

*Robyn Ashley Weddings*

NYC WEDDING OFFICIANT

THE OFFICIANT'S CUT

# The Love Lock Ceremony.

*The ninety-second unity ritual at the altar: what to gather, the words to say, the keepsake that goes home instead of onto a bridge.*

AS SEEN IN

*Tamron Hall · Brides · The Knot*

FROM ROBYN'S DESK

# One small moment, *done right.*

A couple once handed me a padlock thirty seconds before their processional and asked me to make sure it worked. It was the cheap kind that sticks about half the time.

I clicked it shut on the program table, popped it open, and breathed out. They locked it to a little engraved board during the ceremony and carried it home that night. It hangs in their hallway now. That is the love lock ceremony done right, and it has nothing to do with a bridge.

This is the whole ritual, set in large type so whoever is officiating can read it at arm's length. The words are here, the delivery cues are in the margins, and the one catch nobody mentions is on its own page.

Read it once out loud in your own voice. Cut anything that does not sound like you. The moment is theirs.

## *Robyn*

ROBYN ASHLEY WEDDINGS · BROOKLYN · NYC



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# What you'll *need*.

- **Two padlocks**

One for each partner, or a single lock the two of them close together.

For a blended family, add one small lock per child.

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- **Something to lock onto**

An engraved wood or metal board, a small gate, or a Tree of Life sculpture (commonly around 22 inches). It sits on the table during the ceremony and goes home that night.

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- **A spot for the keys**

A small dish or pocket if the couple is keeping them. A box at home if they are setting them aside. Settle this before the processional.

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- **A small table near the front**

Close enough that the couple steps to it without a long walk. The board faces the guests so the room can see the locks go on.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

Test every lock at home first, then bring them to the ceremony *already open* and sitting on the table. A couple fumbling with a stiff, never-tested padlock in front of eighty guests is the one failure I see most.

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# What the locks *stand for*.

— *[Place this after the ring exchange. Turn to the guests. Wait for the room to settle.]*

Before we close, **[PARTNER 1]** and **[PARTNER 2]** have chosen one more thing to do together.

In their hands are two locks. These simple locks stand for who they are: their hopes, their fears, the promises they have just made, and the love they carry for each other.

Right now those locks are open. In a moment they will fasten them together, onto this piece they will carry home and keep. From this day on, what is joined here stays joined.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

Slow down on "*right now those locks are open.*" It is the line that makes the guests look at the couple's hands, which is exactly where you want their eyes for what comes next.

# Lock your *love*.

— *[Turn to the couple.]*

**[PARTNER 1]** and **[PARTNER 2]**, lock your love.

— *[Each partner fastens their lock to the board, frame, or sculpture. Stop talking. Let the room watch the locks click shut.]*

These are the keys to a secure and happy marriage. You have a choice to make with them, and you have already made it.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

The pause after the locks click is the whole ritual. The room goes still on its own. Do not rush past it to fill the quiet, that silence is doing your work for you.

# What you do *with the keys.*

## DECIDE THIS BEFORE THE PROCESSIONAL

*Keep them or set them aside. Settle it in advance so nobody improvises at the altar. Pick the matching line below.*

*If they are keeping the keys.* You can keep these keys, one each, to remind you that staying together is a choice you get to make every single day.

*If they are setting them aside.* You can set these keys aside for good, to say that what you have locked today is not meant to be undone.

— *[Couple keeps or sets aside the keys as agreed. Then close.]*

This piece goes home with you tonight, and every anniversary after this one, you will see it and remember the day you locked your lives together.

# Lock onto a *keepsake*, not a bridge.

Every generic article tells you to clip the lock to a bridge or fence. In New York that is bad advice, and it can cost you money.

The city cuts love locks off the Brooklyn Bridge, has posted "No Locks" signs with a hundred-dollar fine, and removed more than eleven thousand of them in a single year. Locks on park bridges and railings come off the same way, so a bridge lock would not survive the first anniversary.

So you own the thing instead. The couple locks onto a board, a frame, or a sculpture they brought, and they take it home that night. Same ritual, better ending.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

If a couple has their heart set on a bridge, I tell them the real reason. In Paris a railing section collapsed under the weight of the locks. The keepsake is not a downgrade, it is the version that lasts.

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# When there are *children*.

This is one of the strongest rituals for a blended family, because adding more locks does not break it. It makes it better.

The Tree of Life version gives you a built-in structure. Use it like this, naming each child out loud as they step up:

*"At the roots are the locks of the parents, the foundation everything grows from. At the base of the branches, [PARTNER 1] and [PARTNER 2] lock theirs. And on the leaves, each of you, [CHILD] and [CHILD], add your own. This is your family now."*

— *[Say each child's name. Let them step up and lock their piece on. When you name them, the front row settles.]*

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

Give each child their own lock and their own key to keep. A small object that is theirs to hold makes a kid feel chosen on a day that can otherwise feel like it is happening to them.

## If a lock *won't cooperate.*

*If a lock sticks or won't close.* Say, "These two are stubborn, which feels about right." Let the couple work it a second, then move on. Warm beats flustered every time.

*If a key drops or rolls away.* Say, "We will track that one down at the reception, the lock is what counts." Keep going. Nobody needs the key in this exact moment.

*If a child freezes at their turn.* Say their name gently and hold the lock out a little closer. If they still hang back, "We will get yours on in a minute," and carry on. No pressure on a kid in front of a crowd.

# Three things *before you read it aloud.*

*This is one ritual, 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* ***Test the locks, then bring them open.***

Click each lock shut at home, then open again, so you know it works. On the day, every lock sits on the table already open. No fumbling with a stiff mechanism in front of the room.

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## *ii* ***Settle the keys question in advance.***

Keep them or set them aside, decided before the processional. Then read only the matching line on the keys page. Cross out the one you are not using so the eye does not catch it mid-ceremony.

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## *iii* ***Fill the brackets and mark the cues.***

Type each [BRACKET] with the real names a week out and print a clean copy. Then highlight every italic cue, the turns, the pauses, the wait, in a second color so you catch them at a glance.

*"We wanted the love lock moment but had no idea how to build the rest of the ceremony around it. This gave us the whole frame, and our friend who officiated sounded like he had done it for years."*

DANA & MARA · MARRIED IN THE HUDSON VALLEY, 2024

IF THIS RITUAL IS THE MOMENT YOU WANT

## Now write the ceremony *around it.*

A love lock is one moment inside a larger script, and it works best when the ninety seconds on either side are written, not winged. The Couple's Ceremony Kit is the full framework I use with my own couples: the structure, the framing, the transitions in and out of a ritual like this, with the language already worked out so the whole thing sounds like you instead of a template.

# \$79

Open the Ceremony Kit →

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

# Where this *came from*.

## PULLED FROM

The love lock ritual I run for couples across NYC and the Hudson Valley, marked with the cues I actually use. The keepsake-board version, field-tested over *more than 300 ceremonies*.

## WHAT IS IN THE KIT

The full ceremony framework, the structure and the language, ready for you to drop a ritual like this one in. 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 RUN ONE

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

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

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