

*Robyn Ashley Weddings*

NYC WEDDING OFFICIANT

THE OFFICIANT'S CUT

# The DIY Wedding Ceremony.

*A full ceremony a friend can read at the altar: the words, the delivery cues, the two lines the law requires, and what to say if the moment slips.*

AS SEEN IN

*Tamron Hall · Brides · The Knot*

FROM ROBYN'S DESK

# A ceremony you can *do* *yourselves.*

This is a complete DIY ceremony, the words and the timing both, the kind a friend can stand up and read without ever having done this before.

It is set in large type on purpose, so whoever is officiating can read it at arm's length without losing the line. The two moments the law actually requires are flagged. In the margins are the cues I have learned over 300+ ceremonies: where to slow down, where to look up, where to let the room go quiet.

Most couples writing their own ceremony over-prepare the vows and under-prepare the one part that carries legal weight. This script protects you from that. Read it once, out loud, in your own voice. Cut anything that does not sound like you.

At the back are the pages a first-time officiant wishes someone had handed them: the lines to say if your voice goes, and the swaps for the feel you actually want.

*Robyn*

ROBYN ASHLEY WEDDINGS · BROOKLYN ·



# We made it.

— *[Turn to the seated guests once the processional settles. Smile first. Wait for the room to go quiet before the first word.]*

Good evening, everyone. Thank you for being here. I mean that.

Some of you flew across the country, some of you crossed town, and all of you are part of why **[PARTNER 1]** and **[PARTNER 2]** wanted to do this in front of the people who love them, instead of quietly at a desk somewhere.

— *[Pause. Let that settle.]*

We are here for something simple and enormous at the same time. Two people, deciding out loud and on purpose, to build a life together.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

The first turn to face the crowd is the scariest second for a first-timer. Open like a person, never like a podium. A warm *"we made it"* turns a wall of staring guests into participants, and it settles your own nerves at the same time.

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# Three true *things*.

[PARTNER 1] and [PARTNER 2] met [HOW THEY MET, ONE SENTENCE]. What I know about them is this: [ONE SPECIFIC, TRUE THING THEY DO FOR EACH OTHER]. And [ONE MORE, A LITTLE FUNNY IF YOU CAN].

A wedding is not the start of their story. It is the moment they put their name to a chapter that has already been the best part of both their lives.

— *[If you have a reader, they come up now. Otherwise, take a breath and turn to the couple.]*

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

This is the part DIY couples write longest and guests tune out fastest. Three specific, true details beat a five-minute biography every time. Keep the brackets short and let them be real.

# The first *required* line.

SAY THIS CLOSE TO AS WRITTEN

*One of the two moments the law needs to hear. The wording can flex, the consent cannot, and it has to be answered out loud.*

[PARTNER 1], do you take [PARTNER 2] to be your spouse, to love and to honor, in the good days and the hard ones, for as long as you both shall live?

*I do.*

[PARTNER 2], do you take [PARTNER 1] to be your spouse, the same promise, for as long as you both shall live?

*I do.*

— *[Wait for each answer. Do not rush it. The pause is the moment.]*

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# The part you *wrote yourselves.*

[PARTNER 1] and [PARTNER 2] have written their own promises.

Please face each other and take both hands.

— *[Step half a pace back so the couple has the room. Keep your eyes on whoever is speaking.]*

Whenever you are ready, [PARTNER 1].

— *[Allow the vows in full. Do not fill the silences. If a partner's voice goes, hand them the tissue you brought, then wait.]*

Thank you. [PARTNER 2], whenever you are ready.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

Vows are optional and the declaration is not, so if the couple skips written vows you go straight to the rings. Keep a printed backup of their words in your folder. Someone always leaves theirs in the hotel room.

# A small thing, *carrying a big one.*

The rings, please.

— *[Hold out a hand for the rings, or let the ring bearer step up. Hold them up briefly so the room sees them.]*

A ring is a small thing to carry something this big. Every time you catch sight of it, let it remind you of this exact moment and the people standing here.

**[PARTNER 1]**, place the ring on **[PARTNER 2]**'s finger and repeat after me:

*I give you this ring as a sign of my love, today and every day after.*

— *[Pause for the line. Wait for the ring to go on. Then repeat for the second partner.]*

# By the power vested *in me.*

## THE SECOND REQUIRED LINE

*The marriage is not official until you say a version of this out loud, in front of your witness.*

[PARTNER 1] and [PARTNER 2], by the power vested in me, and with every person in this room as witness, it is my joy to pronounce you married.

You may kiss.

— *[Step back. Let the kiss happen. Wait for the cheer to peak before you raise your voice over it.]*

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

This is the only other line the state needs from you. A friend officiant has to be properly ordained and, inside NYC, registered in person with the City Clerk before the day. Check the rule for the exact place you are marrying.

# For the *first time*.

Friends, it is my honor to introduce, for the very first time, **[NEW NAME OR HOW THEY WISH TO BE INTRODUCED]**.

— *[Gesture to the couple. Let the recessional music start. Your job is done.]*

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

Keep it short and let the room take over. The end of the ceremony is the start of the party, and it belongs to them.

# If it gets *away from you*.

*If you lose your place.* Say, "Give me one second here. This part matters and I want to get it right." Then look down, find the line, and go on. The room reads it as care, never as a stumble.

*If your own voice goes.* Say, "Forgive me, I have known these two a while and this got me." It is true almost every time. Take one breath and carry on.

*If they cannot speak through the tears.* Say, "Take your time. We are all right here." Then stop talking. The silence belongs to them.

# Keep *moving*.

*If you skip a section.* Keep going. Nobody in the seats has the script, and you are the only person who knows the order. A skipped reading is a private miss, never a public one.

*If a ring sticks or drops.* Say, "We will get it on at the reception, the promise already counts." Light, warm, and then move.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

The difference between a first-timer and a pro is not that the pro never freezes. It is that the pro has a line ready for the freeze, says it warmly, and keeps moving.

# One spine, *your feel.*

This script is deliberately secular, so it works for most couples as written. To shift the feel, you do not rewrite it. You swap three or four lines at the seams that take it cleanly.

*For a warmer, funnier open.* Add after the welcome, "They asked me to keep this short, which, if you know them, is the first promise that gets broken today." Use it only if the couple is genuinely funny.

*For a joint declaration.* Instead of asking each partner in turn, ask both the consent question at once and let them answer together. It reads beautifully for couples who want symmetry. The consent still has to be spoken out loud.

# Protect the *two lines*.

*For a unity ritual or reading.* It belongs between the vows and the rings, never inside the declaration of intent or the pronouncement. Those two stay clean.

*For a second reading.* Place it before the vows, framed the way you framed the first. Two readings is the ceiling. A third and the room drifts.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

The rule for a DIY ceremony is short: change the connective tissue, protect the two required lines, and keep the whole thing to about fifteen minutes of spoken words, twenty at the outside. No guest has ever complained that a ceremony was too short.

# Three things *before you read it aloud.*

*This is one ceremony, marked the way I would mark my own. Treat it as a working draft and it starts sounding like you.*

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## *i* ***Read it out loud, all the way through, daily.***

Whoever is officiating reads it start to finish in their own voice, from a printed copy instead of a screen. Time it on your phone. That is the difference between a script that sounds read and one that sounds meant.

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## *ii* ***Settle the paperwork before the ceremony.***

Fill every [BRACKET] a week out and print two copies on cardstock. Get the marriage license inside its valid window, line up your witness, and sign it at the rehearsal, not on the day, when a signature gets forgotten.

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## *iii* ***Highlight the cues in a second color.***

Every italic note here, the pauses, the tissue, the wait for the cheer, is the part officiants forget under pressure. Mark them so the eye catches them at a glance. Use a lavalier mic, never a handheld, so both hands stay free to turn pages.

*"We wrote our own ceremony and kept second-guessing whether it was even legal. Having the must-says marked and the whole thing laid out so our friend could just read it took the panic out of the day."*

DANA & MARCUS · MARRIED IN PROSPECT PARK, 2024

IF THIS SCRIPT IS DOING ITS JOB

## The writing, *already done for you.*

This is one ceremony in one tone. The Couple's Ceremony Kit is the whole thing done for you: ready-to-use ceremony scripts in several tones, the legal language marked so you cannot accidentally skip it, vow prompts for both of you, and the order laid out so your friend just reads and delivers. The done-for-you version of writing your own.

# \$79

Open the Ceremony Kit →

ONE-TIME PAYMENT · LIFETIME ACCESS · 48-HOUR MONEY-BACK

# Where this *came from*.

**PULLED  
FROM**

The DIY ceremony I hand to couples writing their own, marked with the cues I actually use. The structure is field-tested over *more than 300 ceremonies*.

**WHAT IS IN  
THE KIT**

Ready-to-use scripts in several tones, the legal must-says marked, vow prompts, and the order laid out so a friend can just read and deliver. All of it in *the Couple's Ceremony Kit*.

**USE THIS  
FREELY**

Print it, mark it up, read it at the rehearsal, hand a copy to whoever is standing up front.

**IF YOU USE  
IT**

Email me. I read every one.  
*hello@robynashleyweddings.com*.

*Marked from a working ceremony, with the cues I read from at the front of the aisle.*

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*About this script, and where it has been read.*