

Planning a Wedding & Creating a Ceremony

You are now engaged. Perhaps you have been planning a wedding for some time, or it is all new to you. If you haven't been planning for some time, it's time to plan all the details. There are many aspects to planning a wedding, decisions (to be included or not included) and things to do.....

- Will it be formal or informal?
- Invitations?
- Photographer?
- Gift registry – if desired?
- Clothes – gown, tux, dresses?
- Witnesses/supporters/ bridesmaids, maid of honor, groomsmen, best man, flower girl, ring bearer?
- Special guests, parents, children?
- Setting /location/venue/time- date for wedding?
 - o Circular or pew style seating – or other special venue
- Choosing flowers?
- Will there be a receiving line?
- Plan- a reception/celebration/speeches/toasts/dancing/music/bands/cake/etc?
- Honeymoon/trip – etc?
- Confetti?

And oh yes...arranging the wedding officiant or minister and the actual ceremony.

Unfortunately, often very little time is spent on this aspect. Much emphasis is placed on attire and the celebration, but often planning the wedding ceremony is overlooked. There are many things consider and it is my job to help that part go smoothly and wonderfully memorable. Some couples choose to let the officiant prepare the ceremony with little or no input. Others appreciate the opportunity to co-create their ceremony.

Here are questions and items to consider in preparation....

How much time between now and wedding? Elopement? (License is generally good for 4-59 days).

The actual components of the ceremony – what you wish to be included

- Style of service – religious/non/thematic?
- How many in wedding party
 - o Children of bride and groom taking part in service?

- Special guests – parent’s contributions? /solos / readings/etc..
- Is the bride being given away – if so - by who?

Is a rehearsal needed? Some considerations....

- Formal or informal
- How many participants/bridal party
 - Special guests
 - Children
- Special parts of ceremony
- Writing own vows, traditional vows, officiant creating vows?
- Coordination of solos, speakers, etc
- Size of guest list
- Length of ceremony
- Venue accommodations
- Will rehearsal be before/same day wedding
 - Out of town wedding participants
 - Wedding time of day/night

Are there concerns that you might like to discuss before marriage?

- Interfaith, past marriages, parenting, spiritual/pre-marital counseling etc

Creating the Ceremony

These are common elements of a wedding ceremony. Elements may be chosen for significance to bride, groom, family, or special guest preferences. Those written in **bold** are required for the marriage to be legally binding. All else, is optional to some degree, whether it is more religious, or non religious. But do remember this is a day to remember. It is a bridge between past and future, something to be celebrated and, however simple or elaborate, a special occasion to be set aside and cherished. Inclusion of some elements gives structure and recognition to the idea that this is an important occasion being marked in your life. How you chose to include any of these elements is your own personal style and tone, can be brief or more involved. This is the beauty of creating a unique ceremony just for your special day.

- Pre ceremony Music:
- Processional:

- Introduction/convocation - Greeting/opening remarks...call to guests to bear witness significance of marriage
- Opening prayers (Invocation) if religious- invite in higher powers presence
- Special Music selections-optional
- Readings? Religious or non-religious, ie love poems..etc..
- Address: “words” for the couple
- Special Music selections - optional
- Consecration – prayers that underline sacredness of marriage
- **DECLARATION OF CONSENT – intention, marry freely/no coercion (required)**
- Could add - who gives away bride here (“who gives this woman to be married”)
- **VOWS – binding emotionally and legally (required)**
- Blessing and exchanging rings – symbolic and spiritual act
- Unity candle (optional)
- **PRONOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE- (required) – Climatic!**
- The KISS
- Any closing comments – instructions to guests
- Final benediction(brief)
- Recessional
- Receiving line
- *Other customs to be included - What and when? Hand fasting/broom jumping, etc..