

Robyn Ashley Weddings

NYC WEDDING OFFICIANT

THE OFFICIANT'S CUT

The Ring Exchange.

Every wording I reach for, set large to read at the altar: traditional, secular, playful, one ring, kids' rings, and where to pause so a shaking hand can keep up.

AS SEEN IN

Tamron Hall · Brides · The Knot

FROM ROBYN'S DESK

The words are *the easy part.*

A groom once handed me both rings before the ceremony with the relief you give someone holding your wallet at the beach. Mid-vow, his hands shook so hard the band would not clear her knuckle.

The front row leaned in. I slowed everything down, gave him one short phrase, waited for him to say it back, and he got there. That is the whole thing about a ring exchange. This is the moment when the hands are shaking most, so the words have to be short enough to actually say out loud.

Inside is every version I reach for across more than 300 ceremonies: religious, secular, playful, the one-ring fix, the kids' beat for a second marriage. Each is set in large type with the cues marked where they matter.

Pick the one that fits your couple. Read it once, out loud, and cut anything that does not sound like you.

Robyn

ROBYN ASHLEY WEDDINGS · BROOKLYN ·
NYC



Feed it *one phrase at a time.*

The structure stays the same no matter the words. You frame the moment in a sentence or two. Then each partner places the ring while repeating a short line back, fed to them one phrase at a time.

That repeat-after-me cadence is the trick. Hand a nervous person a full sentence and they freeze. Give them four words, wait, give them four more, and they sail through it.

— *[Anywhere you see a slash in the lines ahead, that is your breath. Stop. Let them catch up. Then go on.]*

ROBYN'S NOTE

A shaky couple can manage "*With this ring*" and "*I marry you*" separately. They cannot manage a whole sentence delivered at once. Break every line the same way.

With this ring, *I thee wed.*

The version most people picture. It still works for couples who want the ceremony rooted in something older than themselves.

*With this ring, / I thee wed. / With my body, I honor you, / and
with all that I am, / I give myself to you.*

— *[Hold the rings up briefly so the room sees them, then hand one to the speaker before the line, not during it.]*

BEST FOR couples who want gravity and tradition, religious or culturally Christian families, anyone who likes the old cadence on its own terms.

ROBYN'S NOTE

One thing to know before you choose it. That phrasing comes straight from the Book of Common Prayer, so it carries a liturgical root even though it sounds neutral now. If a fully secular ceremony matters, take one of the swaps ahead.

The weight, *without the liturgy.*

If you want the weight of the moment without the scripture, keep the rhythm and swap the root.

With this ring, / I marry you. / I give you my love, / my trust, / and my whole self, / today / and every day after.

Or shorter, when the couple wants plain:

On this day, / I give you this ring / as a symbol of my love / and my promise to you.

BEST FOR *secular couples, humanist ceremonies, anyone who wants the moment to feel like a decision rather than a claim.*

ROBYN'S NOTE

I use these constantly. Both keep the shape of the traditional line while dropping anything that reads as scripture, and no guest has ever noticed a thing was missing.

It is *my wish*.

There is a more deliberate version some couples love. Instead of binding language, you use consent language, and the choreography carries it.

Rather than placing the ring on your partner, you put it in their open hand:

I cannot bind you to me. / Only you can choose this. / It is my wish.

— *[The ring goes into the open palm. The partner slides it onto their own finger. Let that move read for the room before you speak again.]*

BEST FOR couples who want the ring to read as a yes they each say for themselves.

ROBYN'S NOTE

The choreography flips from ownership to choice, and the room feels the difference even if nobody can name it. Walk the couple through the open-hand move at the rehearsal so it is not a surprise.

Laugh first, *then go soft.*

Some couples do not want solemn. They want the room to laugh and then go quiet. You can do both in two lines.

I give you this ring as a reminder / that I chose you, / I keep choosing you, / and I'll still be choosing you / when we're old / and arguing about the thermostat.

Or shorter:

With this ring, / I promise you my love, / my patience, / and the last bite / of whatever I'm eating.

BEST FOR couples whose whole relationship runs on banter, lighter receptions, anyone who wants guests grinning before the tears.

ROBYN'S NOTE

Keep it to one joke, then end on something real, or the moment tips into a comedy set. Say a funny line out loud to one friend first. If they smile instead of laugh, cut a word and try again.

Change the action, *not the meaning.*

This comes up more than people expect. One partner does not want a ring, cannot wear one for work, or the second band is not ready. The amateur move is to apologize for it. The right move is to change the action.

The partner without a ring takes the other's hand and says the line as a gesture rather than a placement:

On this day, / I wed thee. / I take your hand as my own / and give you all of me.

BEST FOR *any couple where one ring is missing by choice or by circumstance, with no stand-in prop.*

ROBYN'S NOTE

I have done this many times and it never reads as a gap. It reads as a choice. Some couples grab an inexpensive band just for the day, which is fine, but holding hands is the more deliberate option.

When the words *are not yours to invent.*

If the ceremony is rooted in a faith tradition, the wording usually is not yours to write, and that is part of the beauty of it.

In a traditional Jewish exchange, the ring goes on the bride's right index finger, the finger used to bind tefillin, and the line is:

Harei at mekudeshet li / b'taba'at zo / k'dat Moshe v'Yisrael.

— [*"Behold, you are consecrated to me with this ring according to the law of Moses and Israel." Confirm the finger and the wording with the couple and their tradition beforehand.*]

BEST FOR *faith-rooted ceremonies, and interfaith couples who each want their own tradition kept.*

ROBYN'S NOTE

For interfaith, I often let each partner use the wording of their own tradition back to back, so neither has to give theirs up. A detail couples love: Jewish law asks for a plain band with no stones, so the bride can read its value at the moment of consent.

Two beats, *and the order matters.*

This is the version I get asked about most, because the wording online almost never covers it well. Do the couple's exchange first, complete and unhurried. Then move to the children as a separate beat so neither moment crowds the other.

Many blended families use a small medallion, a pendant, or a little ring for each child:

Take this as a symbol of our family, / and our love for you. / You are part of everything / we promised each other today.

— *[Kids old enough can answer "We do" to a short line. Cue the child quietly beforehand so they know it is coming.]*

ROBYN'S NOTE

Answering turns a child from a spectator into a participant. I have watched a nine-year-old say those two words and undo every adult in the room.

The whole beat, *start to close.*

Frame, then exchange, then close. Drop in whichever wording above fits the couple. This is the secular version:

[PARTNER A] and **[PARTNER B]**, these rings are the visible sign of everything you have just promised. A circle with no beginning and no end, worn where the whole world can see it.

[PARTNER A], take **[PARTNER B]**'s ring.

— *[Partner A holds the ring at the tip of the finger. Feed the line in short phrases, then repeat the same for Partner B.]*

These rings will catch the light / at red lights, / at kitchen sinks, / in the middle of ordinary days. / Let each one remind you of this exact moment.

ROBYN'S NOTE

The close is where you give the room the picture they take home. Slow it down and look up on the last line, so it reads to the couple and not to your page.

If the band *hits the floor*.

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

If a ring drops and rolls. Pause and smile. Ask the two or three people nearest the ring to scan the floor. A small focused search beats a frantic crowd every time. Outdoors, mark the last-seen spot and look downhill and downwind.

If it is well and gone. Finish the exchange with a backup band and laugh about it later. The ceremony never stops for a missing ring.

ROBYN'S NOTE

Decide who is physically holding the real rings before the ceremony, not during it. The best man's pocket, not the ring bearer's pillow. Keep two cheap silicone bands in your bag and a dropped pillow becomes a non-event.

"We built our whole ceremony from this. The ring exchange was the part we dreaded, and it ended up the part our friends still bring up."

MAYA & DEV · MARRIED IN PROSPECT PARK, 2025

IF THESE LINES ARE DOING THEIR JOB

Every section, *already written for you.*

The ring exchange is one beat in a ceremony that has a dozen. The Couple's Ceremony Kit gives you every section already written and ready to adapt: the welcome, the vows that come before the rings, this exchange in all the variations above, and the pronouncement that follows. It exists because I got tired of watching couples stitch a ceremony together from twelve blog tabs at midnight.

\$79

Open the Ceremony Kit →

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

Where this *came from*.

PULLED FROM

The ring exchanges I have read aloud at weddings across NYC and the Hudson Valley, religious and secular both, marked with the cues I actually use. Field-tested over *more than 300 ceremonies*.

WHAT IS IN THE KIT

Every ceremony section already written and ready to adapt: the welcome, the vows, the rings in all these variations, and the pronouncement. 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 working ceremonies, with the cues I read from at the front of the aisle.

About these lines, and where they have been read.