Caring Ceremonies prepared for YOU with YOU in mind!

Let's create a ceremony just for you two







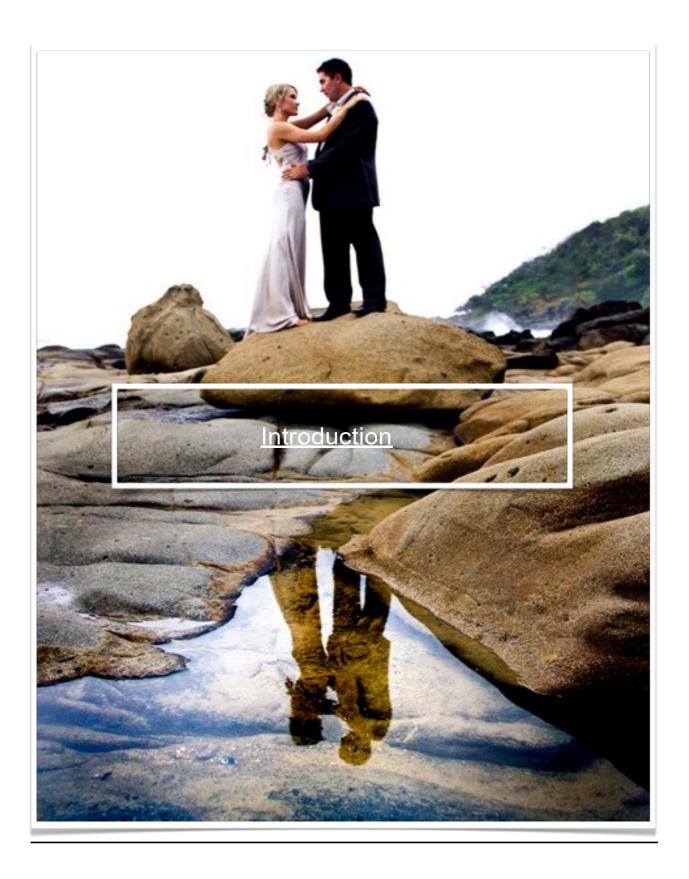
The following booklet is for you to use as a guide to planning your ceremony. Included are ways to start, sample ceremonies, and lots of ideas to assist in making your ceremony just what you want. Don't feel you have to read it all, just pick the bits you enjoy. I am here at any time to assist you in writing and preparing all aspects of your ceremony.

Leesma.

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Acknowledgement to Kari Celebrations for use of some content in this brochure



1. Introduction

Everyone is an individual, and every couple has individual needs. The type of wedding or commitment ceremony you choose to have will be a reflection of your beliefs and values as a couple.

It may help to think of a marriage ceremony as a transition, from your life as a single person to that of a partnership, as part of a married couple. The Marriage ceremony assists you with this transition; it essentially ritualizes your transition.

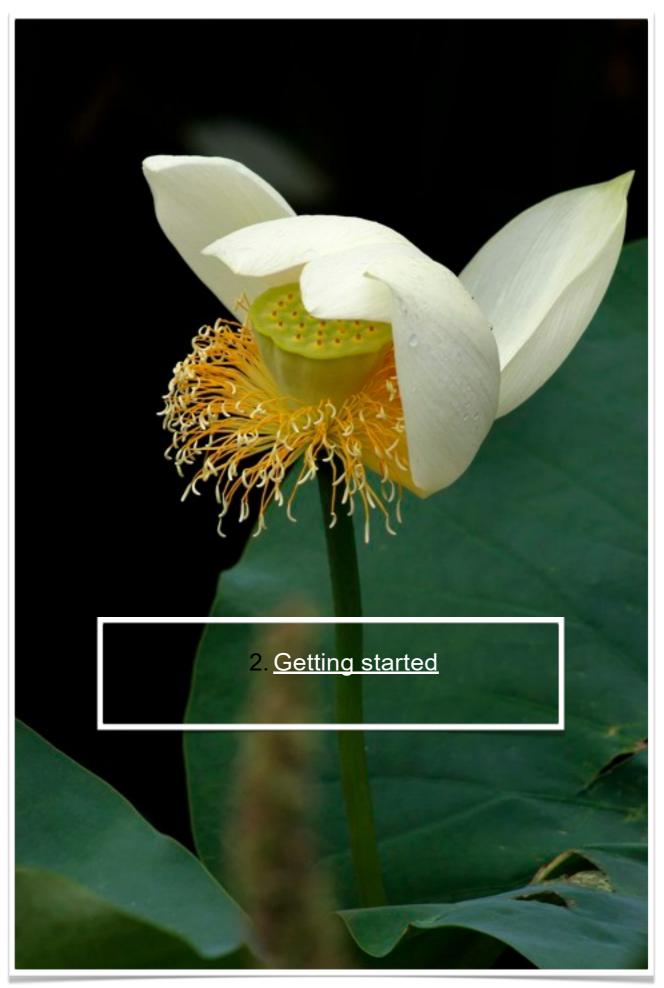
For some people the traditional ceremony is the only type that will do. For others something much more laid back and casual, a little more modern.

Some may like to include a myriad of other traditions or rituals from family heritage, culture or even invent their own. Or you may like to hark back to bygone times with a Pagan Ceremony, a Hand Fasting Ritual or a Medieval Ceremony.

Some couples choose to link their ceremony's theme to their subculture, such as with a Gothic Ceremony or Vintage or Classic. You may choose to write the entire ceremony yourself or have one individually written for you to fit in with a theme or personal belief system.

I specialise in writing individual ceremonies. I begin with a fresh canvas, to tell your very own love story. I walk beside you, as together we plan your own ceremony. I'm here to offer as much or as little support as you wish.

Let's create a ceremony just for you two.



Getting started

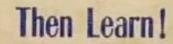
You may like to write your own ceremony and vows, or at least contribute your ideas towards a truly personal and unique marriage ceremony.

If you have in mind to be really individual, take up your pen, or lean to your computer and articulate your thoughts, memories and desires. Dig deep into the loves of your own experience, your literary and musical taste and your personality.

If it all seems a little daunting, and too difficult to articulate, here's one way to begin. Some of these questions may stimulate answers that can contribute to an engaging wedding ceremony. I am here to assist as soon as you run dry of ideas or words. We will probably even do this together when we meet. But at least you can see the questions beforehand.

- 1. How did you first meet? What was that like?
- 2. When did you first feel you fell in love? What happened?
- 3. What made you decide you wanted to make it forever? Why did you decide to have a wedding?
- 4. What were the good things that contributed to that decision?
- 5. What are the challenges?
- 6. What do you love about him/her?
- 7. What is it about her/him that makes you laugh, wonder, smile, or feel joy, respect, missing, awe, pride, fulfilled?
- 8. What would you never have change about him/her?
- 9. What does your family mean to you?
- 10. What do your friends or community mean to you?
- 11. Why did you choose this place for your marriage?
- 12. What are your hopes for the future?
- 13. Can you recall a very special moment, time, occasion, place in your lives together?
- 14. What kind of wedding ceremony had you envisaged?
- 15. What music do you like? Have you heard a song that seems to articulate what you feel? Perhaps it's just one line that says it.
- 16. Have you found any poetry or prose that you'd like included somehow in your wedding?
- 17. Who would you like to include in your ceremony? There are many ways to include family or friends and let them contribute to your union.
- 18. What's your favourite colour?

Do You Know How to Kiss a Girl?





Stand facing her.

Do not tell her your intentions.

Do not ask permission to kiss her.

Look dreamily into her eyes.

You may hold her right hand in your right hand, if you wish.

It is well to sigh a couple of times about this stage of the game.

Whisper softly that her rosebud lips remind you of cupid's bow.

She will probably drop her eyes and blush when you say that.

Place the fingers of your left hand under her chin and tilt back her head slightly.

Draw her gently towards you.

Do not hurry.

Gaze deeply at the love-lights which slumber in her eyes.

Sigh once more.

Incline your head towards hers until your lips — BUT WAIT!

Do not kiss her until you know that she uses Listerated Pepsin Gum, the only antiseptic gum in the world, the only chewing gum that makes it safe to kiss.

If she is a Listerated Pepsin Gum girl, kiss her.

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Don Ma Scott 1916



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Ceremony Structure

The ceremony itself can be can be as intricate or as simple as you wish. It can be considered in simple four parts:

1. The Invitation & Opening

... Where the celebrant invites your family and friends to partake in your rite of passage. Words about love, commitment & marriage are an appropriate opening, and your particular love story.

2. The Asking

... Where the celebrant asks if you want to marry the person standing next to you.

3. The Promise

... Where you and your beloved make promises of how you will love and support each other.

4. The Seal

... Where you can exchange a symbol like a ring and sign a certificate of marriage, thus sealing your contract of marriage.



Alternatively, you can also break it down into bite sized pieces in the following order of components:

1. Processional

Guests and family gather. Bride and/or groom and/or bridal party arrive.

2. Giving Away

Bride and/or Groom are given away or accompanied by special person to the ceremony place.

3. Welcoming

Celebrant welcomes family and friends, introduces herself and invites everyone to gather around.

4. Introduction/Story

Celebrant speaks about the couple's commitment to each other and what marriage means to this couple. Details about their meeting and choice of life together.

5. Reading/Music

Celebrant introduces others to read, speak or sing etc.

6. Monitum/legal

From the marriage act and said appropriately by the celebrant

7. Declaration of intention to marry

Bride and Groom repeat declaration after celebrant or respond "I do".

8. Vows

Bride and Groom recite vows, or repeat after celebrant. Who will go first?

9. Ring Ceremony or other Ritual/s

Couple exchange rings and sentiments they have about these rings. Or other ritual of choice is enacted.

10. Conclusion

Conclusion by celebrant acknowledging all who have come to witness this occasion.

11. The Declaration

Celebrant announces the couple married as husband and wife.

12. Signing of the Register

Sometimes music is used at this time.

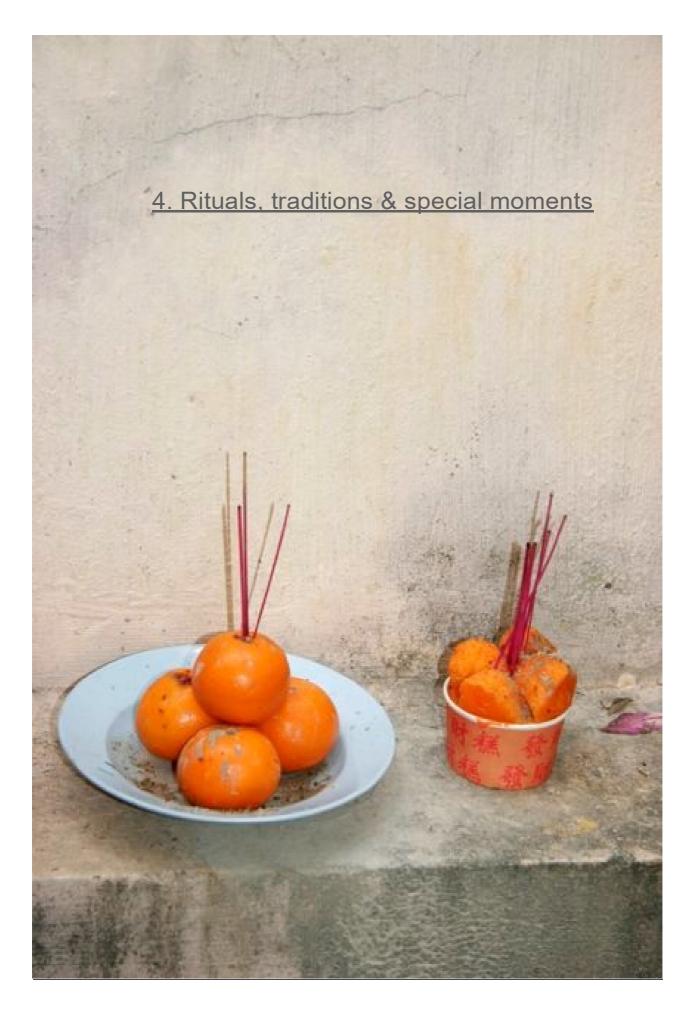
Couple and two witnesses sign the Marriage Register, Certificate of Marriage and the Marriage Certificate.

13. Congratulations & Presentation to Family and Friends

Celebrant introduces the couple "I present to you B and G" OR "Mr and Mrs X" OR "husband and wife", OR we can ask the guests to pronounce you married!

14. Recessional

Celebrant presents to the couple their own copy of marriage certificate, and the folder of ceremony before asking everyone to join the festivities or after celebrations.



Rituals in a marriage ceremony can be the most memorable moments for you and your guests. They say with actions rather than words. The following ideas just about cover the elements of fire air, earth and water; some are my ideas, some are borrowed goodies. My speciality is creating new rituals specially for you.

FOOD & DRINK

I often ask a couple to bring to their ceremony a symbolic meal, to remind us that as your bodies need to be nurtured each day, so does your love for each other. I ask you to bring whatever is "bread and wine" to you, the real thing.

The food? What is your choice of daily bread? Is it cinnamon toast, eggs, fruit, Mum's homemade bread? Bring whatever you need each day to sustain you, and feed each other. Perhaps it is the same thing prepared differently for each other.





And for your celebratory drink? What would you drink to toast the important occasions in your life? Is it special champagne, local rainwater, coffee, milk, Dad's homemade beer? Whatever is a special drink for you both. It is a symbol that we do not live by bread alone. We want to nurture living not just surviving. Celebration is part of life too.

As part of your ceremony, we include the ritual of eating the food and toasting each other with the drink. Special plates or vessels can be mementos of this ritual, or a part of your daily bread.

WATER CEREMONY

As water sustains our very lives it can be an important moment in or ceremony. If water is linked with a hobby (surfing/sailing/skiing) it can be especially poignant.

Pouring Water Ceremony: Water collected from a favourite place, place of memory or desire, or joining waters from different places is a delightful ritual. Children and other family members can be included. Special ceramic or glass vessels can be used to pour and receive. The joined water may be kept in a special bottle.

CANDLE CEREMONY

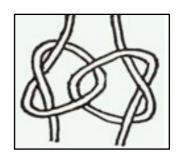


Perhaps you are more of a fire person. Flame is a symbol of igniting intent or passion or love or energy. Lighting candles together, lighting one from another, passing flame from one to another, creating fire sticks are examples of fire ritual.

The vase pictured is available for your ceremony. You can use beeswax church tapers or a candle of your choice.

TIE THE KNOT

The lovers knot is a knot of two lines, that symbolise two lives tied in the middle of their journey's path; individual and separate yet inextricably linked. There is a story that a sailor at sea would send his love two cords tied loosely. If she returned them tied up tight, he knew she returned his affections, if she returned them with one untied, he knew not to hope.



PLANTING TREES

A growing tree is always a symbol of new and ongoing life. Planting two trees such that as they grow their leaves will entwine signifies ongoing growth together.

SAND CEREMONY

The Sand Ceremony, with its Native American origins, is now poised to become a wedding staple. Simply find several vessels, one to pour the sand into, and some to pour the sand from.

As an explanation is read, you pour the containers of sand into the receiving container simultaneously. You may wish to leave a small amount of sand in each container to symbolize that although you are now joined as one, you each remain individuals. Children and other family members can be included.

See sample ceremonies in chapter 5 for some sand ceremony wording.

OPENING THE DOOR



In many cultures either the bride or grooms family arrives in procession bringing gifts and must request entry to the other's home or their is a negotiation between families. In a light hearted reflection of these traditions, the opening of the door ceremony is more like a game.

Before the ceremony begins, Bride and Groom stand in different places of the venue, and ask families and guests to be the support of one or the other. Special guests or most effectively the children are requested to relay messages back and forth between the two parties. Questions, comments, jokes go between two communities and families, until both parties agree that it is a great idea to be married. This ceremony is fun and light hearted. Alternatively gifts or songs can be sent back and forth; representative dowries or family symbols.

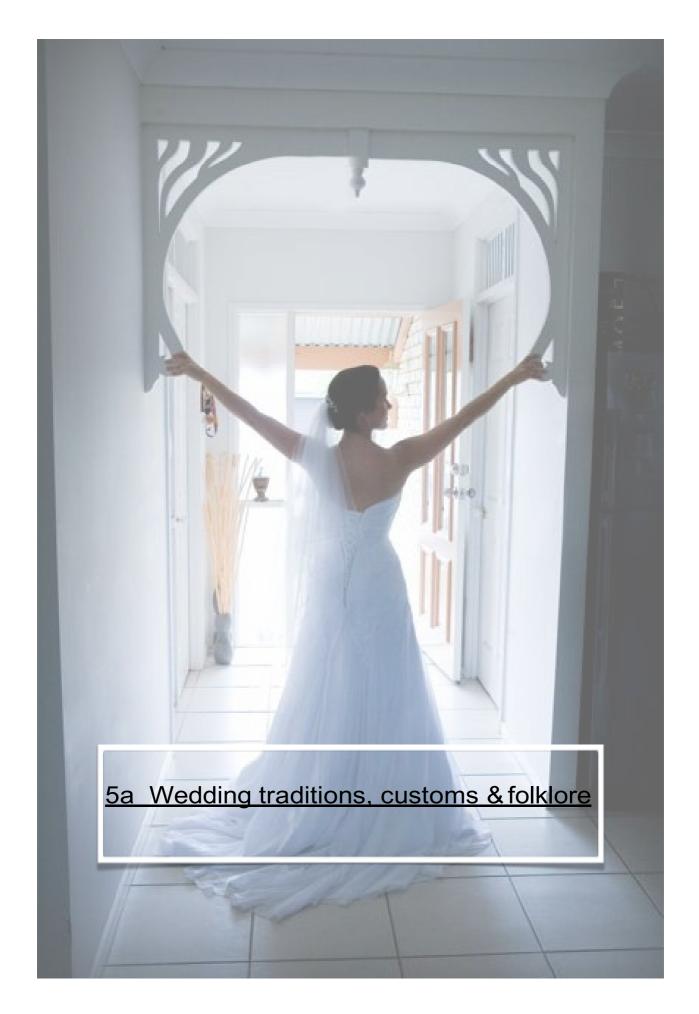
INTRODUCING THE FAMILIES

A wedding frequently brings together many people who may not have met before. And of course everyone wants to know who is responsible! A touching gesture is for the celebrant to introduce the bride, who in turn introduces her family and special friends or community. The celebrant then introduces the groom, who does the same for his own.

HOBBIES

How can you include your special interests in your ceremony. Let's talk!





WEDDING TRADITIONS, CUSTOMS & FOLKLORE

The following series of articles have been compiled and/or written by: Cherish Ceremonies www.cherishceremonies.com

Many of today's popular wedding ceremony and reception traditions can be traced to ancient Egyptian and European customs. These were often based on symbolism, superstition, folklore, religion, and even the belief that evil spirits could bring disease and death to newlyweds and crops, which was very important in many farm-based early cultures. Although the exact origin and usefulness of many of these early wedding traditions are not always clear, popular acceptance has allowed them to flourish. Besides, many of these wedding traditions are just plain fun!

According to various sources, some of the early marriages were literally carried out by the Groom and his "Bridesmen" (or "Bridesknights") who would kidnap a woman (the origin of "carrying a Bride over the threshold") from another tribe! The Groom and his fellow conspirators would then fight off the female's family of tribesmen with swords held in their right hand while the Groom would hold the captured Bride in his left hand, which is the origin of why a Bride stands on the <u>left</u> side of the Groom at a wedding.

After a successful capture, another politically correct practice was for the Groom to hide his new Bride for one month for mating purposes. It is said that the word "honeymoon" was created to describe this one month cycle of the moon when they would drink mead, which was a honey sweetened alcoholic brew that effects both sobriety and the acidity of the womb, thus increasing fertility.

Beginning around 1000 A.D., marriages were often nothing more than trading chips used in bartering land, social status, political alliances, or money (no checks or credit cards were accepted) between families!

The word, "Wedding" comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "wedd" that meant a man would marry a woman and pay the Bride's father.

Bouquet

Wedding bouquets were originally made of such strong herbs as thyme and garlic, which were meant to frighten away evil spirits, and to cover the stench emitting from people who had not bathed recently!

Bouquet Toss

In ancient times, it was believed that a Bride was especially lucky on her wedding day. Guests would sometimes tear at her dress for a souvenir piece of good luck to take home. The Bride's tossing of her bouquet grew from her desire to offer a good luck souvenir, and prevent guests from bothering her (and her dress!) during her reception.

<u>Bridesmaids</u>

Early Brides and Bridesmaids wore similar dresses in order to confuse evil spirits.

Bridal Shower

Back in the days when weddings were arranged by family members, it is said that a poor Dutchman fell in love with a girl whose father refused her a dowry. Their friends showered her with enough gifts to help them start a household. According to another story, the first "Bridal Shower" occurred at the end of the 19th century. At a party, the Bride's friends placed small gifts inside a parasol and opened it over the Bride's head. When she opened the parasol, she was "showered" with presents!

Bridal Veil

When marriages were arranged by family members, the newlyweds very rarely were allowed to see one another. Family members exchanging a dowry were afraid that if the Groom didn't like the appearance of the Bride's face, he might refuse to marry her. This is why the Father of the Bride "gave the Bride away" to the Groom at the actual wedding ceremony. Only after lifting her veil just prior to the ceremony did the Groom see the Bride's face for the first time! Early Greek and Roman Brides wore red or yellow veils to represent fire, and to ward off demons.

Carrying The Bride Over The Threshold

When a Groom used to steal his Bride from her tribe, he was forced to carry her kicking and screaming. This act of thievery has evolved into a more romantic gesture, welcoming the Bride into her new home.

Garter

Brides originally tossed a garter, rather than a bouquet, at a wedding reception. In the 14th century, this custom changed after Brides became tired of fighting off drunken men who tried to remove the garter themselves! According to one legend, the garter toss in England evolved from an earlier tradition of "flinging the stocking". On their wedding night, guests would follow the Bride and Groom to their bedroom, wait until they undressed, steal their stockings, and then "fling" them at the couple! The first person to hit the Bride or Groom on the head would supposedly be the next person to marry.

Money Dance

According to one custom, when arranged marriages were common, the Groom collected a dowry only after his marriage was consummated. The money dance insured that the couple would have some money before they left their wedding reception. According to another wedding tradition, the people of the village gave gifts of pottery, livestock, and garden plants to the newlyweds because the Bride and Groom had no money to acquire these items until they had children, after which a dowry was exchanged.

Penny In Shoe

This is a European tradition to bring the Bride good luck, fortune, and protection against want. After the Wedding Day, the lucky penny can be turned into a piece of jewelry as a pendant, charm for a bracelet, or ring setting.

Ring Finger

Prior to the 5th century, the ring finger was actually the index finger. Later, it was believed that the third finger contained the "vein of love" that led directly to the heart.

Shoes On Vehicle

Ancient Romans used to transfer to the Groom his authority over his Bride when her Father gave the Groom her shoes. In later years, guests threw their own shoes at the newlyweds to

signify this transfer of authority. Today, this tradition is kept alive by simply tying old shoes to the back of the newlywed's vehicle before they leave their wedding reception celebration.

Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue

This superstition of the Bride wearing something that fits each of these four categories originated in Europe, to ward off evil spirits. Something Old: This tradition symbolized the sense of continuity while making the transition from a single person to that of a married couple. Something New: This tradition symbolized that marriage represented a transition to adulthood. Something Borrowed: This tradition symbolized the popular belief that by borrowing something from a happily married couple, good fortune would follow the newlyweds. Something Blue: In ancient Israel, blue was the border color of the Bride's dress, symbolizing purity, constancy and fidelity.

Stag Parties

This is the male equivalent of the Bridal Shower. Roman empire soldiers would feast with the Groom the night before his wedding to say goodbye to his irresponsible days of bachelorhood, and to renew their vows of allegiance to their friendships.

Tossing Rice

By believing that newlyweds brought good luck, guests used to shower them with nuts and grains to insure a bountiful harvest, and many children to work the land. During years of a poor harvest, rice was tossed instead. This tradition continues today with rice or birdseed (where permitted), or bubbles to wish the Bride and Groom much happiness. Incidentally, it is not true that birds eating rice thrown after a wedding ceremony will cause their stomachs to enlarge and eventually explode. This myth may have simply evolved from church and synagogue employees weary from cleaning up after every wedding ceremony!

Tuxedo

Until the 20th century, the Groom simply wore his "Sunday best" on his wedding day. It is said that President Teddy Roosevelt popularized the modern tuxedo.

Tying The Knot

This comes from the days of the Roman empire when the Bride wore a girdle that was tied in knots. The Groom untied the knots prior to the consummation of their marriage.

Wedding Cake

Also during the days of the Roman empire, wedding cakes were baked of wheat or barley. At the reception, they were traditionally broken over the head of the new Bride by the Groom as a symbol of her fertility. Guests would then scramble for pieces of the cake, and take them home for good luck. It later became a tradition to place many small cakes on top of each other as high as possible. The newlyweds would then try to exchange a kiss over the top of the tower of cakes without knocking them down. During the reign of King Charles II of England, the baker added icing, and the modern style of wedding cake was born. It is unclear when the tradition of the newlyweds smashing wedding cake into each other's face first began, and uncertain if such marriages are consummated later that day or evening!

Wedding Ring

According to some historians, the first recorded marriage rings date back to the days when early man tied plaited circlets around the Bride's wrists and ankles to keep her spirit from running away. Approximately 3,000 BC, Egyptians originated the phrase "without beginning, without end" in describing the significance of the wedding ring. These rings were made of woven hemp

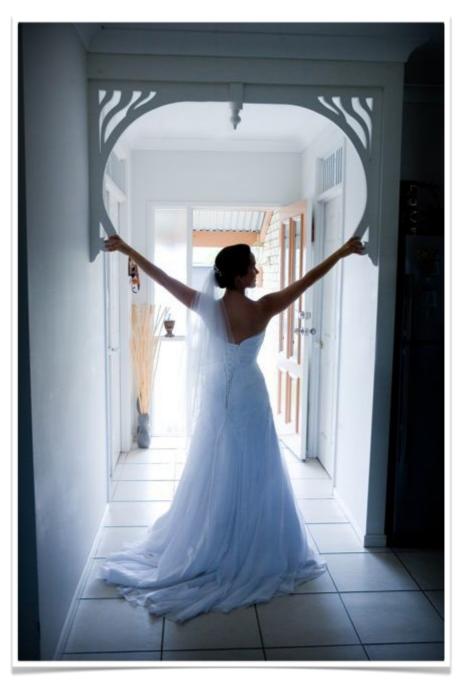
which constantly wore out and needed replacement. Although Romans originally used iron, gold is now used as a symbol of all that is pure. Diamonds were first used by Italians, who believed that it was created from the flames of love. In some European cultures, the wedding ring is worn on the right hand. In other cultures, an engagement ring is worn on the left hand, and the wedding ring is worn on the right hand.

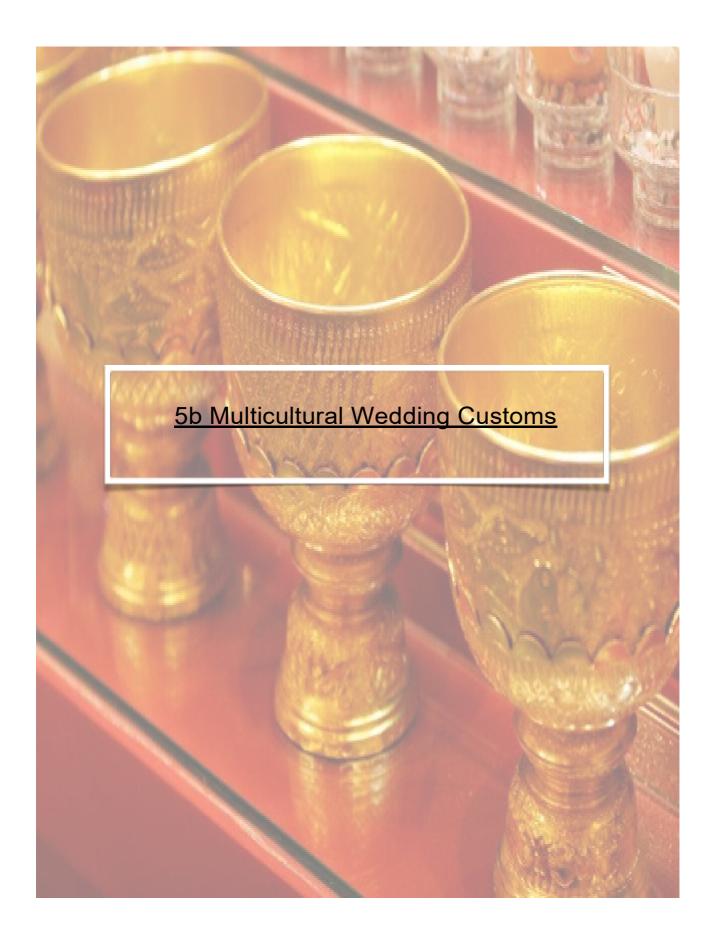
Wedding Toast

It is said that this tradition first began in France, where bread would be placed in the bottom of two drinking glasses for the newlyweds. They would then drink as fast as they could to be the first person to get to the toast. According to legend, the winner would rule their household!

White Wedding Dress

This was made popular in the 1840's by Queen Victoria, who chose this instead of the traditional royal "silver" wedding dress. Prior to this, Brides simply wore their best dress on their wedding day.





MULTICULTURAL WEDDING CUSTOMS

Various wedding customs have their roots and popularity based on ethnic origin.

African-American

At some African-American wedding ceremonies, newlyweds "jump over a broom" to symbolize the beginning of a new life. The ritual was created during slavery, when African-Americans could not legally marry. Some people trace this wedding tradition to an African tribal marriage ritual of placing sticks on the ground representing the couple's new home. Today, the jumping of the broom is a symbol of sweeping away of the old, and welcoming the new. Broom Jumping can be performed either at the wedding ceremony, after the minister pronounces the newlyweds husband and wife, or at the wedding reception just after the Bridal Party enters the reception area. A fully decorated broom can be purchased at ethnic stores. Other couples may prefer to use a regular household broom decorated with bows, flowers, and/or other trinkets in the wedding colors. At some receptions, guests may participate in the ceremony by tying ribbons around the broom before the Broom Jumping begins.

<u>Belgian</u>

As the Bride walks up the aisle at her Wedding Ceremony, the Bride stops and hands her mother a flower from her bouquet and they embrace. After the Wedding Ceremony is finished, the new couple walk to the Groom's side of the church and the Bride gives her mother-in-law a second flower from her bouquet and they also embrace.

Chinese

The Bride may wear a red wedding dress, symbolizing love and joy. At the wedding reception, a nine-course meal (lasting up to three hours) is very popular. A family member may act as the official "Master of Ceremonies" orchestrating family introductions, toasts, comedy sketches, and a reenactment of the newlywed's courtship.

Eastern Orthodox Church

The rings are blessed by the Priest, who takes them in hand, and makes the sign of the cross over the Bride and Groom's head. The "Koumbaros" (Best Man) then exchanges the rings three times, taking the Bride's ring and placing it on the Groom's finger, and vice-versa. This exchange signifies that in married life, the weaknesses of the one partner will be compensated for by the strength of the other, and the imperfections of one by the perfection's of the other. Candles are held throughout the Wedding Service, which begins immediately after the Betrothal Service. The candles are like the lamps of the five wise maidens of the Bible who, because they had enough oil in them, were able to receive Christ when He came in the darkness of the night. The candles symbolize the spiritual willingness of the couple to receive Christ, Who will bless them through this sacrament. The Office of the Crowning which follows is the climax of the Wedding Service. The crowns are signs of the glory and honor that God crowns them during the sacrament. The Bride and Groom are crowned as the King and Queen of their own little "kingdom", their home, which they will (hopefully) rule with wisdom, justice, and integrity.

French

I speak French and can offer a full French Flair to your marriage ceremony.

Ask for my special French Package.

Before and during the Marriage Ceremony

The traditional bridal trousseau, or hope chest, originated in France and came from the French

word trousse, meaning bundle. The bundle refers to the clothes and other possessions that a bride would take with her from her family's home to the one she'd share with her husband.

In many smaller French towns, the groom will meet his betrothed at her home on the day of the wedding and escort her to the ceremony. Across the road, children stretch white ribbons which the bride cuts as they proceed towards the chapel. The groom usually walks his mother down the aisle just prior to the main wedding procession.

At the church, the bride and groom are seated upon two red velvet chairs beneath a silk canopy, or "carre." Sometimes laurel leaves are scattered across their paths when they exit the church, or small coins are tossed for the towns' children to gather.

One early French wedding custom signifies the new alliance created by uniting two families through marriage. During the Wedding Reception, the new couple raise a glass of wine from two different vineyards. They then pour their wine into a third glass and each drinks from it.

During the reception, the couple often uses a toasting cup called a "Coupe de Marriage." In fact, the origin of giving a toast began in France when a small piece of toast was dropped into the couple's wine to ensure a healthy life. Hence the reference to lifting your glass in a "toast."

The popularity of a bride wearing a white wedding gown on her day of matrimony, began in France several hundred years ago. The custom of having fragrant flowers as decorations and bridal bouquets has also been popular for centuries. Each flower represents a special and unique meaning to the bride and groom, and especially fragrant flowers helped freshen things up a bit, before deodorant and perfumes were invented. Wedding bells in France were usually heard in spring and summer when it was warm enough for everyone to bathe!

In a church filled with incense and flowers, the couple stands beneath a silk canopy. A predecessor of the veil, a square of silk fabric,"carre'," is held over the head of the bride and groom as the couple received the priest's final blessing. They were designed to protect the couple from descending malice. The same veil is used for the baptism of their new born child.

Outside the church, rice or wheat as a symbol of prosperity and fertility, is showered over the couple. In Southern parts of France, wedding guests toss dragées and coins at children waiting on the doorsteps of the chapel **Dragées**, dated as early as Roman Empire, are French delicacy, almond covered with chocolate, sugar or nougat. As symbol of happiness and festivity, they accompany all major French ceremonies. As the bridal couple leaves the chapel, they walk through flower arch or over laurel leaves scattered in their path.

As the newlywed couple departs from the wedding site, laurel leaves are scattered in their path for them to walk over.

French Wedding Reception

A wedding toast is made to the newlyweds sometime during the traditional **French wedding reception**. Following this toast, they drink, as husband and wife, from a specially engraved, double handled goblet, usually a precious family heirloom passed down from generation to generation.

After the wedding reception, and even later into the couple's wedding night, friends of the newlyweds might show up outside their window banging pots and pans, singing boisterous tunes. The groom is expected to invite them in for drinks and snacks.

Today's wedding cakes are in adaptation of French pastry to English customs. Originally, large, thin biscuits were broken over the head of an English bride. By Elizabethan times, these biscuits had changed into small, square cakes. The French influence added icing.

Long ago in France, it was the custom for villagers to throw buns into a pile in preparation for the wedding feast. A clever baker decided to take some bun-like pastries stuffed with creamand

fastened them as a pyramid, like the mound of buns, creating a tall cone of caramel-coated cream puffs called **croque-en-bouche** ("crisp in the mouth"). The cone may be topped with caged doves, which are released to symbolize the newlyweds' departure from their families.

In Brittany, the wedding party and the bride and groom drink from a glass of brandy poured over a piece of white bread, symbolic of the beginning of the "**toasting**" custom. The couple has the last sip and eats the bread for good luck.

Another tradition that is finding its way into wedding celebrations is that of "beheading" a bottle of champagne with a sabre specially-made for the occasion. Begun as a means of showing off their skill on horseback, the Hussards under Napoleon's command celebrated their victories by 'sabring' off the top of a bottle of champagne. As legend has it, these skilled horsemen would ride on horseback at a full gallop while brave (or foolhardy!) ladies would hold up the bottles. With over 100 lbs. of pressure per square inch in a bottle of champagne, the sabre must strike the neck at exactly the right angle.

The practice spread throughout France as a way to celebrate special occasions such as weddings, and nowadays celebrants can purchase decorative replicas of these sabres that have been faithfully recreated by artisans in Thiers, France - the French capital of cutlery. (You can view one of these specialized sabres by clicking on the related link at the top right-hand side of this page...)

On an equally dynamic note, some bridal couples choose to serve a croquembouche instead of a wedding cake. This tasty desert is a pyramid of crème-filled pastry puffs that are drizzled with a caramel glaze.

A fairly boisterous French wedding tradition involves continuing the celebrating into the wee hours of the night. After the reception, friends gather outside the newlyweds' window and bang together pots and pans. These raucous revelers are then invited inside for a few more drinks in the couple's honor before they are finally allowed to spend their first night together as husband and wife...

A funny tradition

This tradition is totally French but is not use a lot nowadays. This tradition originates in Aveyron, but was also popular in Brittany and Savoy. "On their wedding day the newlyweds are transported in a cart drawn by a donkey, and they hold a chamber pot to announce the ceremony to the villagers (this ride was called "The donkey dance"). The day after, very early in the morning, the villagers had to hunt for for the newlyweds to give them the chamber pot (this was called "The running after newlyweds"). The running was a success when the villagers had found the couple. As soon as they were found, they had to drink the contents of the chamber pot, the bride first, then the groom and finally, the villagers. The content of the chamber pot had to give vigour to the couple after the wedding night.

The content of the chamber pot changes in function depending on the region and can contain bananas, alcohol, hot chocolate, spices, bread...

German

During the wedding ceremony, the Groom may kneel on the hem of the Bride's dress to symbolize his control over her. Not to be outdone, the Bride may step on the Groom's foot when she rises to symbolize her power over him!

Greek

Some newlyweds wear a crown of flowers during the wedding ceremony. The couple may walk around the altar three times representing the Holy Trinity. At the reception, Greek folk dances are popular, with guests lining up in a single file line or folk circles.

Hispanic

During the wedding ceremony, thirteen gold coins (representing the Groom's dowry to his Bride) are often blessed by the priest, and passed between the hands of the newlyweds several times before ending with the Bride. A large rosary or white rope ("laso") is sometimes wound around the couple's shoulders in a figure-8 symbol of "infinity" during the wedding ceremony to symbolize their union as one.

Irish

In the early 1900's, an Irish couple would walk to church together on their Wedding Day. If the people of their parish approved their union they would throw rice, pots, pans, brushes and other household items at the couple as they approached their church. Today, "hen parties" (Bridal Showers) have replaced this practice. Some Irish people wear a "claddagh" ring for a wedding ring. This ring was created by a master goldsmith, Richard Joyce, 400 years ago in a fishing village called Claddagh, which overlooks Galway Bay. The claddagh symbolizes love, loyalty, and friendship. On the right hand, with the heart facing inward, it means the wearer's heart is unoccupied. Facing outwards reveals love is being considered. When worn on the left hand facing outward, it signifies that the wearer is seriously committed or married. At some Irish wedding receptions, the Groom is lifted in a chair ("jaunting car") to celebrate that he is a married man. For good luck, the newlyweds are given a horseshoe to display in their home in the upward position. A traditional Irish wedding cake is a fruitcake. Traditional Irish toasts, in addition to remarks from the Best Man, are very popular.

Irish Marriage Blessing

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.

Italian

Some Brides may choose to carry a white silk or satin purse ("busta") to store gifts of money that are welcomed. "Tarantella" folk dances are popular at the wedding reception. Another Italian custom is to present five sugar-coated almonds to the guests which represent health, wealth, long life, fertility, and happiness.

<u>Japanese</u>

The Bride and her Parents might visit the Groom's house on wedding day. At the wedding ceremony, the Bride's wedding gown is often a traditional wedding kimono. She usually changes into something else at the wedding reception. The first of nine sips of sake drunk by the Bride and Groom at their wedding ceremony symbolizes the official union of marriage.

Jewish

It is a Jewish tradition for a Bride to present her Groom with a tallit to wear for his Aufruf, the reading of the Torah prior to their ceremony. The Groom's family often give candlesticks to the Bride that can be used during the actual wedding ceremony. It is also a custom for Jewish men to cover their heads at all times, especially during prayers, with a kippot (yarmulkes), as a form of reverence, respect, and acknowledgement that God is present everywhere. In some congregations, women also cover their heads to pray.

Some Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform wedding ceremonies take place under a chuppah (wedding canopy). The chuppah is a rectangular piece of cloth large enough for the Bride, Groom, Rabbi, and sometimes other members of the wedding party to stand under. The chuppah signifies the new home about to be shared by the newlyweds. Before the procession to the chuppah, the tanaim are signed, and the Groom is asked if he is ready to take on the

responsibilities outlined in the kepubah. He signifies his willingness by accepting a handkerchief or other object offered to him by the Rabbi. The two witnesses to this sign the ketubah. While the actual text of the ketubah is never meant to vary, the border decorations on this document have over the centuries been the subject of remarkable artistic creations. At the beginning of the wedding ceremony, the Bride might observe the Biblical custom of "Circling the Groom" seven times. This practice is seen as a powerful act of definition, where the Bride will symbolically create the space that they will share as husband and wife. In Judaism, the number seven is mystical and represents completion and fulfillment. Just as the creation of the world was finished in seven days, the seven circles complete the couple's search for each other.

The bedeken, or veiling, is a small ceremony in which the Groom lowers the veil over the Bride's face, and by this act acknowledges that he is marrying the correct woman. This custom originated in the story of Jacob who didn't see the face of his Bride prior to his wedding and was tricked into marrying Leah instead of his intended, Rachel.

The Jewish marriage ceremony consists of two parts: Erusin (pre-engagement) and Nissuin (marriage). These ceremonies were historically performed up to one year apart, but more recently the two have been combined into one ceremony. The Eursin ceremony begins with Kiddush, the blessing over the wine. Kiddush is part of virtually all Jewish observances as a prayer of sanctification. The exchange of rings completes the Erusin ceremony.

In Jewish law, a verbal declaration of marriage is not legally binding unless an act of Kinyan, a formal physical acquisition is completed. This is reached when two witnesses see the Bride accept a ring from the Groom, and he recites the words of marriage. After the ketubah has been read at the ceremony, wine is often poured into a new glass, and the Sheva Berakhot (Seven Benedictions) are recited over it. The Bride and Groom then drink from the glass of wine. With the ceremony complete, tradition calls for the Groom to break the wrapped glass by stomping on it. This final action symbolizes the destruction of the Holy Temple in Israel, and reminds guests that love is fragile. The audience may shout Mazel Toy, and the Bride and Groom kiss.

Immediately after the wedding ceremony, the couple may spend a few private moments together, or Yichud as a symbolic consummation of their marriage. Later, the Mitzvah, or obligation, of rejoicing at a wedding reception is incumbent on the Bride, Groom, and guests.

Mexican

Red beads are sometimes tossed at Newlyweds to bring them good luck.

Polish

The Mother of the Bride may choose to place the veil on the Bride before the wedding ceremony to symbolize her last task that a Mother does on behalf of her girl before she becomes a married woman. A traditional folk song ("Twelve Angels") is sometimes played at the reception, allowing the Bride to transfer her veil, and good luck to be married, to her Maid of Honor, Bridesmaids, and Flower Girl. A morning wedding ceremony is sometimes followed with a brief afternoon luncheon, several hours of downtime when guests return home, and then a long evening wedding reception. Polka dances and other audience participation events are very popular.

Scottish

The Groom and his Groomsmen often wear Scottish kilts (and traditionally no undergarments!). The Groom may present the Bride with an engraved silver teaspoon on their wedding day to symbolize that they will never go hungry. A traditional sword dance is sometimes performed at their wedding reception.

Spanish

A Spanish Groom gives sometimes gives his Bride thirteen coins in memory of Christ and the twelve apostles. The Bride carries them in a small bag during the Wedding Ceremony as a symbol that the Groom promises to support and care for her.

Persian

The Persian wedding ceremony despite its local and regional variations, like many other rituals in Iran goes back to the ancient Zoroastrian tradition. Zoroastrianism was the religion of Parsi nation (Persians) before the introduction of Islam to the country, 1400 years before present. Zoroastrians believe in a single god, an all-wise creator who is supreme "Ahura Mazda" also known as Ormuzd, and they are dedicated to a three-fold path, as shown in their motto: "Good thoughts, Good words, Good deeds". Though the concepts and theory of the marriage have changed drastically by Islamic traditions and Koran, the actual ceremonies have remained more or less the same as they were originally in the ancient Zoroastrian culture. In modern Iran the marriage ceremony is more a symbol of their rich ancient culture than religion, even though it has been influenced by religion to some extent.

For Iranians marriage is considered to be an event, which must be celebrated not quietly but with glory and distinction. It is the most conspicuous of all the rituals and must be celebrated in the presence of an assembly, which can bear witness to the event.

In the ancient times, the musicians playing at marriage gatherings used drums to announce the marriage to the people of the town or village. The group that gathered for the marriage was called the assembly "Anjoman" for the queenly bride.

Traditionally, both the bride and the bridegroom would dress in white with wreaths of flower on their necks, something similar to the Hawaiian Lei. These wreaths of flower are still worn in modern wedding ceremonies in Pakistan (which used to be part of the great Persian Empire), but it is eliminated from the Iranian wedding ceremony. The color white is a symbol of purity, innocence and faithfulness. Today most modern Iranian couples follow the western dress code and style.

There are two stages to a Persian marriage. Most often both take place on the same day, but occasionally there could be some time between the two. The first is called "Aghd", the legal process of getting married, when both the bride and bridegroom and their guardians sign a marriage contract. The second stage is "Jashn-e Aroosi", the actual feasts and the celebrations, which traditionally lasted from 3 to 7 days.

The ceremony takes place in a specially decorated room with flowers and a beautiful and elaborately decorated spread on the floor called "Sofreh-ye Aghd". Traditionally Sofreh-ye Aghd is set on the floor facing east, the direction of sunrise (light). Consequently when bride and bridegroom are seated at the head of Sofreh-ye Aghd they will be facing "The Light".

By custom Aghd would normally take place at bride's parents/guardians home. The arrival of the guests, who are to be witnesses to the marriage of the couple, initiates the wedding ceremony. Traditionally the couples' guardians and other elder close family members are present in the room to greet the guests and guide them to their seats. After all the guests are seated the bridegroom is the first to take his seat in the room at the head of Sofreh-ye Aghd. The bride comes afterwards and joins the bridegroom at the head of Sofreh-ye Aghd. The bridegroom always sits on the right hand side of the bride. In Zoroastrian culture the right side designates a place of respect.

The spread that is used on the floor as the backdrop for Sofreh-ye Aghd was traditionally passed from mother to daughter (or occasionally son). The spread is made of a luxurious fabric such as "Termeh" (Cashmere: A rich gold embroidered fabric originally made in Cashmere from

the soft wool found beneath the hair of the goats of Cashmere, Tibet, and the Himalayas), "Atlas" (Gold embroidered satin) or "Abrisham" (Silk).

On Sofreh-ye Aghd, the following items are placed:

- Mirror (of fate) "Aayeneh-ye Bakht" and two Candelabras (representing the bride and groom and brightness in their future) one on either side of the mirror. The mirror and two candelabras are symbols of light and fire, two very important elements in the Zoroastrian culture. When the bride enters the room she has her veil covering her face. Once the bride sits beside the bridegroom she removes her veil and the first thing that the bridegroom sees in the mirror should be the reflection of his wife-to-be.
- A tray of seven multi-colored herbs and spices "Sini-ye Aatel-O-Baatel" to guard the
 couple and their lives together against the evil eye, witchcraft and to drive away evil
 spirits. This tray consists of seven elements in seven colors:
 - 1. Poppy Seeds "Khash-Khaash" (to break spells and witchcraft)
 - 2. Wild Rice "Berenj"
 - 3. Angelica "Sabzi Khoshk"
 - 4. Salt "Namak" (to blind the evil eye)
 - 5. Nigella Seeds "Raziyaneh"
 - 6. Black Tea "Chaay"
 - 7. Frankincense "Kondor" (to burn the evil spirits)
- A specially baked and decorated flatbread "Noon-e Sangak" with blessing "Mobaarak-Baad" written in calligraphy on it. The writing is usually with either saffron "Zaffaron", cinnamon, Nigella seeds, or glitters. This symbolizes prosperity for the feasts and for the couple's life thereafter. A separate platter of this flat bread, feta cheese and fresh herbs are also present to be shared with the guests after the ceremony, to bring the new couple happiness and prosperity.
- A basket of decorated eggs and a basket of decorated almonds, walnuts and hazelnuts in the shell to symbolize fertility.
- A basket of pomegranates and/or apples for a joyous future. Pomegranates are considered heavenly fruits and apples symbolize the divine creation of mankind
- A cup of rose water extracted from special Persian roses "Gol-e Mohammadi" to perfume the air
- A bowl made out of crystallized sugar "Kaas-e Nabaat/Shaakh-e Nabaat" to sweeten life for the newly wed.
- A brazier "Manghal" holding burning coals sprinkled with wild rue "Espand" a popular incense. Wild rue is used in many Zoroastrian ceremonies, rituals and purification rites. It is believed to keep the evil eye away and bring on plenty of health.
- A bowl of gold coins representing wealth and prosperity.
- A scarf or shawl made out of silk or any other fine fabric to be held over the bride and bridegroom's head throughout the ceremony by various happily married female relatives (mostly bride's close family members).

- Two sugar cones "Kalleh Ghand" made out of hardened sugar to be used during the ceremony. These sugar cones are ground together above the bride and bridegroom's head (over the scarf held above their heads) throughout the ceremony to shower them in sugar (symbolizing sweetness and happiness).
- A cup of honey to sweeten life. Immediately after the couple is married they each should dip one pinky finger in the cup of honey and feed it to the other one.
- A needle and seven strands of colored thread to figuratively sew up the mother-in-law's lips from speaking unpleasant words to the bride! The shawl that is held above the couple's head throughout the ceremony is sewed in one corner by the needle and threads.
- A copy of Koran "Ghoraan-e Majid" (the Moslem's holy book) opened in the middle and placed on the spread. This symbolizes God's blessing for the couple. Traditionally "Avesta" the ancient Zoroastrian holy book was present during the ceremony and readings were made from it. Eventually Koran replaced Avesta after Iran became a Moslem nation.
- A prayer carpet/kit "Jaa-Namaaz" spread open in the center of Sofreh-ye Aghd to remind
 the couple of importance of prayer both at blissful times and times of hardship. This
 prayer kit includes a small rug "Sajjaadeh" to be spread on the floor at the time of prayer,
 a small cube of molded clay with prayers written on it "Mohr" and a strand of prayer
 beads "Tasbih".
- An assortment of sweets and pastries to be shared with the guests after the ceremony.
 The assortment usually includes: Sugar coated almond strips "Noghl", Baklava (a sweet flaky Persian pastry "Baaghlavaa"), Mulberry-almond paste made in the shape of mulberries "Tout", Rice-flour cookies "Noon-Berenji", Chickpea-flour cookies "Noon-Nokhodchi", Almond-flour cookies "Noon-Baadoomi", and Honey roasted almonds "Sohaan A'sali".

When the bride and bridegroom are both seated the marriage ceremony begins. Usually the Moslem priest "Mullah" or other males with recognized authority such as a notary public will be the master of ceremony and perform the legal part of the ceremony. The bride and the bridegroom have each a marriage witness. Usually older and married males are chosen amongst close relations to stand as witnesses. The ceremony consists of preliminary blessings, questions to the witnesses, guardians and the marrying couple. Finally the ceremony is solemnized by giving some prayers for the newly wed couple and signing of a legal marriage contract.

After the preliminary blessings and a few words about the importance of the institution of marriage, the master of ceremony confirms with both the parents or guardians that they indeed wish to proceed with the ceremony and there are no objections. Then the master of ceremony asks the mutual consent of the couple. First the bridegroom is asked if he wishes to enter into the marriage contract, then the bride is asked the same question. Once the bride is asked if she agrees to the marriage, she pauses. The question is repeated three times and it is only at the third time that she will say yes. To make the bridegroom wait for the bride's answer is to signify that it is the husband who seeks the wife and is eager to have her and not the other way around!

During the reading of the marriage contract, all the unmarried ladies are asked to leave the room. There exists the belief that a girl should only hear the marriage ceremony's readings for her own marriage or her chances for marriage might be ill-fated! Nowadays the single ladies do

not seem to be too worried about finding a husband and getting married, because most of them stay in the room to witness the ceremony.

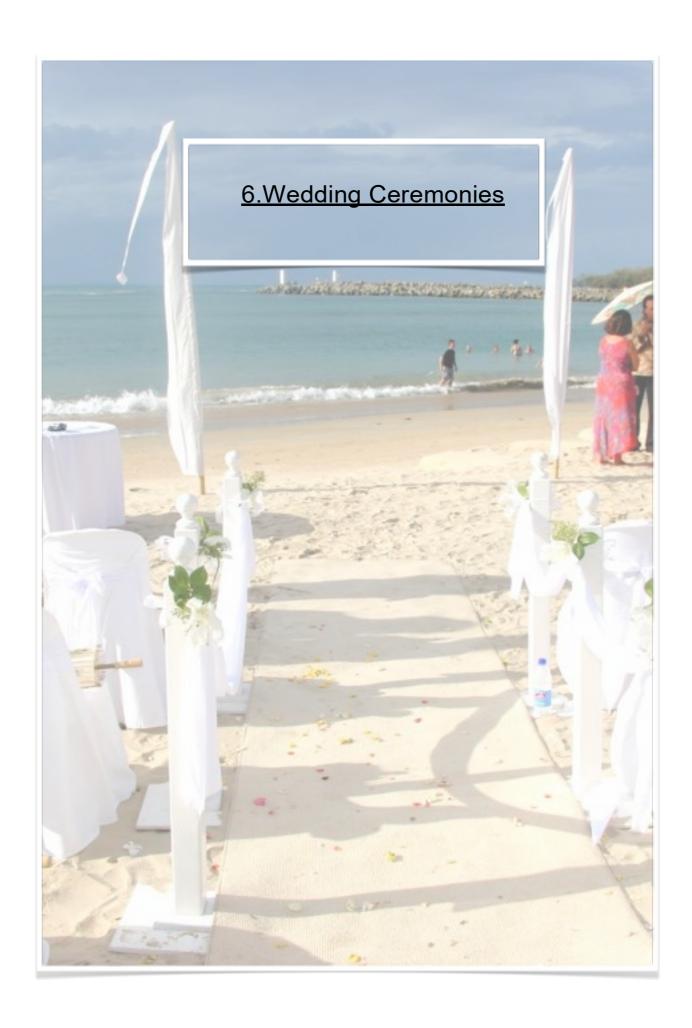
During the service married female relatives of the couple (mainly the bride) hold over the couple's head the fine scarf. Two different actions take place at the same time. Two pieces of crystallized sugar shaped like cones are rubbed together, a symbolic act to sweeten the couple's life. In the second act two parts of the same fabric are sewn together with needle and thread to symbolize sewing mother-in-law's lips together. The ceremony is reminiscent of the ancient traditions.

Once the bride has said yes to the proposal, the master of the ceremony pronounces the couple husband and wife and asks for God's blessing to be with the couple in their lives together. The bride and bridegroom place the wedding bands on each other's hands and feed each other honey. Afterwards the couple, their guardians, witnesses and master of ceremony sign the documents.

Traditionally after the ceremony while the bride and groom are still seated the bride is showered with gifts, usually expensive jewelry, and all she receives is hers. The bridegroom does not receive many gifts. He only receives one gift from the bride's parents/guardians. When all the gifts are presented to the bride the wedding ceremony is officially concluded. Generally after the ceremony the bride and bridegroom and the guests move to the location of the wedding celebration party "Aroosi" and celebrate the occasion by playing laud cheerful music, dancing and consuming some lavishly prepared food.

The celebration includes a lavish meal, sometimes with a whole roast lamb as the centerpiece. Jeweled rice "Morrasah Polo" or sweet rice "Shirin Polo" is always served along with many other dishes and an elaborate wedding cake. The celebration, with so much feasting, singing, and dancing, is a day for all to remember. After the guests have gone home, it is customary to give the remaining pastries to those who were unable to come and to those who helped make the day a success. The sugar cones are kept by the bride for good luck.

Before they enter their home, the bride kicks over a bowl of water placed in the doorway. The water spilled on the threshold represents enlightenment, happiness, and purification for their new house. A friendly competition starts with the bride and groom as the bride tries to enter her house while stepping on her husband's feet. This act makes the bride the boss in the household.



Marriage Ceremonies

Ceremonies

It can take some time to get your ceremony so that it feels right for both of you. But there are many resources to help. It can be immeasurable joy when you finally decide on what is right for you.

The local library will have some books to read. My favourites are listed under **Resources**

The internet has many websites that specialise in marriage.

Your family and friends who have embraced marriage before you will be able to point you towards some great resources. How about your favourite song, or poem. Try listening to the radio and selecting a phrase that appeals to you or seems to say just what you'd like to be able to say if you were the poet!

As a starting point, some ceremonies are on the following pages to assist you. This is only a beginning.....

The legal parts

What you must have in a ceremony:

• The marriage celebrant must say at least the following words:

"I am duly authorized by law to solemnize marriages according to law.

"Before you are joined in marriage in my presence and in the presence of these witnesses, I am to remind you of the solemn and binding nature of the relationship into which you are now about to enter.

"Marriage, according to law in Australia, is the union of two people to the exclusion of all others entered into for life."

• The parties to be wed must say at least:

"I call upon the persons here present to witness that I, A.B. (or C.D.), take thee, C.D. (or A.B.), to be my lawful wedded wife (or husband or spouse)"

The Above words constitute the shortest ceremony I can do for you!

A SAMPLE WEDDING BY KARI....

(note, real names have been substituted with Groom, Bride, Celebrant, Son etc)

The hosts, welcome guests and offer refreshments. They gather the guests around them in the garden setting and rehearse all family and guests to say

"We, your family and friends, now pronounce you married."

ARRIVAL OF BRIDE AND GROOM

Bride and Groom arrive in a wooden canoe across the lake, with their son, and walk up the bank to the awaiting guests.

PLANTING THE TREES

Bride and Groom plant two trees in the gardens, to represent the growth their relationship will experience as time flows slowly by.

OPENING THE DOOR CEREMONY

Bride and Groom stand in different grassy glades of the garden, and ask families and guests to be the support of one. The children are requested to relay messages back and forth between the two parties. Questions, comments, jokes bounce between two communities and families, until both parties agree that it is a great idea to be married. This ceremony is to be fun and light hearted.

PROCESSIONAL

A musician pipes the two groups together and into a stone circle.

INTRODUCING OUR FAMILIES

Celebrant: I'd like to introduce myself, Kari and Bride, A.B
......who introduces her family (her Son, Mum, Dad, brothers & wives & children, and Aunties)
Celebrant: And I'd like to introduce Groom, C.D
.....who introduces his family (Mum, Dad, brothers & wives & children, grandmothers and

THE STORY

Aunties)

Celebrant: Friends, we are here today to celebrate the marriage and the intertwining of the destinies of Groom and Bride. Through being ruthlessly and wonderfully themselves, they have fallen in love and chosen to get married, to begin the journey and ride the waves of life together.

Two years ago Groom and Bride met in a Park while weeding on the small island there. They spoke briefly about native plants and art... and then I believe Bride ran away due to the intensity of the attraction! Groom uncharacteristically called out to her as she left. "Are you going already? But what's your name?" You may be able to persuade them to fill in the rest of the story later.

From that moment they have been making informal promises and agreements, until this day when they have chosen to acknowledge and celebrate their union in this native garden amongst those they love.

<u>ASKING OUR PARENTS</u>

Dad and Mum#1, you stood together in a church many years ago and made a commitment to each other while wondering in your hearts what would become of your life together. Part of that answer stands here in your son Groom. We see the pride you take in him and the love and respect you have for him he also feels for you. Part of the reason Bride chooses him for her life's partner is because of all that you have given to him out of your lives.

Dad and Mum #1: "Bride, on behalf of our family, we welcome you and support your marriage"...they also said, "and as well as gaining a daughter we also gain a grandson. We welcome you too Their Son"

Celebrant: Dad and Mum #2, you stood together in a church many years ago and made a commitment to each other while wondering in your hearts what would become of your life together. Part of that answer stands here in your daughter Bride. We see the pride you take in her and the love and respect you have for her, she also feels for you. Part of the reason Groom chooses her for his life's partner is because of all that you have given to her out of your lives.

Dad and Mum #2: "Groom, on behalf of our family, we welcome you and support your marriage"

Celebrant:

Friends, you have been invited to share this occasion because of your friendship and special relationship to the bride and groom. I ask if you support this union and give them your warm wishes?

Guests: "WE DO!"

ASKING EACH OTHER

Celebrant:

Groom, do you happily choose to embrace the adventure that is your future with Bride. Will you respect her, be understanding and support her as the partner of your life and undertake the promises of marriage?

Groom: "I certainly do"

Celebrant:

Bride, do you happily choose to embrace the adventure that is your future with Groom. Will you respect him, be understanding and support him as the partner of your life and undertake the promises of marriage?

Bride: "I certainly & surely do"

OUR VOWS

Celebrant:

Hold hands now and make your vows to each other

Groom:

"My Darling Bride, you have been my friend, my lover, my partner, and today I embrace you as my wife.

From this day, I choose to share with you all I have to offer

my affection, loyalty and devotion,

dreams, hopes and thoughts

possessions, resources and skills.

I vow to be your loyal friend, your affectionate lover, your devoted partner.

Bride, I will love being your husband.

Bride:

"From this day on I choose you, darling Groom, to be my life's partner;

to live, love and dance with you

to stand by your side and sleep in your arms

to laugh with you in the good times

to try my best with you in difficult times

to share with you all that I have

and play with you as much as I can

I vow to dig the fertile earth of our marriage

to feed, water, and nurture our relationship and feel joy in its growth

Groom, I want to grow old with you, hand in hand, wife and husband"

OUR RINGS

Celebrant:

Who brings the rings?

Their Young Son "Me"

Groom: "I offer this ring as a symbol of my love"

Bride: "I offer this ring as a symbol of my love. Son, thanks for bringing our rings, we

love you too

Groom "Son, Thank you for welcoming me into your family"

DRINK AND FOOD

Celebrant:

Groom and Bride wished to bring a symbolic meal and drink, as a reminder that as their bodies need nurturing so does their love. They wanted to bring whatever is bread and water to them, their daily bread.

Bride asked that Groom make one of his omelettes, as he did for their first breakfast. This omelette is made with eggs from their own loved chooks, with herbs and greens grown by Groom. Feed each other now a piece of this omelette.

Bride brings a pot of tea brewed from the rainwater that fell in their garden. In the teapot made by Groom is a mixture of herbs from their garden, peppermint given by a dear friend, chillies for the warmth of their relationship, cinnamon for the spice and liquorice for the sweetness they experience with each other. Drink to each other.

TYING THE KNOT

Celebrant passes a green cord to Groom, and a red one to Bride, and says as they tie a lovers knot:

And finally you can tie the knot.

The lovers knot is a knot of two lines, that symbolise two lives tied in the middle of their journey's path; individual and separate yet inextricably linked.

Celebrant:

Bride and Groom you are now entwined, entangled, en-knotted. I ask all those here to join in saying......

"We, your family and friends, now pronounce you married."

TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE VOWS

I, (Bride/Groom), take (you/thee) (Groom/Bride), to be my (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us. ORI, (Bride's Name), take (you/thee), (Groom's Name), to be my [opt: lawfully wedded] husband, secure in the knowledge that you will be my constant friend, my faithful partner in life, and my one true love. On this special [opt: and holy] day, I (affirm/reaffirm/give) to you in the presence of God and (all those in attendance/these witnesses) my (pledge/sacred promise) to stay by your side as your [opt: faithful] wife in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, as

stay by your side as your [opt: faithful] wife in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, as well as through the good times and the bad. I (promise/further promise) to love you without reservation, comfort you in times of distress, encourage you to achieve (higher/all of your) goals, laugh with you and cry with you, grow with you in mind and spirit, always be open and honest with you, and cherish you for as long as we both shall live.

I, (Groom's Name), take (you/thee), (Bride's Name), to be my [opt: lawfully wedded] wife, knowing in my heart that you will be my constant friend, my faithful partner in life, and my one true love. On this special [opt: and holy] day, I (affirm/reaffirm/give) to you in the presence of God and (all those in attendance/these witnesses) my (pledge/sacred promise) to stay by your side as your [opt: faithful] husband in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, as well as through the good times and the bad.

I (promise/further promise) to love you without reservation, honour and respect you, provide for your needs as best I can, protect you from harm, comfort you in times of distress, grow with you in mind and spirit, always be open and honest with you, and cherish you for as long as we both shall live.



Please note that Celebrant legal authorization and mention of husband, wife or spouse in the vows must be included to legally marry a couple. Without the authorization and mention of husband and wife, this ceremony may be used as a good commitment ceremony.



FULL TRADITIONAL WEDDING CEREMONY

Celebrant: We are gathered here today in the face of this company, to join together (Groom's Name) and (Bride's Name) in matrimony; which is an honourable and solemn estate and therefore is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently and soberly. Into this estate these two persons present come now to be joined. If any one can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together, let them speak now or forever hold their peace. Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Parents: We do. (Then the bride is given away.)

Celebrant to Groom:(Groom's Name), do you take (Bride's Name) for your lawful wedded wife, to live in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love, honour, comfort, and cherish her from this day forward, forsaking all others, keeping only unto her for as long as you both shall live?

Groom: I do.

Celebrant to Bride: (Bride's Name), do you take (Groom's Name) for your lawful wedded husband, to live in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love, honour, comfort, and cherish him from this day forward, forsaking all others, keeping only unto him for as long as you both shall live?

Bride: I do.

(At this point the couple may improvise by playing a favorite song and/or reading.)

Celebrant: (addressing the groom who repeats the marriage vows:) I (Groom's Name) take thee (Bride's Name) to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, honour, and cherish, 'til death do us part, and thereto I plight thee my troth.

Celebrant: (then to the bride who repeats the marriage vows:) I (Bride's Name) take thee (Groom's Name) to be my wedded 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, honour, and cherish, 'til death do us part, and thereto I plight thee my troth.

(The Celebrant then asks for the brides ring from the best man.)

Celebrant: (about brides ring): May this ring be blessed so he who gives it and she who wears it may abide in peace, and continue in love until life's end.

Groom: (placing ring on bride's finger:) With this ring I thee wed. Wear it as a symbol of our love and commitment.

Celebrant: (about groom's ring): May this ring be blessed so that she who gives it and he who wears it may abide in peace, and continue in love until life's end.

Bride: (placing ring on groom's finger:) With this ring I thee wed. Wear it as a symbol of our love and commitment.

You may want to play a song or some music here.

Celebrant: May this couple be prepared to continue to give, be able to forgive and experience more and more joy with each passing day, with each passing year. (Groom's Name) and (Bride's Name), are now beginning their married life together, we hope that they may have loving assistance from their family, the constant support of friends, and a long life with good health and everlasting love. In so much as (Groom's Name) and (Bride's Name) have consented to live forever together in wedlock, and have witnessed the same before this company, having given and pledged their troth, each to the other, and having declared same by the giving and receiving of a ring, I pronounce that they are husband and wife.

Celebrant: (to the couple): You may now seal the promises you have made with each other with a kiss.

Celebrant: Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the loving couple Mr. and Mrs.....

Music and Signing of the Register.

Please note that Celebrant legal authorization and mention of husband and wife in the vows must be included to legally marry a couple. Without the authorization and mention of husband and wife, this ceremony may be used as a good commitment ceremony.

PAGAN CEREMONY

Celebrant: Blessings and merry meet. We are here today to join (bride) and (groom) together, they have asked you here to share in their joy, and to declare their love for one another before you as a community.

Celebrant To the Bride: What is your desire?

Bride: To be made one with (groom)

Celebrant To Groom: What is your desire?

Groom: To be made one with (bride)

The celebrant at this time would take up a wand and sprinkle it upon the bride

Celebrant To bride: Repeat after me: I (bride), do come here of my own free will, to seek the partnership of (groom) I come with all love, honor and sincerity, wishing only to become one with him, whom I love. Always will I strive for (grooms) happiness and welfare.

The celebrant at this time would take up a wand and sprinkle it upon the groom

Celebrant To Groom: Repeat after me, I (groom) do come here of my own free will, to seek the partnership of (bride). I come with all love, honor and sincerity, wishing only to become one with her, whom I love. Always will I strive for (brides) happiness and welfare.

At this time the celebrant would sprinkle the rings with the wand and take them up, handing the brides ring to the groom and the grooms ring to the bride

Celebrant: As the grass of the fields and the trees of the woods bend together under the pressures of the storm, so too must you both bend when the wind blows strong. But know that as quickly as the storm comes, so equally quickly may it leave. Yet will you both stand strong in each others strength. As you give love, so you will receive it. As you give strength, so will you receive strength. Together you are one, apart you are as nothing. Know that no two people can be exactly alike. No more can any two people fit together, perfect in every way. There will be times when it will seem hard to give and to love. But see then your reflection as in a woodland pool, when the image you see looks sad and angered, then know it is the time for you to smile and to love. It is not fire that puts out fire. In return will the image in the pool smile and love. So change your anger for love, and your tears for joy. It is no weakness to admit a wrong: more is it a strength, and a sign of eternal growth. Forever love, help, and respect each other. The constant circle of love you share is symbolized in these rings. Let them be a token of your friendship and the partnership you have come to celebrate on this day. When the waters are rough, let these rings remind you of the ebb and flow of life. Let them remind you of the happiness you feel at this moment, and let your memory soothe your spirit.

The bride and groom would exchange rings at this time

(If there are any things that the bride and groom would wish to say to one another, this is the perfect time for such a thing.)

Celebrant: It is with great happiness that I present you to the community as husband and wife. May you always remember the love that brought you here on this day, and may the God and Goddess bless this union. So Mote It Be. You may now kiss....

After conducting your ritual or consecration, you or the celebrant must take down the circle. Return to the middle of the circle, stand in the Goddess position and say while gradually lowering your arms to your side:

The web of life is an endless circle never to die only to change form. What was begun is now complete. Welcome home these energies borne. The circle is open, never broken. So Mote It Be!

When your arms reach your waist quickly drop them to put the energy back into Earth Mother. The circle is released. You may extinguish the candles and move to your reception area.

____<>____

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SAND CEREMONIES

Sample Sand Ceremony - 1

"Today, this relationship is symbolized 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 these two containers of sand are poured into the third container, the individual containers 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 containers, so will your marriage be."

Sample Sand Ceremony - 2

"BRIDE and GROOM, today you join your separate lives together. The two separate bottles of sand symbolize your separate lives, separate families and separate sets of friends. They represent all that you are and all that you'll ever be as an individual. They also represent your lives before today. As these two containers of sand are poured into the third container, the individual containers 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 containers, so will your marriage be."

Sample Sand Ceremony - 3

"Today, BRIDE and GROOM, have chosen to commemorate their marriage through the celebration of the Sand Ceremony. This ceremony symbolizes the inseparable union of BRIDE and GROOM into a new and eternal marital relationship. Bride and Groom will simultaneously pour separate containers of sand into a common vessel. Each grain of sand in their separate containers represents a unique and separate moment, decision, feeling or event that helped shaped Bride and Groom into the separate and unique individuals that they are today. As they pour their separate containers of sand into a common vessel, those separate and independent individuals will cease to exist. Instead they will merge into a loving and supportive marital community. BRIDE and GROOM, just as the grains of sand can never be separated into their individual containers again, so will your marriage be."

Sample Sand Ceremony - 4

"OFFICIANT: Please note this empty glass. Glass, itself, is made from sand and the sands of time have come together, melting into one piece to make this vessel. The sands of time should remind us all of our eternal love and our mortality. Today BRIDE and GROOM have chosen to represent their love to each other in a special sand ceremony. Please BRIDE and GROOM, take your separate glass of sand and alternate the pouring of sand into this joining vessel and united, repeat after me: You are my love for eternity. I blend with you. My heart is like these grains of sands, merging with yours. I am yours. You are mine. We are together forever like the sand, like the wind. We are one.

HANDFASTING CEREMONY

Celebrant: Greetings friends and family and welcome to this day of celebration. We are united to witness the marriage of <Name> and <Name>. We've been invited to share in the commitment they make to each other today. They ask your blessing on this joyful occasion. If life has any meaning to us at all, it possesses it because of love. Love enriches our human experience. It is the reason for the peace in the family and the peace of the peoples of the Earth. A meeting between two beings who are made for each other is a beautiful miracle. <Name> and <Name>'s understanding of the true meaning of marriage has resulted from many influences; their families, their friends, and each of their own personal beliefs. We are here not only strengthen the binds of <Name> and <Name>'s love for each other but also to bring family and friends together to celebrate these same said bonds that hold us all together. What defines <Name> and <Name>'s love today will change and grow to new depth in the future. It takes three seconds to say I love you, but it can take a lifetime to show it. This ceremony is the celebration of a single stage in a much larger process that is the love between husband and wife. The promises made today and the ties that are bound here greatly strengthen your union. They will cross the years and lives of each soul's growth. Do you seek to begin this ceremony?

Couple: Yes we do.

Celebrant: The human soul shares characteristics with all things divine. It is this belief which assigns virtues to the cardinal directions; North, South, East and West. Let us offer a traditional blessing in support of this hand-fasting ceremony.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the East: communication of the heart, mind, and body, fresh beginnings with the rising of each sun, and the knowledge of growth found in the sharing of silence.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the South: warmth of hearth and home, the heat of the heart's passion and the light created by both to lighten the darkest of times.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the West: the deep commitments of the lake, the swift excitement of the river, the refreshing cleansing of the rain and the all encompassing passion of the sea.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the North: firm foundation on which to build, fertility of the fields to enrich your lives, and a stable home to which you may always return.

Now I ask the couple to look into each others' eyes.

Celebrant to groom: Will you cause her pain?

Groom: I May

Celebrant to groom: Is that your intention?

Groom: No

Celebrant to bride: Will you cause him pain?

Bride: I may

Celebrant to bride: Is that your intention?

Bride: No

Celebrant to both: Will you share each other's pain and seek to ease it?

Both: Yes

Celebrant to both: And so the binding is made. Join your hands.

The first cord is draped across the bride and grooms hands.

Celebrant to bride: Will you share his laughter?

Bride: Yes

Celebrant to groom: Will you share her laughter?

Groom: Yes

Celebrant to both: Will both of you look for the brightness in life and the positive in each

other?

Both: Yes

Celebrant: And so the binding is made.

The second chord is draped across the couple's hands.

Celebrant to bride: Will you burden him?

Bride: I may.

Celebrant to bride: Is that your intention?

Bride: No

Celebrant to groom: Will you burden her?

Groom: I may

Celebrant to groom: Is that your intention?

Groom: No.

Celebrant to both: Will you share the burdens of each so that your spirits may grow in

this union?

Both: Yes

Celebrant: And so the binding is made.

Drape third chord across the couple's hands.

Celebrant to bride: Will you share his dreams?

Bride: Yes

Celebrant to groom: Will you share her dreams?

Groom: Yes

Celebrant to both: Will you dream together to create new shared realities?

Both: Yes

Celebrant: And so the binding is made.

Drape fourth chord across the couple's hands.

Celebrant to groom: Will you cause her anger?

Groom: I may

Celebrant to groom: Is that your intention?

Groom: No.

Celebrant to bride: Will you cause him anger?

Bride: I may.

Celebrant to bride: Is that your intention?

Bride: No.

Celebrant to both: Will you take the heat of anger and use it to temper the strength of

this union?

Both: We will.

Celebrant: And so the binding is made.

Drape fifth chord across the couple's hands.

Celebrant to bride: Will you honour him?

Bride: I will

Celebrant to groom: Will you honour her?

Groom: I will

Celebrant to both: Will you seek to never give cause to break that honour?

Both: We shall never do so.
Celebrant: And so the binding is made.

Drape sixth chord across the couple's hands, and tie all chords together while saying.

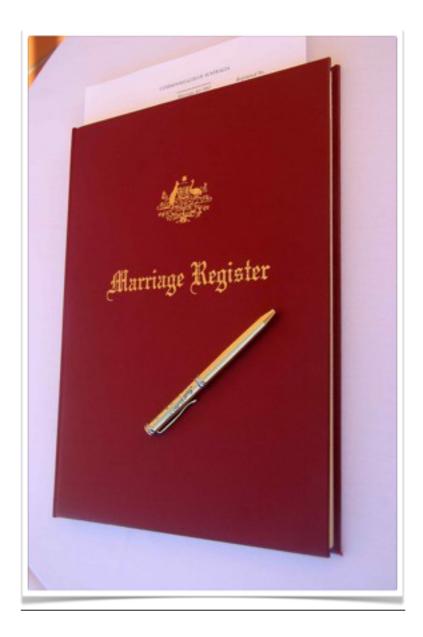
Celebrant: The knots of this binding are not formed by these chords but instead by your vows. Either of you may drop the chords, for always you will hold in your own hands the making or breaking of this union.

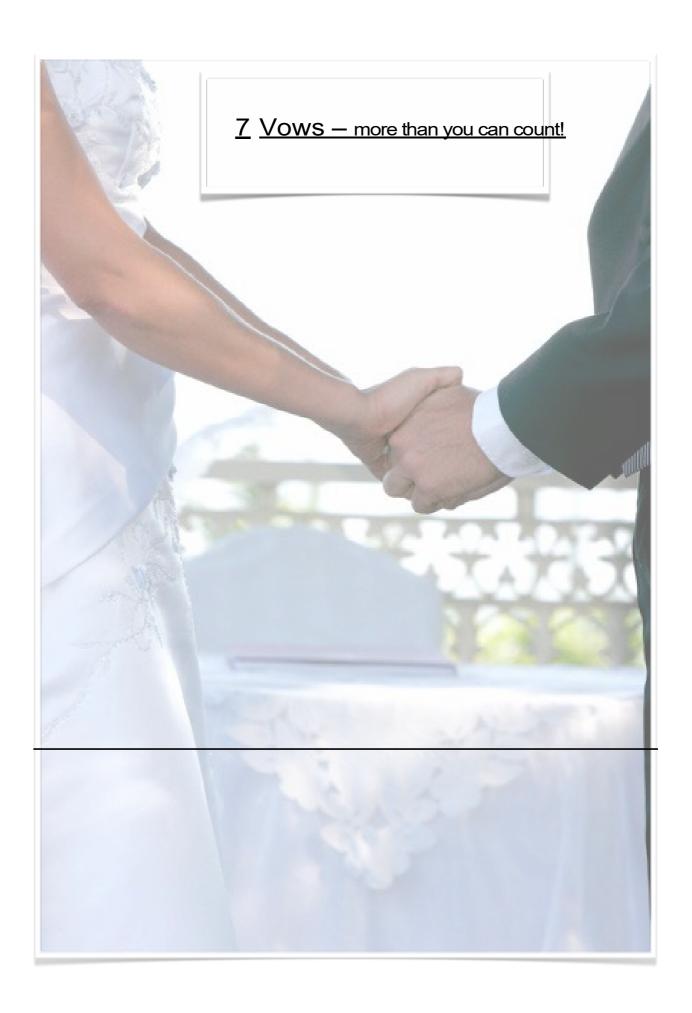
Once the chords are tied together they are removed.

Celebrant: Spirit of Love, may <Name> and <Name> know great love together, and may they live in the desire to always support each other in positive and uplifting ways. May they strengthen one another in sorrow, share with one another in gladness, and be companions to each other in times of silence. May their home be a haven, and wherever they are plagued by changing fortune, may they be united not in word and outward form alone, but by the presence in the hearts of each, of the deepening love they share. You are husband and wife. Celebrate with a kiss.



Please note that Celebrant legal authorization and mention of husband and wife in the vows must be included to legally marry a couple. Without the authorization and mention of husband and wife, this ceremony may be used as a good commitment ceremony.





Sample Vows

Your vows must include the following sentence, with at least two of your names:

"I call upon the people here present to witness that I, A.B, take you, C.D, to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse."

.....then you may add your own words before or after...

Apache

Now I will feel no rain, for each of you will be shelter for the other.

Now I will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other.

Now there will be no loneliness, for each of us will be companion to the other.

Now we are two persons, but there is only one life before us.

May beauty surround us both in the journey ahead and through all the years,

May happiness be our companion and our days together be good and long upon the earth.

Buddhist

In the future, happy occasions will come as surely as the morning.

Difficult times will come as surely as the night.

When things go joyously, meditate according to the Buddhist tradition.

When things go badly, meditate.

Meditation in the manner of the Compassionate Buddha will guide our life.

To say the words 'love and compassion' is easy.

But to accept that love and compassion are built upon patience and perseverance is not easy.

Vow 1

, I love you. Today is a very special day. Long ago you were just a dream and a praye	∍r.
This day like a dream come true the prayer has been answered. For today,, you as r	my
joy become my crown. I am thankful for the honour of going through time with you. Thank yo)U
for being what you are to me. With our future bright, I will care for you, honour and protect yo	ou.
lay down my life for you,, my friend and my love. Today I give to you me.	
Vow 2	

(Name), I take you to be my lawfully wedded (husband/wife).

Before these witnesses I vow to love you and care for you as long as we both shall live. I take you, with all your faults and strengths, as I offer myself to you with all my faults and strengths. I will help you when you need help, and turn to you when I need help. I choose you as the person with whom I will spend my life.

Vow 3

I, (Groom's Name), take you (Bride's Name) to be my wife, my partner in life and my one true love. I will cherish our friendship and love you today, tomorrow, and forever. I will trust you and honour you I will laugh with you and cry with you. I will love you faithfully through the best and the worst, through the difficult and the easy. What may come I will always be there. As I have given you my hand to hold so I give you my life to keep.

Vow 4

In the presence of God and these our Friends, I take thee to be my wife/husband, promising with Divine assistance to be unto thee a loving and faithful wife/husband as long as we both shall live."

Vow 5

I, (name), take you, (name), to be my partner, loving what I know of you, and trusting what I do not yet know. I eagerly anticipate the chance to grow together, getting to know the (man/woman) you will become, and falling in love a little more every day. I promise to love and cherish you through whatever life may bring us.

Vow 6

(Name), with all my love, I take you to be my wife/husband. I will love you through good and the bad, through joy and the sorrow. I will try to be understanding, and to trust in you completely. Together we will face all of life's experiences and share one another's dreams and goals. I promise I will be your equal partner in a loving, honest relationship, for as long as we both shall live.

Vow 7

(Name), from this day forward I promise you these things. I will laugh with you in times of joy and comfort you in times of sorrow. I will share in your dreams, and support you as you strive to achieve your goals. I will listen to you with compassion and understanding, and speak to you with encouragement. I will remain faithful to our vows for better or for worse, in times of sickness and health. You are my best friend and I will love and respect you always.

sickness and health. You are my best friend and I will love and respect you always.
Vow 8 I, take you,, to be my lawful husband/wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, while we both shall live.
Vow 9 I, take you,, as my husband/wife. 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.
Vow 10 I, take you,, to be my lawful husband/wife. I will be a loving 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.
Vow 11, I declare my love for you, I invite you to share my life as my husband/wife. I promise always to respect your needs, and to accept you as you are. I will be kind, unselfish and trusting. I will work for a happy life for both of us.
Vow 12, 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.
Vow 13 I, take you,, take you as my spouse, my lifelong partner. I will do everything I

can to maintain our love. I will talk to you and listen to you. I will give to you and I will take from you. Your success and happiness will be mine.

Vow 14

_____, I am proud to take you as my husband/wife for all the time we have been together. There has always been the kind of love and understanding which is only shared when there is true love.

You have helped me triumph over challenges presented

Encouraged my personal growth and boosted my self esteem.

You have helped me become the person I am today

And with your help I will be a better person tomorrow than I was yesterday.

I love the way you love and care for me.

I love the way you trust and believe in me.

I love the way you always look your best for me.

I love you and I love my life with you.

Today as we begin our lives as husband and wife I commit myself to you.

Vow 15

Vow 16

I will take you in my arms when you need to be held. I will listen when you need to talk. I will laugh with you in times of joy, and comfort you in times of sadness. I will love you for who you are, and help you to become all that you can be. I will age gracefully with you/grow old with you.

Vow 17

______, you are my best friend and my one true love. When I'm with you, I feel I can be the person I want to be, and I cannot imagine my life without you. You make me smile, you stick up for me, you take care of me and you are always interested in what I have to say and do. Today, I want to make a promise to you and to myself, in front of our friends and family, to love and honour, protect and respect you for the rest of my life.

I vow to trust and value your opinions, and stand by your actions. I pledge to always treat you as my best friend, and equal. I will ask for help when I need it, and offer help when necessary. Let us be friends and lovers, and grow old together. And let us make all the years of our lives together be the best years of our lives. For now and forever.

Vow 18

What can I say to you that I haven't already said, What can I give you that I haven't already given, Is there anything of me that isn't yours already,

My body, my mind, my heart, even my soul, Everything that is me belonged to you long before this, And it shall be yours long after this, I will follow you anywhere and everywhere you lead, Hand in hand and heart in heart.

Vow 19

You are my best friend, my confidant and one of my favourite pests. You make me laugh and cry, you are honest and wise. You are my strength and you are kind-hearted. You always love me no matter what. You have always managed to help me through bad times and I cannot imagine my life without you. Today, I want to make a promise to you and to myself, in front of our friends and family, to love, honour and protect you for all the days of my life.

Vow 20

I pledge to remain your companion and friend, I promise to be with you always, to care for you, and to love you no matter how far apart we may be. I will always show an interest in the things you do and your ideas. I will be with you in your heart, and keep you safely in mine. When you are happy, I will be happy with you. When you are sad, I will make you smile. I will encourage you to continue growing as an individual as we work toward our mutual goals. I stand with you as your friend and husband/wife and acknowledge that your choices are valid ones. I promise to give you love, honesty, trust and commitment, and, in general, keep your life interesting as we grow old together.

Vow 21 I, take you,, to be my husband/wife. I will be a loving husband/wife. I promise to respect and encourage your fulfilment as an individual. In marrying you, I want to continue to build on the love and friendship which we have developed during our time together. I want to continue to cherish the joy of being with you. I recognise that part of our strength comes from the little things that make us happy. I want to love you through good fortune and adversity, while we both shall live.
Vow 22, I take you as my husband/wife. I treasure the bond we have together, and the strength of our friendship. A friendship I have never had before. I feel cared for by you, and long for your touch and your smile when we are apart. I love your sensitivity, I love your caring nature, I love your enthusiasm. I love your optimism, and your pessimism. I promise to support you in the good and the bad. I promise to appreciate you, and us, as we journey through the rest of our lives. I am proud to be your husband/wife.
Vow 23, I feel so proud to be your husband/wife. Having you beside me makes me glow. With all your tenderness, support and strength, knowing I can lean if I need to, makes my fears less. You have given me so much. I love your quietness. I love your stillness. I love your smile. I love the way you love me. Just the way I've always wanted to be loved. You encourage my personal growth. You listen and support me as no one else can. Today, the first day of the rest of our lives, I commit myself to you.
Vow 24 I, promise to give you,, all my love, comfort and support and to be open and honest at all times.

_____, 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 will take you in my arms when you need to be held. I will listen when you need to talk. I will laugh with you in times of joy, and comfort you in times of sadness. I will love you for who you are, and help you to become all that you can be. I will grow old with you. (I will age gracefully with you.)

Vow 26

I promise to give you the best of myself, and to ask of you no more than you can give. I promise to respect you as your own person, and to realise that your interests, desires and needs are no less important than my own. I promise to share with you my time and attention, and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship. I promise to keep myself open to you. I promise to grow along with you - to be willing to face changes as we both change 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.

Vow 27

I, [name], promise to love, honour, and cherish you forever. I promise to always stand by your side through the good and the bad times. I promise to be faithful and loving. I promise to be the most compassionate wife through sickness, in health, and the sad times. I promise to give you all of my heart. I promise to be your partner and best friend. And, I promise to love you with all my heart and soul for eternity. Please accept this ring as a symbol of our love and friendship. I love you, [name].

Vow 28

From this day on, I choose you, my beloved (Name), to be my (husband/wife). To live with you and laugh with you; to stand by your side, and sleep in your arms; to be joy to your heart, and food for your soul; to bring out the best in you always, and, for you, to be the most that I can. I promise to laugh with you in good times, to struggle with you in bad; to solace you when you are downhearted; to wipe your tears with my hands; to comfort you with my body; to mirror you with my soul; to share with you all my riches and honours; to play with you as much as I can until we grow old; and, still loving each other sweetly and gladly, our lives shall come to an end.

Vow 29

I (name), choose you (name) as my best friend, my love for life. I promise you my deepest love, my fullest devotion, my tenderest care, through the pressures of the present and the uncertainties of the future, I promise to be faithful to you. I promise to love you, to commit to you, and support you. I pledge to respect your unique talents and abilities, to lend you strength for all of your dreams. You have shown me what love feels like and for that I thank you. You are everything I need and at this moment I know all of my prayers have been answered and that all of my dreams have come true. I praise God for you (name); for all of your love and constant friendship. I know that our love is heaven sent and I promise to be here for ever and always. From this day forward, you shall not walk alone. My heart will be your shelter and my arms will be your home. As I have given you my hand to hold, I give you my life to keep.

Vow 30

(Name), you have filled my world with meaning. You have made me so happy and more fulfilled as a person. Thank you for taking me as I am; loving me, and welcoming me into your heart. I promise to always love you, respect you as an individual, and to be faithful to you forever. Today

I choose you to be my partner, and commit myself to you for the rest of my life.

Vow 31

Here we stand before witnesses, to make vows this day, Love, honour, cherish, until death, do they say. This is my pledge, my promise, my creed, These faith-given words, that I will now read.

For you, all my love, both body and soul It's what brought us together, it's what makes us whole. With our faith in the Church, we will walk with the Lord, My life for yours, our destiny to unfold.

Honouring you is a task well received For respect and commitment is something we need. I will always respect you, on this long road ahead, I commit my life to you, My love whom I wed.

One cherishes a treasure, something dear to the heart, I will cherish your love, and always impart, My thoughts and concerns, remain open, sincere, Through good times and bad, every day of the year.

Until Death is a theme that is best left unsaid For death has no place with the woman I wed. But Eternal life, states our faith in the Son, Means that even in death, we will always be one.

This ring that I give you is my promise of love, Of our future together, with the Lord God above. I take you as my wife, let true witness bear, With this ring I wed, your life in my care.

Vow 32

My beloved, romance may fade, but true love endures. I choose to truly love you, with kindness, faithfulness, and respect, through every circumstance that life may bring.

Because you are the treasure of my heart, it will be my joy to support, encourage, comfort, and defend you as we together face the coming days of sorrow and joy, sickness and health, poverty and wealth.

When I have been wronged, I will forgive.
When I do wrong, I will confess with contrition.
When conflict dims our days,
I will exercise the patience of true love
and seek the light of wise counsel.

Most of all, I will rejoice and thank the Lord for completing me with the gift of you.

And through His infinite grace,
I know that no matter what may come,
I will remain by your side with enduring devotion and fidelity for as long as He allows us to share this earthly life.

This is my solemn vow because, in you, I have found the one my soul loves. May the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit guide us and bless us each day from this moment forward.

Vow 33

, I promise to love you with all my heart, mind and strength. I promise to be faithful, now and forever. I also promise to respect your children and treat them as if they were my own. I gladly accept the obligations that go along with this pledge. I care for your children and want them to be a part of my life.
With continued love, friendship, trust and communication, I,, take joy today in committing my life to yours, when you need me I will be there and when your strength fails you, may mine always be there for you. Side by side, step by step, may our great journey together begin, here now from this day forward.
Vow 34
, 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 thank God for you,_____, and 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.

Vow 35

(name), as you have been by my side through my darkest hours, so will I be a light in your life. I will lift you up and support you through laughter and through tears. As you have cared for me in times of infirmity, so will I keep you sheltered when storms arise. I will comfort and console you. I will be the rock that you stand on, the staff that you lean on, and the wings that allow you to fly. As you have inspired me to follow my dreams, so will I strive to help you achieve your goals. I will encourage you in your endeavours and nourish your spirit as we walk through this life together. As you have loved me, so will I love you. I will be by your side, a part of one entity, but above all else, I will allow you to be you.

Vow 36

As we face the future together, I promise to stand by your side. I promise to unfailingly share and support your hopes, dreams and goals. I vow to be there for you always.

When you fall, I will catch you.
When you cry, I will comfort you.
When you laugh, I will share your joy.
Everything I am and everything I have is yours,

from this moment forth and for eternity. **Vow 37** I,_____, take you,_____to be my wife. I will speak the truth to you in Love. I will encourage you and strengthen you in your walk with God. I will not let the sun go down on my anger, instead I will be gracious, tender-hearted, and forgiving even as God has forgiven me. I will be peaceful, content and joyful in every situation we encounter knowing that God is at work. ___, take you,____to be my husband. I will speak the truth to you in Love. I will encourage you and strengthen you in your walk with God. I will not let the sun go down on my anger, instead I will be gracious, tender-hearted, and forgiving even as God has forgiven me. I will be peaceful, content and joyful in every situation we encounter knowing that God is at work. **Vow 38** , since we have been together, you have provided me with strength, security, confidence, honesty, love & plenty of much needed guidance. Where there has been cold, you have brought warmth; where my life was dark, you have brought light. In my darkest trouble, in my coldest silence, I looked for you and you were there. You are truly my knight in shining armour. You may not realise it but you have helped me and saved me in so many ways and I love you for that.

Vow 39

_____, you are a star from the heavens to love, honour and cherish, for all the days of my life. You are my pearl of choice, my strength at my side.

I am honoured that you will have me as your wife and I am proud to have you as my husband. I

believe that we were meant to be from the start & I will always love you with all my heart.

My love for you will never fade.

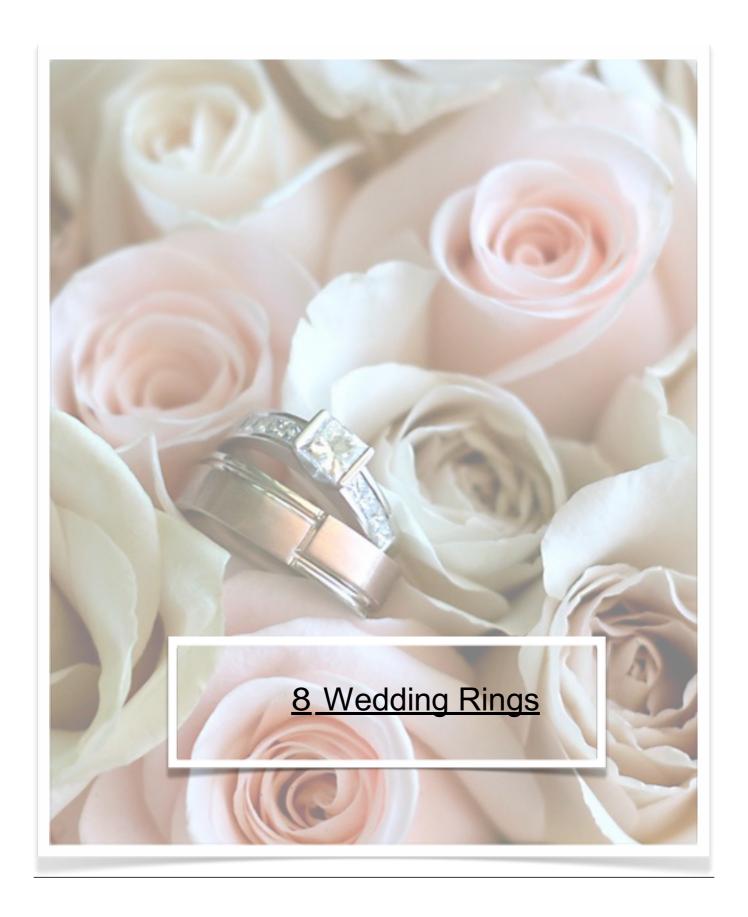
You are my love, my life, my wife.

May God bless our marriage in peace and happiness for all time.

Vow 40

(Name), I love you. You are my best friend. Today I give myself to you in marriage. I promise to encourage and inspire you, to laugh with you, and to comfort you in times of sorrow and struggle.

I promise to love you in good times and in bad, when life seems easy and when it seems hard, when our love is simple, and when it is an effort. I promise to cherish you, and to always hold you in highest regard. These things I give to you today, and all the days of our life.



Exchanging Wedding Rings

For thousands of years lovers have exchanged rings as a token of their vows......

Of course there is no legal imperative to use rings in your ceremony, but it is a custom that most couples still hold dear for their wedding. For a ring is a gift you wear forever as a reminder of your wedding day, and the promises you gave to each other.

Shakespeare wrote, "Now join your hands, and with your hands your hearts." It is believed that the hands are a connection to the heart, and a hand blessing symbolically brings two hearts together.

Something to say

So what does one say when giving the ring?

It does not need to be a long message. You have just exchanged vows, the moment which would usually encapsulate your promise. So for the rings one need not be wordy.

Here are some examples of something to say whilst slipping the ring on your love's finger:

- ♦ With this ring I thee wed.
- ♦ 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 honored to call you my (wife/husband).
- ♦ I give this ring as my gift to you. Wear it and think of me and know that I love you.
- ♦ This ring is a circle with no end, just like my love for you.
- ♦ Wear this ring and recall my promise to you today.
- ◆ As you cherish this ring, so I cherish you.

With a poem

Another delightful solution is to choose someone to read the poem, "These are the Hands..." No one seems to know the original author, and it has appeared in several versions. It is also easy to personalise to your own situation. For example, substitute, *young* for *mature*, or *care* for *cherish*, or the present tense for the past tense for a longer relationship/engagement or for a renewal of vows.etc.

These are the hands, author unknown

These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love, that hold yours on your wedding day.

These are the hands that will work along side yours as you build your future together.

These are the hands that will passionately love you and care for you throughout the years.

These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief torments your mind and with the slightest touch, will comfort you like no other.

These are the hands that will give you strength when you struggle, and support and encouragement to chase down your dreams.

These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children, and help keep your family together as one.

These are the hands that will, countless times, wipe the tears from yours eyes, tears of sorrow, and tears of joy.

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

Of course you need not say anything at all. Sometimes it is what you do that is as important as what you say.

How about a **handfasting ritual** or a **ring warming**.

Ask me, I'll tell you how.





9 Poetry & Prose - just few examples to get you going....

Or perhaps one of these is the basis of your vows or the ceremony script.

ANON

Our love is strengthened by knowing that each of us could survive on our own if we wanted to... but realising that more than anything we choose to be together

As Long As Your Eyes Are Blue ~ A B Paterson 1891~

Wilt thou love me, sweet, when my hair is grey And my cheeks shall have lost their hue? When the charms of youth shall have passed away.

Will your love as of old prove true?

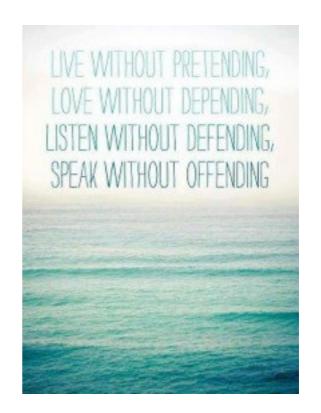
For the looks may change, and the heart may range,

And the love be no longer fond; Wilt thou love with truth in the years of youth And away to the years beyond?

Oh, I love you, sweet, for your locks of brown And the blush on your cheek that lies -- But I love you most for the kindly heart That I see in your sweet blue eyes.

For the eyes are signs of the soul within, Of the heart that is leal and true, And mine own sweetheart, I shall love you still, Just as long as your eyes are blue.

For the locks may bleach, and the cheeks of peach May be reft of their golden hue; But mine own sweetheart, I shall love you still, Just as long as your eyes are blue.



from Captain Corelli's Mandolin by 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 blossom have fallen from their branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.

EXCERPT FROM 100 LOVE SONNETS ~ Pablo Neruda ~

I do not love you as if you were salt-rose, or topaz, or the arrow of carnations the fire shoots off. I love you as certain dark things are to be loved, in secret, between the shadow and the soul.

I love you as the plant that never blooms but carries in itself the light of hidden flowers; thanks to your love a certain solid fragrance, risen from the earth, lives darkly in my body.

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where. I love you straightforwardly, without complexities or pride; so I love you because I know no other way than this: Where "I" does not exist, nor "You", so close that your hand on my chest is my hand, so close that your eyes close as I fall asleep.

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, unite.
You are thought and I am sound.

May the nights be honey-sweet 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.

From THE PROPHET ~ Kahlil Gibran ~

Love has no other desire but to fulfill itself.

But if you love and must needs have desires, let here be your desires:

To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night.

To know the pain of too much tenderness.

To be wounded by your own understanding of love;

And to bleed willingly and joyfully.

To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving;

To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy;

To return home at eventide with gratitude;

And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart

And a song of praise upon your lips.

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 ¾ 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!

A Love Blessing author unknown

Be all that you are,

The sun will find you...give you her warmth

And bless you with her golden touch

As you awaken.

The wind will call you as you gently bend

And become open to the world that surrounds you.

The soil will ground you

The water will nourish you

You have been planted here.

The world is yours -

To enjoy...

To expand ...

To go wherever you want.

Life is the gift you have been given,

Love is the blessing you can feel.

It is all around...

In the flowers,

In the trees,

In the meadows,

On the mountaintops.

Accept the gifts of this new day.

Be a part of every person who is here.

We are all just hearts, alone and together,

Beating to the music inside,

Fulfilling our ambitions,

Finding our places,

In the wonder of the universe.

More than to hope in yourselves, may you believe in yourselves.

Take each other's hands on this new journey.

In the guiet, you will hear the voice of wisdom.

In the stillness you will realise your deepest dreams,

And in your hearts you will know how deeply you are loved.

I LOVE YOU ~ Unknown ~

I love you not only for what you are,

But for what I am when I am with you

I love you not only for what you have made of yourself

But for what you are making me

I love you for the part of me that you bring out.

I love you for passing over all my foolish and weak traits,

That you can't help but see

I love you for drawing out into the light my beauty,

That no one else had looked quite far enough to din

I love you.

Leap into the void ~ Yves Klein 1957~

Come with me into the void

If you return one day

You who, like me dream,

Of that wonderful void

That absolute love

I know that together

Without needing to say a single word to each other We will leap

Into the reality of that void

That awaits our love

The way I wait for you every day

Come with me into the void

Corinthians 13:1-13 (The Message)

If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end. Love never dies.

Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled. When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good. We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us! But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us

toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.

Corinthians 13:4-8 (King James version)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

It does not dishonor others, it is not selfseeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

A TAPESTRY OF LOVE

Just as two very different threads woven in opposite directions can form a beautiful tapestry, so can your two lives merge together to form a beautiful marriage.

To make your marriage work will take love.

Love should be the core of your marriage;

love is the reason you are here.

But it will also take trust - to know in your hearts

you want the best for each other.

It will take dedication – to stay open to one another;

to learn and to grow together even when this is not so easy to do.

It will take faith – to always be willing to go forward to tomorrow, never really knowing what tomorrow will bring.

And it will take commitment – to hold true to a journey you both now will share together.

FRIENDSHIP

It is often said that it is love that makes the world go round.

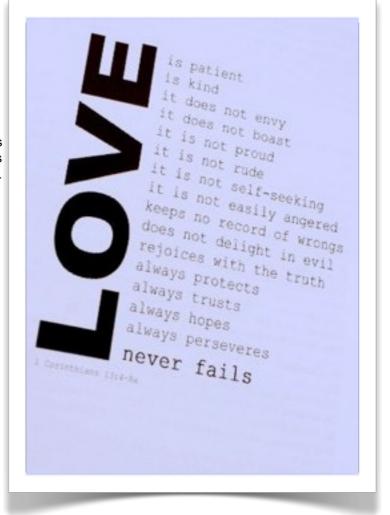
However, without doubt, it is friendship which keeps our spinning existence on an even keel.

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.

This couple came together as friends, they pledge to each other not only their love but also the strength, warmth and, most importantly, the fun of true friendship.

SONG ~ Daniel Handler of The Magnetic Fields ~

Asleep and Dreaming
I've seen you laugh at nothing at all
I've seen you sadly weeping
The sweetest thing I ever saw
was you asleep and dreaming
I've seen you when your ship came in
And when your train was leaving
The sweetest thing I ever saw
was you asleep and dreaming
Well you may not be beautiful
But it's not for me to judge

Blessing of the hands

I don't know if you're beautiful Because I love you too much.....

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 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.

NOVEMBER ~ F.S. Flint ~

What is eternal of you I saw in both your eyes.

You were among the apple branches;

the sun shone, and it was November.

Sun and apples and laughter and love we gathered, you and I.

And the birds were singing.

READING

You share today the joy of a deep commitment And a sacred trust, and you have given each other The most precious gift of love

Treasure it, nurture it and encourage it With all the honesty you used in creating it

You are sharing something rare and beautiful
Always speak the truth and listen attentively
So that you may understand each others thoughts and intentions

Inspire each other by sharing your accomplishments
Say I love you often to retain the warmth between you

Laugh a lot too, even when you are angry Remember you are each other's best friend

Stand together and for each other always
May each day be a blessing
And the fulfillment of your dreams.

FROM THE SANSKRIT

Look to this day for it is life
The very life of life in its brief course
lie all the varieties and realities of your existence
The bliss of growth
The glory of action
The splendor of beauty
For yesterday is already a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision
But today, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness

WEDDING PRAYER (Adapted) ~ Robert Lois Stevenson (1850-1894) ~

Lord, behold our family and friends here assembled We thank you for this place in which we celebrate For the love that it unites us For the peace accorded to this day

And every tomorrow a vision of hope Look well, therefore, to this day.

For the hope with which we dream
For the health, the work, the food,
And the bright skies that make our lives delightful
For our friends and family in all parts of the earth.

CELEBRATION ~ Rev. Carl Thitchener 2003~

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.

From A NAVAJO WEDDING CEREMONY

Now you have lit a fire and that fire should not go out.

The two of you now have a fire that represents love,

understanding and a philosophy of life.

It will give you heat, food, warmth and happiness.

The new fire represents a new beginning - a new life and a new family.

The fire should keep burning; you should stay together.

You have lit the fire for life, until old age separates you.

NATURE BOY song lyrics by Nat King Cole

There was a boy
A very strange enchanted boy
They say he wandered very far, very far
Over land and sea
A little shy
And sad of eye
But very wise
Was he

And then one day
A magic day he came my way
And while we spoke of many things, fools and kings
This he said to me
"The greatest thing
You'll ever learn
Is just to love
And be loved
In return"

"The greatest thing You'll ever learn Is just to love And be loved In return"

WHY MARRIAGE? ~ Mari Nichols-Haining ~

Because to the depths of me, I long to love one person, With all my heart, my soul, my mind, my body...

Because I need a forever friend to trust with the intimacies of me, Who won't hold them against me, Who loves me when I'm unlikable, Who sees the small child in me, and Who looks for the divine potential of me...

Because I need to cuddle in the warmth of the night With someone who thanks God for me, With someone I feel blessed to hold...

Because marriage means opportunity To grow in love in friendship...

Because marriage is a discipline
To be added to a list of achievements...

Because marriages do not fail, people fail When they enter into marriage Expecting another to make them whole...

Because, knowing this, I promise myself to take full responsibility For my spiritual, mental and physical wholeness I create me, I take half of the responsibility for my marriage Together we create our marriage...

Because with this understanding The possibilities are limitless.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY ~ Percy Bysshe Shelley ~

See, the mountains kiss high heaven, And the waves clasp one another; No sister flower could be forgiven If it disdained its brother; And the sunlight clasps the earth, And the moonbeams kiss the sea;--What are all these kissings worth, If thou kiss not me?

HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS ~ Emily Dickenson~

Hope is the thing with feathers That perches in the soul, And sings the tune without the words, And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard; And sore must be the storm That could abash the little bird That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land, And on the strangest sea; Yet, never, in extremity It asked a crumb of me.

FIDELITY ~ Dorothy Colgan ~

Man and woman are like the earth, that brings forth flowers in summer, and love, but underneath is rock.

Older than flowers, older than ferns, older than foraminiferae, older than plasm altogether is the soul underneath.

And when, throughout all the wild chaos of love slowly a gem forms, in the ancient, once-more-molten rocks of two human hearts, two ancient rocks, a man's heart and a woman's, that is the crystal of peace, the slow hard jewel of trust, the sapphire of fidelity.

The gem of mutual peace emerging from the wild chaos of love.

A NEW BEGINNING ~ Gwen Frostic ~

On this earth there is a oneness
A rhythmic flow through everything that lives
The things with roots and stems and leaves
The things with shells and fins and furs
The things with wings with which to fly
The things that crwal and those that walk
Each thing must eat and breath and rest
Each thing must seek and each is sought for
Each has a birth, a purpose to fulfill
To each an end and then a new beginning.

DOVE POEM ~ Author Unknown ~

Two doves meeting in the sky
Two loves hand in hand eye to eye
Two parts of a loving whole
Two hearts and a single soul

Two stars shining big and bright Two fires bringing warmth and light Two songs played in perfect tune Two flowers growing into bloom

Two Doves gliding in the air Two loves free without a care Two parts of a loving whole Two hearts and a single soul

HINDU wedding vows

"I am the sky," says the Hindu bridegroom to the bride.

"You are the earth united, you are my husband," She replies.

"You are my wife.

My feet shall run because of you.

My feet shall dance because of you.

My heart shall beat because of you.

My eyes shall see because of you.

My mind thinks because of you and I shall love because of you"

BRIDAL SONG ~ John Ford ~

Comforts lasting, loves increasing, Like soft hours never ceasing: Plenty's pleasure, peace complying, Without jars, or tongues envying; Hearts by holy union wedded, More than theirs by custom bedded; Fruitful issues; life so graced, Not by age to be defaced, Budding, as the year ensu'th, Every spring another youth: All what thought can add beside Crown this bridegroom and this bride!

My Child ~ Jane Gray©Terrigal NSW ~ For (Boy or Girl)

We knew before we saw or held you, that you were special.

A new beginning, not only in your life our precious one

But in ours also......

So small, so delicate and with a lifetime ahead to grow

And our love and encouragement will be with your every step.

We know that in time, you will seek your own hopes and dreams, and through times of laughter and tears.

Remember we will be there, ready to laugh or dry a tear,

Listening and reassuring and loving you always our child.

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You and I ~ Ruth Van Gramberg© From Little Pebbles & Stepping Stones ~

You and I -

Hand in Hand we'll walk towards

"Tomorrow"

Embracing our dreams
Bursting with love and enthusiasm
We will tread boldly, encouraged by the
Love that surrounds us
Sharing and saturating ourselves in
'Today'
No regrets, just courage to carry on,
Face each challenge and call it
'Yesterday'
Living, laughing, caring, loving as one We will climb each hill and beyond

You and I

Yes, You and I!

Ruth grants permission for her poetry to be used in ceremonies and on a memento copy from the Celebrant provided her authorship is clearly acknowledged

Desiderata ~ Max Ehrmann (in 1927) ~

Go placidly amidst the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its shams, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful.

Strive to be happy.

(Desiderata is Latin, it means the things that are wanted or needed or necessary..especially to complete something. To say something has desiderata means it requires certain virtues deemed important or necessary for success.)

The Invitation ~ Oriah Mountain Dreamer, Indian Elder, May 1994

It does not interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon. I want to know if you have touched the centre of your own sorrow, if you have been open to life's betrayals, or have become shrivelled and closed from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it or fade it or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own, if you can dance with the wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful, be realistic, or to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself, if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul.

I want to know if you can be faithful and therefore be trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see beauty even when its not pretty every day, and if you source your life from its presence.

I want to now if you can live with failure, yours and mine, and still stand on the edge of the lake and shout to the silver moon, "YES".

It doesn't interest me who you know, or how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the centre of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied. I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all else fades away. I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truely like the company you keep in the empty moments.

Extract from The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams (1881-1944)

What is REAL?' asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. 'Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?' 'Real isn't how you are made,' said the Skin Horse. 'It's a thing that happens to you. When someone loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, buy REALLY loves you, then you become Real.' 'Does it hurt? Asked the Rabbit. 'Sometimes,' said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. 'When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.' 'Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,' he asked, 'or bit by bit?' It doesn't happen all at once,' said the Skin Horse. 'You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.' 'I suppose you are real?' said the Rabbit. And then he wished he had not said it, for he thought the Skin Horse only smiled. 'Someone made me Real,' he said. 'That was a great many years ago; but once you are Real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always.'

A Good Wedding Cake - Author Unknown

4lb of love

½ of good looks

1 lb of sweet temper

1 lb of butter youth

1 lb of blindness of faults

1 lb of pounded wit

1 lb of good humour

2 tablespoons of sweet argument

1 pint of rippling laughter

1 wine glass of common sense

Dash of modesty

Put the love, good looks and sweet temper Into a well-furnished house. Beat the butter of youth to a cream, and mix well together with the blindness of faults. Stir the pounded wit and good humour into the sweet argument, then add the rippling laughter and common sense. Add a dash of modesty and work the whole together until everything is well mixed. Bake gently for ever.

Eskimo Love Song - Author Unknown

You are my husband, you are my wife My feet shall run because of you My feet dance because of you My heart shall beat because of you My eyes see because of you My mind thinks because of you And I shall love, because of you.

A Love Like This, Dan Fogleberg

And now the lonely days are done
And with each rising of the sun, love begins anew
And if you ever ask me why
I know that my love will never die I'll say these words to you

Of all the souls I've ever known

Mine sings to yours and yours alone and yours sings just to me
In all this world I'll never find

A heart that could beat as close to mine and this time I can see

A love like this is so hard to find And so many never do And loves like this, when they even exist Are precious and few, you know they're precious and few

Down the miles, through the years Yours is the star by which I steer, the brightest star I've known And when I feel all hope is gone, yours is the love that leads me on The light that guides me home The light will guide me home

The Key to Love, Author Unknown

The key to love is understanding ...

as it is the little things that say so much by themselves.

The key to love is forgiveness

to accept each others faults and pardon mistakes,

The key to love is sharing ...

Sharing and acing your good fortunes as well as the bad, together;

both conquering problems, forever searching for ways

to intensify your happiness.

The key to love is giving ...

Giving without thought of return,

but with the hope of just a simple smile,

and by giving in but never giving up.

The key to love is respect ...

Respect realizing that you are two separate people, with different ideas;

that you don't belong to each other,

that you belong with each other, and share a mutual bond.

The key to love is inside us all ...

It takes time and patience to unlock all the ingredients

that will take you to its threshold;

it is the continual learning process that demands a lot of work ...

but the rewards are more than worth the effort ...

and that is the key to love.

Carl Sandburg

I love you. I love you for what you are,

but I love you yet more for what you are going to be.

I love you not so much for your realities as for your ideals.

I pray for your desires, that they may be great,

rather than for your satisfactions,

which may be so hazardously little.

A satisfied flower is one whose petals are about to fall.

But the most beautiful rose is one,

hardly more than a bud,

wherein the pangs and ecstasies of desire are working for larger and finer growth.

Not always shall you be what you are now.

You are going forward toward something great.

I am on the way with you and . . I love you.

Oath of Friendship -- Anon., China, 1st Century B.C.

I want to be your friend

For ever and ever without break or decay.

When the hills are all flat

And the rivers are all dry,

When it lightens and thunders in winter,

When it rains and snows in summer,

When Heaven and Earth mingle

Not 'til then will I part from you.

What is Love? by 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.

excerpt from Captain Corelli's Mandolin by 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.

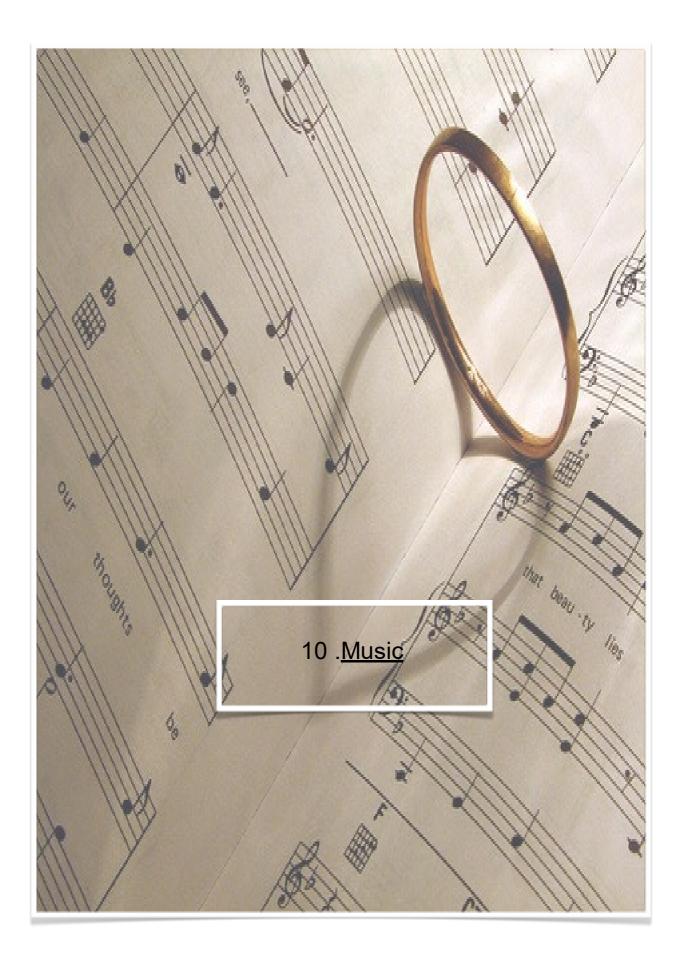
Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of eternal passion.

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 blossom have fallen from their branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.

OR ask to see my own compilation of thoughts on marriage.



Music

Classical Music

Minuet in G, by Mozart

Someone To Watch Over Me, trad

Greensleeves, trad

Prelude in C, Bach

Arioso, Bach

Romanza, sung by Andrea Bocelli

Four Seasons - Winter, Vivaldi

Ode to Joy, L Beethoven

Ave Maria,

Canon in G, Pachelbel

Brandenburg Concerto No. 1, J.S. Bach

Other Music

any of the many love songs by Nat King Cole

Somewhere Over the Rainbow, arranged by Ismael Kamakawiwo'ole

I Feel Good, by Nina Simone

All You Need is Love, by the Beatles

Grow Old With Me, Mary Chapin Carpenter

From This Moment On, Shania Twain & Bryan White

The Wedding Song, Laura Creamer

Circle of Life, Elton John

You Light Up My Life, Joe Brooks

Because You Love Me, Celine Dijon

If I aint Got You, Alicia Keys

Longer, Dan Fogelberg

Hallelujah, Leonard Cohen

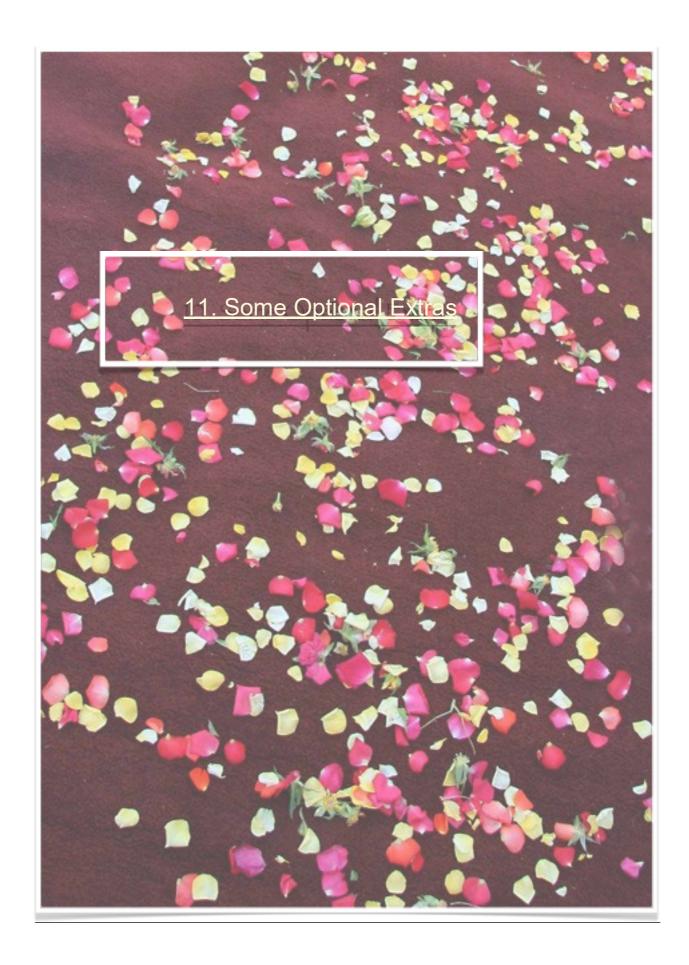
At Last, Etta James

Book of Days, Enya

How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved By You), James Taylor

Walking On Sunshine, Katrina and the Waves

You & I. Michael Buble



Some Optional Extras

My Celebrant service <u>already includes</u>:

Meetings or planning sessions, rehearsal, all government & legal requirements and lodgement of paperwork, as well as:

- My time ... as long as it takes to get it perfect
- Suggestions on ceremonial locations, music, theme, rituals and symbols
- Individual ceremony ready and sent to you well before your day
- Keep-sake copy of your vows and ceremony
- Appropriate dress to suit your ceremony; even themed dress
- Professional highest quality outdoor PA.
- Folding signing table with cloth & runner, and chair
- Quality pen for signing
- Bridal party emergency kit, with hairpins, safety pins rescue remedy, tissues, small scissors, buttonhole pins

Optional Extras:

Bridal car and driver to fit 5 passengers



Bride's Change of Name Kit

Changing Your Name After Marriage

If you have been married in Queensland, a bride has a traditional right to take her husband's surname after marriage. It is essentially a process which happens after the wedding day, not before. Therefore all the marriage paperwork must be done in the Bride's maiden or current name. Your signature remains the same until <u>after</u> the wedding day.

To take on your new <u>surname</u>**, you only need a copy of your <u>registered</u>* Marriage Certificate issued by the Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages.

- * Note that the Commonwealth certificate issued to you on your wedding day is a legal and numbered document, however it is not sufficient for this purpose.
- ** Note also, if you wish to make any other changes to your name, a legal <u>Change of Name</u> process through the registry is required.

To procure the Registered Marriage Certificate, which is essentially a copy of what is recorded in the government registry, you need to apply separately to BDM; it is not automatic.

Applying for the Registered Certificate

You can of course choose to apply for the *Registered Marriage Certificate* at any time after your marriage, even years later!

However, this is where I can make it easy for you as part of my service.

If you choose to fill out the official application form (that I will supply for you), I will undertake to lodge the application with all your other official papers, via registered mail. The Registry simply sends the certificate to you as soon as your marriage is processed. This is the quickest and easiest method possible. I charge you nothing for this. BDM, on the other hand, does. I'll show you their current list of costs.

Changing your name

It is up to the individual to establish that their name has been changed. This can be achieved by forwarding a certified copy, or taking the original to each organisation. I can certify documents for you.

It is a good idea to keep a certified copy in your wallet for at least a year to cover most bases.

Note that the Registry can take several weeks to process a new marriage. Wait until you receive it before making important changes to your name (i.e booking international flights).

Use the checklist over page to make sure nothing is forgotten.

And start practising your new signature! Enjoy.

Some Authorities to inform of your new name (By no means an exhaustive list):

Authority	Date Contacted	Date Confirmed
RMS transport (license)		
Car registration		
Passport Office		
Australian Tax Office		
Electoral Commission		
Bank/s		
Local Shire Council		
Phone provider/s		
NRMA		
Insurance/s		
Updated Will		
Utilities provider/s		
Employer/Payroll		
Centrelink		
Health providers		
Other/s		

13 ID requirements for marriage in Australia

Notes:

- i. All papers must be original government issued documents, as even certified photocopies, are not now accepted by Government for ID purposes.
- ii. Don't be unduly concerned if any of the documents are not currently available, for I can advise as to how to proceed.
- iii. Could you please photocopy your birth certificates and bring both the copies and the originals with you. The copies don't need to be authorised, just copies. These will be kept on confidential record for cross-referencing until your marriage, and will be destroyed to protect your security.

In order to satisfy the identity requirements for the lodgement of your Notice Of Intended Marriage (NOIM), with your celebrant, the documents needed for each party to be married are:

1. **Birth <u>Certificates</u>**; (Note that **birth extracts** are not the same as Birth Certificates, and are issued by the hospital at birth with a name and a date of birth. An extract is not sufficient according to the Australian Law. A full **Birth Certificate** has details of parents' names and places of birth.)

If a party is <u>born outside of Australia</u>, then a passport is sufficient in the case of a birth certificate not being available.

2. Some form of **Photo ID**, like a driver's licence or passport.

ALSO...check if any of the following applies:

- **3.** If party to be married is born outside Australia, an overseas passport can suffice if a birth certificate is not readily available.
- **4.** If either party has been previously married, some evidence of the termination date of that Marriage (death certificate, decree nisi, or other)
- **5.** If current name is different to that on birth certificate, then evidence of change of name (deed poll or previous marriage certificate showing ex husband's surname). Note that it is necessary to have a document for each step of name change away from the name on the Birth Certificate. So if multiple changes have occurred, then a document for each step is needed to ascertain the link/s with the birth certificate.

14 Relationship Education & support

There are specific pre-marriage courses offered to couples: Relationships

Australia offers *Pre-marriage Education - FOCCUS*

This pre-marriage education program uses a questionnaire to assist couples to think about many different aspects of their relationship. To gain the most feedback from the questionnaire a counsellor, who has been trained to use these tools, then facilitates a number of sessions to review the results of the questionnaire and what it means for the couple and their relationship.

This may involve a discussion about:

Personality differences Lifestyle expectations Communication styles Friends and interests

Family backgrounds

Beliefs about parenting, money, etc.

Contact Number: 1300 364 277

Where: Available at Relationships Australia branches throughout Queensland.

Cost: N/A for courses, \$150 for couples private session

Target Group: Couples

Course Topic: Finances, Communication, Sexuality, Parenting, Families, Equality in Relationships, Gender Roles, Relationship Inventory, Behaviour, Expectations

Relationship Stages: Engaged, Newly Married, De Facto/Living together

Centrelink run pre marriage education courses.

They also offer parenting, and family relationships courses and counseling, which vary from free services through to private paid appointments.

15 Marriage Certificates

On your wedding day you will sign three certificates.



The <u>first</u> one (pictured left) is yours to keep. This is the most appealing one to look at. Lucky you get to keep it!

The <u>second</u> stays in the Celebrant's Wedding Register (pictured right).

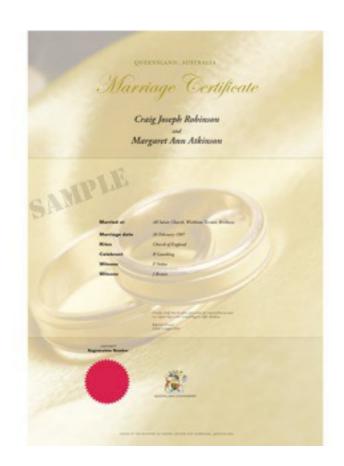
And the <u>third</u> certificate is sent to the Births Deaths and Marriages office in the state in which you are married.



If you wish to receive a registered copy of your marriage certificate (pictured left) then a separate application is made to the Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Ask me, and I will show you a way to make this process a little easier; a free service I offer to you.

If you do choose to order one of these certificates, the department gives you the option of a commemorative certificate as well, for an extra fee!

The commemorative samples are on the following page.





Devotion



Eternity



Gold Ring

Together<u>Feedback</u>

16 YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT TO ME

Dear Newly Weds,

I trust your married lives together have begun happily and successfully. I thank you for choosing me as your marriage celebrant on your special day. I had a wonderful time getting to know you and attending your ceremony.

I endeavour to practice my profession in the best possible way for my clients. I value your feedback, should you choose to offer it. To this end I have prepared this evaluation form. Please feel free to fill it in honestly and sincerely at your leisure and return it to me at your convenience. You don't need to fill in everything, just the sections you wish. All responses remain confidential, except for the box at the end of this form. Thanks, Leesma

1. How did you hear about my celebrancy services? Please name if a publication.

2. How would you rate the following: Preparation of paperwork

1 very poor	2 poor	3 OK	4 good	5 excellent
Personal	presentation			
1 very poor	2 poor	3 OK	4 good	5 excellent
Friendlin	ess of service)	•	•
1 very poor	2 poor	3 OK	4 good	5 excellent
Organisa	tional skills		•	
1 very poor	2 poor	3 OK	4 good	5 excellent
General o	quality of serv	rice	•	
1 very poor	2 poor	3 OK	4 good	5 excellent
Commun	icating clearly	y and effectively	y	
1 very poor	2 poor	3 OK	4 good	5 excellent
Opennes	s to suggesti	ons	•	
1 very poor	2 poor	3 OK	4 good	5 excellent
Overall p	resentation o	f ceremony		
1 very poor	2 poor	3 OK	4 good	5 excellent

ave any suggestions to offer
ack from other newly weds.
may be shown to other ase write your personal
monial comments may be shown to

Making a Complaint about a Marriage Celebrant.

Marriage celebrants are authorised by the Australian Government through the Attorney General's Department. As part of the registration all marriage celebrants must adhere to a specified Code of Practice.

Part of that code is to advise couples on how to notify the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department of any concerns or complaints that you may have regarding the services provided by a marriage celebrant.

Here is the process as outlined on the Attorney General's website.

If you have a concern about the service you have received from a marriage celebrant in relation to your wedding you may make a complaint.

If you have any concerns you should discuss them with the celebrant first but if you are not able to do this, or believe your complaint requires further consideration, there is a special procedure set out in the Marriage Regulations to enable complaints concerning the performance of marriage celebrants to be responded to.

The following information outlines the initial process to be followed.

How must the complaint be made?

The complaint must be in writing and made to:
The Registrar of Marriage Celebrants

Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Robert Garran Offices
3-5 National Circuit
BARTON, ACT 2600 Australia

It must be made within 3 months of the matter complained of. You may seek an extension of time to make a complaint from the Registrar and the Registrar may grant an extension if he or she considers it is justified. This request must be in writing.

The complaint must contain the following details:

- The complaint must state your full name and contact details (anonymous complaints cannot be accepted).
- The name of the marriage celebrant to whom the complaint relates,
- The full details of the complaint, and
- Whether or not it is or has been the subject of other proceedings (such as a report to the police).

If you suffer from a disability and require assistance in preparing the complaint the Marriage Celebrants Section may be able to provide this.

Not all complaints will be accepted but if the Registrar decides to deal with the complaint you will be asked to provide any additional material you wish to provide in support of the complaint. This may include signed statements or statutory declarations from witnesses.

The material must be in writing. The Registrar may also seek additional information from you if necessary.

You must provide to the Registrar a written statement consenting to the marriage celebrant being notified of the complaint and being given a copy of any information or material provided by you to the Registrar in support of the complaint.

If the Registrar does not receive such a statement the complaint cannot proceed and will be terminated.

What information will the Marriage Celebrant receive if the Complaint is being dealt with?

The marriage celebrant will receive a written notice stating that the complaint has been made. They will receive a copy of the complaint and any supporting material provided by you. They will be given your name and that of any supporting witnesses, but no contact details will be provided.

They will be invited to respond to the complaint and provide any additional material they wish in writing in support of their response. This might include, for example, a signed statement from one or more witnesses.

The complaint will then be dealt with by the Registrar. If appropriate it may be dealt with by conciliation or a more formal determination process.

If the Registrar decides the complaint is well founded, there are a number of steps the Registrar may take including several disciplinary measures against the celebrant.

The Registrar does not have the power to require the celebrant to repay any money to you, although the Registrar may make a recommendation to that effect

17 NOTES