

Robyn Ashley Weddings

NYC WEDDING OFFICIANT

THE OFFICIANT'S CUT

An LGBTQ+ Wedding Ceremony.

A full ceremony with no fixed roles: affirming language for what you call each other, the two lines the law still requires, and the cues that keep it yours.

AS SEEN IN

Tamron Hall · Brides · The Knot

FROM ROBYN'S DESK

A ceremony written *from you.*

This is a complete ceremony with no bride, no groom, and no inherited script telling either of you where to stand.

I have officiated queer weddings in a state where this has been legal since 2011, and here is the thing I tell every couple. The pronouns are the easy part. Swapping "husband and wife" for "spouses" takes a minute. The real work is structural, and that work is the gift: every choice becomes one you made on purpose.

It is set in large type so whoever is officiating can read it at arm's length without losing the line. The two moments the law actually requires are flagged, and they stay clean. In the margins are the cues I have gathered over 300+ ceremonies.

Read it once, out loud, in your own voices.
Cut anything that does not sound like you.
The ceremony is yours.

Robyn

ROBYN ASHLEY WEDDINGS · BROOKLYN ·
NYC



No script came *before you.*

— *[Stand center. The couple stands together, facing each other or facing out, their choice. Wait for the room to go quiet.]*

Friends and family, welcome. We are here in this room because **[NAME ONE]** and **[NAME TWO]** decided that what they have is worth saying out loud, in front of all of you.

There is no script that came before them for this. They wrote it themselves, the way they have built everything else.

— *[Pause. Let that settle before you go on.]*

So let us begin the way they chose to begin.

ROBYN'S NOTE

The "no script came before them" line does the quiet work of the day. It tells the room this ceremony is built, not inherited, and that everyone is here to witness a choice.

They made the *road as they went.*

Some people are handed a path and they walk it. [NAME ONE] and [NAME TWO] did not get a path. They got each other, and they made the road as they went.

Every choice that brought them here was exactly that, a choice. That is what makes today honest. Nothing about this is automatic. All of it is on purpose.

— *[Turn to the couple. Take a breath. Continue.]*

ROBYN'S NOTE

Say "*all of it is on purpose*" slowly. For a couple who had to choose this when nothing told them to, that one phrase is often the line a parent remembers.

The first *required* line.

SAY THIS CLOSE TO AS WRITTEN

One of the two moments the law needs to hear. The role words can flex, the consent cannot.

[NAME ONE], do you take [NAME TWO] to be your [SPOUSE / WIFE / HUSBAND / PARTNER]: to stand beside, to choose again on the easy days and the hard ones, as long as you both shall live?

I do.

[NAME TWO], do you take [NAME ONE] to be your [SPOUSE / WIFE / HUSBAND / PARTNER], the same promise, as long as you both shall live?

I do.

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

The part you *wrote yourselves*.

[NAME ONE] and [NAME TWO], 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.]*

These vows are the part you wrote yourselves. Whenever you are ready, [NAME ONE].

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

Thank you. [NAME TWO], whenever you are ready.

ROBYN'S NOTE

If they would rather repeat after you, this works for any couple: *"I take you, exactly as you are. I will keep choosing you out loud and in private, and whatever the road asks of us, I am walking it with you."*

No front, *no back*.

The rings, please.

— *[Hold them up briefly so the room sees them.]*

These rings have no front and no back, no beginning and no end. They do not say who leads. They say you are equal, and you are joined.

[NAME ONE], place this ring on **[NAME TWO]** and say: *I give you this ring as a sign of my love that has no end.*

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

ROBYN'S NOTE

Hand the ring to the speaker before the line, not during it. The "*no front, no back*" framing is small and it does a lot, because it says equal without ever announcing it.

By the power vested *in me.*

THE SECOND REQUIRED LINE

The marriage is not official until you say a version of this out loud.

By the power vested in me by the State of [STATE], and by the witness of everyone in this room, it is my honor to pronounce you married, [EQUAL PARTNERS FOR LIFE / WIVES / HUSBANDS / SPOUSES].

You may seal your marriage with a kiss.

— *[Step back. Let the kiss happen. Let the applause build before you raise your voice over it.]*

ROBYN'S NOTE

"You may kiss" beats "kiss the bride," which hands one person the action and the other the waiting. Say "*seal your marriage with a kiss*" and nobody is the kisser, nobody the kissed.

For the *first time*.

Family and friends, it is my joy to introduce, for the very first time,
[HOW THEY WISH TO BE INTRODUCED, AND ANY NEW
NAME].

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

ROBYN'S NOTE

Ask them weeks out how they want to be introduced, and whether either name is changing. This is the last line the room hears, so it has to be exactly the words they chose.

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 a wrong word slips out. If you say "bride" or a name that is not the one they chose, fix it plainly and move: "Let me say that the way you asked me to." No long apology. The repair is the respect.

If a voice goes through the tears. Say, "Take your time. We are all right here." Then stop talking. The silence belongs to them.

Keep *moving*.

If the entrance jams up. When there is no default for who walks first, couples sometimes freeze at the top of the aisle. Catch their eyes, nod once, and start the people who are escorting them together. A planned signal turns a loving traffic jam into a clean entrance.

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

ROBYN'S NOTE

I have watched two people both wait for the other to go first while a trio plays the same eight bars a third time. Decide the entrance signal at the rehearsal, and the day-of never gets the chance to stall.

Beyond *husband and wife*.

Pick your role words before the rehearsal, then run them from the first line to the last. If you are "spouses" at the end, you should not be "brides" in the welcome.

For the pronouncement. Any of these read cleanly at the altar: "equal partners, joined in marriage," "spouses for life," "wife and wife," "husbands, together," or "married, in the eyes of love and the law."

For no role words at all. Some couples want only their names, start to finish. That is a complete and finished choice, never a placeholder for something missing.

Keep, rewrite, *or cut.*

For a "giving away" moment. The tradition comes from one family handing a daughter to a husband. Keep the warmth, lose the ownership: ask "Who supports these two in their marriage?" or have each say "I give myself, with the support of my family." Or cut it, and nobody misses it.

For a unity ritual. Make it egalitarian. Both break the glass together, handfast with a ribbon that means something, or pour at the same time into one shared vessel. No giver, no receiver.

ROBYN'S NOTE

When you adapt a ritual, say one sentence at the altar about why this version. "*We pour together because no one gave anyone away.*" That single line turns a pretty visual into the emotional center of the whole ceremony.

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.

i Choose your role words, then read it out loud once.

Decide together: spouses, wives, husbands, partners, or only your names. Then whoever is officiating reads it start to finish in their own voice. Mark every line that does not sound like you, and rewrite it or cut it.

ii Settle the entrance at the rehearsal, not on the day.

With no default for who walks first, decide it on purpose. Walk in together, enter from two sides and meet in the center, or pick a signal the officiant gives. Then fill every [BRACKET] and print two clean copies on cardstock.

iii Highlight the cues in a second color.

Every italic note here, the pauses, the tissue, the wait for applause, is the part officiants forget under pressure. Mark them so the eye catches them at a glance.

"We kept staring at a blank page because nothing told us how two brides were supposed to do this. The kit gave us the structure and the language, and the ceremony ended up sounding exactly like us."

DANI & MAR · MARRIED IN BROOKLYN, 2024

IF THIS SCRIPT IS DOING ITS JOB

The whole framework, *not just one script.*

This is one ceremony in one tone. The Couple's Ceremony Kit is how you build your own from a blank page: a fill-in-the-blanks framework, affirming language options for every section, pronouncement and processional choices that do not assume roles, and the vow-writing prompts that get the real stuff out of you instead of the Pinterest version.

\$79

Open the Ceremony Kit →

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

Where this *came from*.

PULLED FROM

The role-free ceremony I write for queer couples across NYC and the Hudson Valley, marked with the cues I actually use. The structure is field-tested over *more than 300 ceremonies*.

WHAT IS IN THE KIT

The fill-in-the-blanks framework, affirming language for every section, pronouncement and processional options, and the vow prompts. 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 ONE

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.

About this ceremony, and where it has been read.