

*Robyn Ashley Weddings*

NYC WEDDING OFFICIANT

THE OFFICIANT'S CUT

# *Renewing Vows After Hard Times.*

*A complete renewal to read aloud: the words, the delivery cues, the one line that names a hard chapter with grace, and what to say if the room gets heavy.*

AS SEEN IN

*Tamron Hall · Brides · The Knot*

FROM ROBYN'S DESK

# The hardest sentence, *carried for you.*

This is a full vow renewal for a couple who came through something. The whole ceremony is built around one decision: who carries the hard part.

The answer is the officiant, not the couple. I name the chapter once, near the top, in the third person, with no details. After that the day moves forward and does not go back. The couple's own words stay on where they are going, never on where they have been.

It is set in large type so whoever is officiating can read it at arm's length. In the margins are the cues I have learned over 300+ ceremonies: where to pause, where to let the room sit, where to protect the partner who was hurt.

Read it once, out loud, before anyone is emotional. Cut anything that does not sound like the two of them. The day is theirs.

## *Robyn*

ROBYN ASHLEY WEDDINGS · BROOKLYN · NYC



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# Name it once, *then go forward.*

## THE STRUCTURAL RULE

*The acknowledgment of the hard chapter lives in the officiant's part, said one time, in the third person, no details. The couple's spoken vows stay entirely on the future.*

The instinct in these is to spill everything or to scrub it clean. Both go wrong. The room already knows what these two came through, so pretending it was all sunshine leaves the ceremony hovering above the real reason everyone is here.

So you name it like an adult who has made peace with it, never like someone confessing. One pass, near the top, and then the day belongs to where they are going.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

That one structural choice is the difference between a renewal that heals and one that reopens the wound in front of forty guests. *Everything else on these pages serves it.*

# A real one, *not a flawless one.*

— *[Address the guests once everyone has settled. Wait for the room to go quiet.]*

Friends and family, thank you for being here. **[PARTNER 1]** and **[PARTNER 2]** have been married **[NUMBER]** years, and they will be the first to tell you those years were not all easy. There were seasons that tested everything they had.

That they are standing here today, choosing each other again on purpose, is the entire reason we have gathered. We are not here to celebrate a flawless marriage. We are here to honor a real one.

— *[Pause. Let it sit. Then move forward and do not return to it.]*

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

This is the only place the hard chapter gets named out loud. Say it warmly, in two sentences, then close the door on it. *The pause does more work than any extra sentence would.*

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# The line, *by what they came through.*

*After almost divorcing or years of distance.* "There were seasons they grew apart and had to find their way back. That they are choosing each other again, on purpose, is the whole point of today."

*After infidelity.* "Trust, once broken, does not repair itself by accident. It gets rebuilt, deliberately, by two people who decided the marriage was worth the work. That work is what we are honoring today."

*After illness.* "This past year asked more of them than any year should. They learned what it means to hold each other up. Today is not a finish line. It is a thank-you, said out loud."

*After addiction and recovery.* "Recovery is a daily thing, and so is a marriage. These two have chosen, one day at a time, to keep showing up for each other."

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

Always "they," always shared, never a recap of who did what. After infidelity especially: *no mention of who caused it, ever.*

# The promise, *remade*.

A marriage is not one promise made once. It is the same promise, remade on the ordinary days and the impossible ones.

[PARTNER 1] and [PARTNER 2] have done that remaking quietly, away from all of us, for years. Today they are doing it out loud, in front of the people who held them up while they did.

— *[Turn to the couple. Give them a beat to find each other before the vows.]*

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

The reflection is the bridge from your framing to their words. Keep it forward-facing so the couple steps into vows that are already pointed ahead.

# Partner A, *to the future.*

[PARTNER 1] and [PARTNER 2], please face each other and take both hands.

— *[Step half a pace back. These are their words now. Keep your eyes on whoever is speaking.]*

*I am not here to talk about where we have been. I am here because of where we are going. I choose you, today and forward, with my eyes open. I will keep showing up, on the good days and the hard ones, for as long as I have. Thank you for not giving up on us.*

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

Notice the vow names the hard chapter only by refusing to relitigate it. "*I am not here to talk about where we have been*" does the acknowledging without a single detail.

## Partner B, *still choosing.*

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

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

*I know exactly who you are, and I am still choosing you. Everything ahead of us, I want to meet it with you next to me. I will keep building this with you, one day at a time. You are still my favorite decision.*

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### ROBYN'S NOTE

Carry tissues even if both swear they will not cry. The hand-holding keeps a nervous partner from losing their own words, and it gives them somewhere safe to look.

# What you chose, *again.*

For couples with new bands, or rings re-engraved with both dates, the officiant holds them and says:

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

*These rings have carried you this far. Wear them now as a sign of what you have chosen, not once, but again. May they remind you, every ordinary day, that you came back to each other on purpose.*

— *[Hand each ring back. No new ring exchange is needed; the marriage already stands.]*

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

One couple I worked with had both their wedding date and renewal date engraved inside new bands, where only they would ever see them. *The repair memorialized privately, in the metal, instead of announced from the front.*

# Again, *and forward.*

A renewal carries no legal weight, so there is no required line here. The pronouncement is purely for the room. Say it like a recognition, not a verdict.

*By the strength of the promise you have remade in front of all of us, it is my honor to recognize you, again and forward, as partners for life. You may kiss.*

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

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

These two are already married, so nothing legal hangs on your words today. That frees the pronouncement to be only what it should be: a public blessing on the coming-back.

# What to *leave out*.

*The public apology.* If a partner asks to stand and say sorry in front of everyone, steer them away, gently, every time. An apology is owed privately, to one person, never performed for an audience who did not sign up to absolve anyone.

*The forced forgiveness.* Do not write a line where the hurt partner declares "I forgive you" into a microphone. That makes them act out a feeling that may still be in progress. Forgiveness lives in the fact that they are standing there. It needs no narration.

*The specifics.* No timeline of the affair, no name of the substance, no recap of the illness. Specifics turn guests into a jury.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

Both banned moves put one partner on the spot to perform a private feeling. *Let the act of showing up do that work instead.*

# Change the *tense*.

Standard renewals lean future-tense. Forever, the years ahead, growing old together. When one partner is facing serious or terminal illness, that tense turns cruel, because you are asking for a promise about a span of time no one can guarantee.

So you stay in the present. Center the strength they have now over the years they cannot promise. A line that holds: *"Your love has been at the core of this marriage, and it is the thing holding you both up right now."*

A hand blessing fits beautifully here, for the hands that hold each other when fear comes. The meaning sits in standing here, now, together, and that is enough.

# Three things *before you read it aloud.*

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

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*i*

*Write the acknowledgment line before anyone is emotional.*

Draft it at the planning meeting, out loud, with no tears in the room. If saying it makes one of you flinch, it has too much detail. Strip it back until it names the season without naming the event.

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*ii*

*Fill every bracket a week out, not on the day.*

The couple writes each [BRACKET] in pencil, the officiant types the final and prints two copies on cardstock. The day-of script has no brackets left in it.

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*iii*

*Pick one ritual that quietly nods to the repair.*

The re-engraved ring, a hand blessing, a single reading chosen by the partner who usually stays quiet. One is plenty. Let the rest of the day breathe and be a celebration.

*"We almost didn't make it, and we wanted to mark that without making the whole day about it. The framing section showed us how to name the hard year in one sentence and then let go of it. I cried writing my vows. I did not cry reading them."*

DANA & MARCUS · RENEWED AT TWENTY-TWO YEARS, 2025

IF THIS RENEWAL IS DOING ITS JOB

## Plan the whole day, *without an officiant.*

This is one renewal in one tone. The Couple's Ceremony Kit is how you build your own from the kitchen table: the welcome scripts, the acknowledgment language sorted by what you came through, the prompts to write vows that point forward instead of backward, and the order of the day so nothing gets missed. It exists because too many couples were drafting the hardest sentence of their lives through tears.

# \$79

Open the Ceremony Kit →

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

# Where this *came from*.

**PULLED  
FROM**

Renewals I have officiated after affairs, after illness, after years of barely speaking, after one partner got sober. The structure is field-tested over *more than 300 ceremonies*.

**WHAT IS IN  
THE KIT**

The welcome scripts, the acknowledgment language by situation, the forward-facing vow prompts, and the full order of the day. All of it in *the Couple's Ceremony Kit*.

**USE THIS  
FREELY**

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

**IF YOU  
RENEW  
YOURS**

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

*Marked from real renewals, with the cues I read from at the front of the aisle.*

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*About this renewal, and the rooms it came from.*