

Robyn Ashley Weddings

NYC WEDDING OFFICIANT

Find Your Unity Ceremony.

Four questions to surface which of the four most-used unity rituals fits your couple, plus the exact script for the one you match.

AS SEEN IN

Tamron Hall · Brides · The Knot

FROM ROBYN'S DESK

Four questions, *one match.*

Most couples spend two weeks Pinterest-ing unity rituals and end up confused. There are too many options, and most of them sound interchangeable on paper. They are not.

These four questions surface what your couple actually values: family inclusion, physicality, recognized tradition, future-orientation. Whichever pattern your answers form will match one of four real rituals that have worked at hundreds of ceremonies.

How to take it: answer each of the four questions on the next pages, A through D. Tally your letters. Whichever you have most of points you to your match. Jump to that result page (07 through 10) for the full ritual and the script.

If you find yourself between two: read both. The most beautiful unity rituals I have officiated combine elements from two. If you have a cultural tradition (jumping the broom, the lasso, kanyadaan, tea ceremony, lighting the menorah), use it. Skip the quiz. Tradition wins over diagnosis.

Robyn

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What do you want your *guests* to remember from your ceremony?

a The moment we were physically *tied together* in front of everyone.

b Watching our two families *visibly become one*.

c Light passing between us and *the people who raised us*.

d That we made a quiet promise to *our future selves*, only the two of us knew the contents of.

When you picture the moment, where are you *standing*?

a Outdoors, under a tree or arch, with *a long ribbon* ready in someone's hand.

b Somewhere that reminds us of where each of us is *from*, a beach, a backyard, a place that holds two histories.

c Inside a venue that feels familiar to *our families*, where the rituals already make sense to them.

d Somewhere small and quiet, where we could plausibly read *a letter to the future* aloud.

Which of these matters *most* to you about a unity ritual?

a That it is *tactile and ancient*, something the room can clearly see happening with our hands.

b That *our families participate* alongside us, not just watch.

c That the room recognizes the *meaning instantly*, no explanation needed.

d That we get to *revisit it later*, in private, on a date that means something only to us.

Three years from now, what do you want this *object* to be doing?

a Hanging *framed on a wall* in our home.

b Sitting *on a shelf* as a daily reminder.

c Being *lit again* on our anniversary every year.

d Still *sealed*, waiting for the right night.

Tally now. Whichever letter you picked most points you to your match.

Mostly **A** → page 07 (Handfasting). Mostly **B** → page 08 (Sand). Mostly **C** → page 09 (Unity Candle). Mostly **D** → page 10 (Wine Box).

The *Handfasting*.

An old Celtic ritual where the couple's hands are tied together with a long cord or ribbon during the vows. This is where the phrase "tying the knot" comes from. It is the most physical, most photographable unity ritual we have, and the cord becomes a keepsake the couple often frames.

Pick a cord or long ribbon, eight to ten feet, in a colour that means something. Many couples use one in each family's wedding colour, braided. The officiant holds it. The couple joins hands at the wrist. The officiant wraps the cord, in a figure-eight pattern, while speaking the binding lines. The couple slips their hands out at the end and the cord stays bound, in the shape of two interlocking circles, kept as the keepsake.

Best for outdoor ceremonies, slightly bohemian or Celtic-flavoured weddings, couples whose guests will lean forward to watch something happen with their hands. Pairs cleanly with a reading right before the binding.

THE SCRIPT

*These hands you are holding are the hands of your best friend, the hands that will hold yours through every ordinary night and every extraordinary one. **I am going to bind them, gently, to remind you of what you are choosing today.***

[Wrap the cord. Slow.] *By this cord, your lives are now joined. The knot is loose. It will stay loose. The point is that the two of you are tied together by your own choice, not by anyone else's pulling.*

*You can take your hands out whenever you want. The cord will hold the shape. **You will hold the marriage.***

If this does not feel right: *read result D (the Wine Box)*. Couples drawn to the *Result: Handfasting* handfasting often also love the wine box, because both rituals leave a physical object that gets revisited later.

The *Sand Ceremony*.

Each partner pours a different-coloured sand into a single vessel, mixing the two streams into a layered pattern that physically cannot be unmade. Especially powerful for blended families, where each child gets their own sand colour and pours alongside.

You will need: one larger central vessel (clear glass works best) and one small bottle of coloured sand per person pouring. Choose colours that mean something. Sand from a beach the couple loves, if you can. Otherwise from a craft store; the cheaper sand actually layers better.

The two partners pour first, in alternating streams. If there are children from previous relationships, they pour after, each with their own colour. The final vessel becomes the keepsake. It can be sealed with wax or a cork and lives on a shelf in the family's home.

Best for blended families, beach weddings, destination ceremonies, and any couple whose families want to participate in a way the room can see.

THE SCRIPT

Today, two histories meet. [PARTNER 1]'s family, [PARTNER 2]'s family, and now the family the two of you are starting. The sand you are about to pour is not just colour, it is everyone who got you here.

As each of you pours, you are saying: this is mine, and now it is also ours. The grains will mix in a pattern that nobody, not the two of you and not me, could pull apart by hand if we tried.

That is the whole point. Two histories, one vessel, no taking it back.

The *Unity Candle*.

Three candles. Each parent (or family member) lights one of the two outer candles to begin. The couple takes those two flames and uses them to light a single central candle together. The room understands the meaning before any words are spoken.

The setup is three candles on a small table or stand: two tapers on the outside, one larger pillar in the middle. Before the ceremony, the parents (or chosen family members) light the two outer tapers. During the ritual, each partner takes their family's candle, and together they touch both flames to the central pillar.

The two outer candles can either be blown out or left lit. Tradition says blow them out (one family becomes one). I prefer leaving them lit (your families do not stop being your families when you marry). Either is correct.

Best for indoor ceremonies, faith-friendly couples, traditional venues, families who want a ritual their grandparents will recognize without explanation. Pairs beautifully with a reading from a parent.

THE SCRIPT

The two outer candles are your families. They were lit before you got here. They are the light you grew up by.

Today, you each take a piece of that light, and you bring it together. [Partners light the central candle.] What you are doing is not throwing away where you came from. It is bringing it forward, into the new thing the two of you are starting.

The central candle will live in your home. Light it on your anniversary, every year.

The flame is the same flame.

The Wine Box.

Each partner writes a private letter to the other, sealed unread. The letters and a bottle of wine go into a wooden box. The box is nailed shut during the ceremony. Opened only on a date the couple chooses, usually their fifth anniversary, or the first night they almost did not make it.

Two weeks before the wedding, each partner writes a letter to the other. The letter is private, never read by the other person. The instructions are simple: tell them why you said yes, what you are scared of, what you promise to come back to. Seal the envelope.

At the ceremony, both letters and a bottle of wine they will love in five years go into a small wooden box. The officiant or a chosen friend nails the box shut, slowly, while speaking the script below. The couple keeps the box at home.

Open it on the agreed anniversary. *Or the first night you almost did not make it.* Either is the right reason.

THE SCRIPT

Inside this box is a bottle of wine that nobody is going to drink tonight. Inside this box are two letters that nobody is going to read tonight. The two of you wrote them. You sealed them. Even I do not know what they say.

The box is going to live in your home. You are going to walk past it on Tuesday mornings. Some days you will forget it is there. Some days you will not.

[Nail the box shut, deliberately, while speaking.] *One day, on a date the two of you have agreed on, or on a night when one of you needs to remember why, you will open this box. You will read what the other person wrote on the day they decided. You will drink the wine you bought for your future selves. That is the only rule.*



The Couple's Ceremony Kit

Now write the ceremony *around your ritual*



Inside the kit

- The full script for your ritual, with what to get right beforehand and what to do if it goes sideways
- Complete ceremonies in every style, and the six-question quiz that tells you which one is yours
- The interview question that digs up the detail your vows are missing
- Why one of your promises should be about the water filter

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Where these *came from*.

PULLED FROM

The four most-requested unity rituals across *more than 300 ceremonies*. The diagnostic questions were sharpened over hundreds of consultations where I had to walk a couple toward the right ritual without telling them what to pick.

WHAT IS IN THE KIT

Twelve more rituals, the cultural ones (jumping the broom, lasso, tea ceremony, kanyadaan), the unusual ones (stone covenant, releasing of butterflies, tree planting), each with the same depth as the four here.

USE THIS FREELY

Print it, pass it to whoever is officiating, photocopy it for the friend whose wedding is two months out. The script pages are designed to be read aloud as written.

IF YOU SHIP A CEREMONY

The rest of my scripts and ceremony notes live at www.robbynashleyweddings.com.

Pulled from a working list, not generated. The four results are the ones that have walked the most couples to a unity ritual that fit their wedding instead of fighting it.

*About this quiz,
and how the four
were chosen.*