

*Robyn Ashley Weddings*

NYC WEDDING OFFICIANT

THE OFFICIANT'S CUT

# Vow Renewal Vows.

*The four-part framework, sample openings by anniversary you can lift straight off the page, and how to read them aloud without falling apart.*

AS SEEN IN

*Tamron Hall · Brides · The Knot*

FROM ROBYN'S DESK

## Vows you *earned* *the right* to say.

Renewal vows are a different writing job than the ones you wrote the first time. Your first vows were a promise about a future you had not met yet. These are written after you have the proof.

I have stood beside couples renewing at five years and at fifty. The vows that work break almost every rule you followed at your first wedding. They testify instead of predict. They name the hard chapter out loud, because the people in the chairs already lived it with you.

This is the framework I give those couples, the same four moves in the same order, with the sample openings I let people lift and make their own. The cues for reading them aloud are here too, the part most people forget until the moment is on top of them.

Write a draft, read it once out loud, then cut anything that does not sound like the two of you. The vows are yours.

*Robyn*

ROBYN ASHLEY WEDDINGS · BROOKLYN ·  
NYC



# Testify, don't *predict*.

At your first wedding you were the most nervous people in the room. You promised an unknown. You said "in sickness and in health" with no idea which one was coming, or when.

At a renewal you have receipts. You know exactly what "for worse" looked like, because you survived a specific version of it. So the whole job is a single shift: from *I will* to *I have, and I still will*.

That flips the privacy rule too. At a first wedding I tell couples to keep the raw material for the marriage, not the microphone. Here the opposite holds. Your guests watched the rough year happen, and naming it is part of what they came for.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

When a renewal vow could belong to any couple, the witnesses feel the gap. Specifics are not oversharing here. They are the receipts the room already holds.

# Start with the *promise that came true.*

Open by naming the one promise that turned out to be true. This is where you can quote a single line from your original vows, if you still have them.

*I promised to be your partner. I have been, and I still am.*

That sentence is your bridge from the old vows to the new ones. You only need one. Pull it forward, then leave the rest of the originals where they are.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

One quoted line is plenty. Quote the whole first set and you skip everything you have learned since, which is the part the room actually wants to hear.

# You are not the people who *got married.*

Say so, plainly. The careers, the cities, the kids, the version of each other you have each grown into. This is where you get to say what you appreciate now, the thing you could not have known to put into words at the first wedding.

*You have grown into someone steadier than the person I met, and I have grown braver because you kept telling me I could.*

Point at the change as a gain, not a loss. The room is watching two people who chose to keep growing toward each other.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

"You are different now" sounds like a complaint. "You grew into someone I admire more" is the same fact pointed the right way. Aim it forward.

# Name the *one real season*.

Pick one true chapter and name it plainly. Skip the "thick and thin" abstraction and go for the actual thing that happened: the move, the diagnosis, the year the business almost folded.

You are not airing grievances. You acknowledge the season and turn toward gratitude in the same breath.

*The year we almost lost the house, you got up every morning and went to work scared, and you never once made me carry it alone.*

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

One sentence that names the hard chapter does more for the room than ten about how perfectly happy you have always been. Acknowledge, then turn. Do not confess.

# One fresh vow, *pointed forward.*

Close with a new promise aimed at what comes next. The next decade, the grandkids, the small daily thing. This is the only part that looks like a traditional vow, and it carries more weight because you earned the right to make it.

*To keep choosing you on the ordinary days. To argue better and apologize faster. To grow old beside you on purpose, the way I have loved you on purpose this whole time.*

End on the turn that started the whole ceremony: *I do. Again. And gladly.*

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

Write each of the four parts as a single sentence first, on one index card. If the bones work in four sentences, they work expanded. Most weak vows are missing a whole part, not missing polish.

# Trade the closed door for a *window*.

Specificity is the whole difference between vows that make the back row cry and vows that sound like a greeting card. A general phrase only gets emotional once you explain why.

*The closed door.* "You have always supported me." True, and forgettable.

*The window.* "You drove ninety minutes each way to my mother's nursing home so I would not have to go alone." Same gratitude, except now the listener is standing inside your marriage.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

If a promise once lapsed, reframe it as what it taught you, never as a replayed complaint. "Your stubbornness drove me up the wall for twenty years, and it is the reason we still have a house."

# Starting lines you can *steal*.

*Five years.* "Five years in, I know things about you I was only guessing at when I married you. I know how you are at three in the morning with a sick kid, and I would not want anyone else in that room."

*Ten years.* "Ten years ago I made you promises with no proof. Today I have proof. We moved twice, we buried your dad, we figured out who we are, and I would sign up for all of it again."

*Fifteen years.* "Fifteen years ago I did not know that the best part of loving you would be the ordinary Tuesdays. I know it now."

# The same shape, *more history.*

*Twenty-five years.* "Twenty-five years ago I pledged my love before I had any idea what those words would cost, or what they would give back. We have had all of it, the joy and the years that nearly broke us, and you have been beside me the whole way. Today I renew every word."

*Forty years.* "Forty years. People ask us the secret, and the honest answer is that we kept choosing each other on the days it would have been easier not to."

*Fifty years.* "Fifty years ago I married a person I was a little in awe of. Half a century later, I still am. We raised a family, we lost people we loved, we got old in the same house, and I would not trade one ordinary day of it."

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

These are starting lines, never finished scripts. Steal the shape, swap in your real detail, then carry it through all four parts of the framework.

# How to get the words *out*.

— *[Print the vows large, on a single card you can hold in one hand. The other hand is for holding theirs.]*

**Before you start.** Take both their hands and find their eyes. Read the first line to them, not to the card. After that you can glance down between sentences.

— *[When your voice goes, and it will, stop. Breathe once. The pause reads as feeling, never as a mistake.]*

**At the hard part.** Slow down on the sentence that names the rough season. Let it sit. That silence is doing the work, so do not rush to fill it.

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## ROBYN'S NOTE

Carry tissues even if you both swear you will not cry. Renewals get the back row every time, because the room has known you both for years.

# Three things *before you read them aloud.*

*Treat your draft as a working draft and it starts sounding like the two of you, instead of like a card you bought.*

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*Write the four parts on four index cards first.*

One sentence each: what held, what changed, what was hard, what is next. If the bones work in four sentences, expand them. If a card is blank, that is the part your vows are missing.

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*Read it out loud, then cut to two to four minutes.*

Renewal vows run slightly longer than first-wedding vows because you have more history. Past four minutes you are narrating the marriage instead of vowing. Cut the backstory, keep the promises.

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*Decide together how much you share.*

You do not have to match length or tone, but agree on whether you are reading to each other privately or to the room. Surprising your partner with a confession at the microphone is the one thing to avoid.

*"We had the vows written and then realized we had no idea what came before or after them. The kit gave us the whole running order. Our renewal felt like a real ceremony, not just two speeches."*

DANA & MARCUS · RENEWED AT TWENTY YEARS, 2025

IF THIS FRAMEWORK IS DOING ITS JOB

## The vows, and the *ceremony* around them.

These vows sit inside a renewal ceremony with its own shape: an opening, a reaffirmation, a ring rededication, a close. The Couple's Ceremony Kit is how you build the whole thing. The vow-building prompts, sample renewal vows by milestone, the full ceremony structure, and the rededication wording, so you are adapting something real instead of inventing from zero.

# \$79

Open the Ceremony Kit →

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

# Where this *came from*.

## PULLED FROM

The renewal vows I have helped couples write and read aloud at five years and at fifty, refined across *more than 300 ceremonies* in NYC and the Hudson Valley.

## WHAT IS IN THE KIT

The vow-building prompts, sample renewal vows by milestone, the full ceremony structure, and the rededication wording. All of it in *the Couple's Ceremony Kit*.

## USE THIS FREELY

Print it, mark it up, write your drafts in the margins, read them to each other at the kitchen table before you read them to the room.

## IF YOU RENEW

Email me. I read every one.  
[hello@robynashleyweddings.com](mailto:hello@robynashleyweddings.com).

*Built from the renewal vows I have helped real couples write, with the cues I give them for reading aloud.*

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*About this  
framework,  
and the  
couples it  
came from.*