtful people I have ever known, you make me feel special even on the most mundane of days, I can't promise to always deserve the kindness that you show me, but I vow to spend the rest of my life trying to make you feel as special as you make me feel each and every day.*

#### **8. Add personal touches.**

To make the vows meaningful you want to make them sound like they have come from the heart rather than something you have googled. Think about the things that are behind what you want to say, this is your opportunity to add your personality or elements of humour to what you have written.

*Name, You have the purest of hearts and I love you so much for that, you are one of the kindest and most thoughtful people I have ever known, my morning brew waiting for me when the alarm goes off makes me feel special even on the most mundane of days, I can't promise to always deserve the kindness that you show me, but I vow to spend the rest of my life trying to make you feel as special as you make me feel each and every day.*

#### **9. Practice saying your vows out loud.**

This step is a very important one, you want the moment you exchange vows to be romantic and engaging, so practice, practice, practice! Not only will this help with nerves on the day, but it will also highlight any words that don't flow naturally to you when you are saying them. Keep tweaking the words until feel easy to deliver and they sound just right.

A great way to really polish your execution of your vows is to record yourself saying them, video yourself on your phone saying the vows and you will learn so much more about the way you deliver your vows than just relying on how you hear yourself in your head.

#### **10. Make sure you have a printed copy!**

Even after all that practice, don't rely on thinking that you know the vows you have written inside and out. Even the most experienced of public speakers will feel emotional and overwhelmed on their wedding day, leading to you having a moment where your mind could go entirely blank!

Print them out onto a nice piece of paper or onto a booklet that matches the rest of your wedding décor. A grotty piece of scribbled on paper can really bring down the aesthetic of your wedding photographs.

Finally, don't worry about messing up on the day itself, blunders and emotion when speaking just adds to the authenticity of what you are saying. Needing to stop to take a breath or wipe the tears from your eyes, will not take anything away from what you are trying to say, it will just show how heartfelt your vows are! This is not about perfection, it is about being the person that your partner fell in love with!

One to one help with writing your vows is part of my standard Celebrant package, if you would like more information, don't hesitate to get in touch!