

Let's Talk about Your Wedding!

This is a questionnaire that I am going to ask you to complete as individuals. The questionnaire gives you an opportunity to articulate your feelings and thoughts regarding your ceremony. AS you write about how you love each other, you are creating a precious document. The thoughts and words you place to paper are powerful! These words allow you to create the essence of why you are having this beautiful ceremony.

Many years from now, you will have the opportunity to pull out these pages, perhaps snuggled together in a favorite spot, or during an anniversary and will be able to recapture how you felt as you began to plan for the moment you would formally join hands and hearts. Your words can bring you back again and again, and can create a wonderful memento to share with your children and grandchildren.

I ask that you and your fiancé or fiancée answer these questions separately. You will have different as well as common needs or wishes. Each side of the family may have particular requests. After you have gathered your thoughts and feelings individually, you can come together to share and discuss them. You then have the tools to build a bridge.

When you write your testimony for the section of the questionnaire called "*Matters of the Heart: about your Relationship*", you may want to keep it a surprise from your partner. Perhaps you would like some of these personal comments included in your ceremony. Imagine how you would feel hearing each other's words of love read by your celebrant without having seen them beforehand!

Of course, you need not answer the questionnaire if you do not wish to, or if it makes you uncomfortable in any way. You can create a beautiful ceremony tailored to your needs and desires by choosing and combing elements from other selections.

As your celebrant/Marriage Commissioner I see my role as a facilitator, to help you weave beautiful elements to create a once in a lifetime ceremony. In answering the questions, you will get down on paper some of the particulars that must be kept in mind, enabling you to give our own information that as your celebrant/MC that I should know, especially if you envision a personal ceremony that reflects your relationship and your beliefs. The questionnaire can also be a way of getting in touch with your souls, of uncovering and disclosing more about who you are and what you want.

As you complete the questionnaire, don't hold back! Be completely honest. Be true to yourselves. Most importantly write from your heart. This is simply writing in a journal and a process in which to enjoy.

The questionnaire is divided into parts. It encompasses everyone who will attend your wedding, and then addresses your immediate families, and finally focuses on you and your relationship.

Section 1 – Logistics

Logistics include your names; wedding date, time and location; contact information; family members etc.

Section 2 – Envision your Ceremony

This area gives you a broad idea of the wedding. Perhaps you would like one or two rituals such as a flower giving ceremony or the lighting of the Christian unity candle.

Be open to possibilities! You may well change your mind as you look or review other books on ceremony.

You will be asked what you wish for family and friends to take away from the experience of your wedding.

Section 3 – Your background and Families

Here you are asked to think about your backgrounds and how you were raised. Write about your families and what they mean to you. Here is an opportunity to voice your love and gratitude for them, and these are words we can include in a part of the ceremony if you wish.

This section also deals with any sensitive matters that need to be considered. Most couples tend to be aware of situations that might present problems, and these may be of a religious or spiritual nature. These questions are to help you begin to identify the sensitive issues.

Perhaps you would like to remember someone who is no longer with you and your words can be a part of your ceremony.

Section 4 – Matters of the Heart: About your Relationship

The questions in this section are all about you and your beloved – what your future bride or groom means to you, what you love about this person, how he or she has changed your life. Describe your “Will you marry me moment”.

As you share your thoughts and feelings with the questionnaire, we can weave your comments into a tribute to each other at the ceremony. If you have chosen to keep this section to yourself... this is where you would hear your partners' words for the first time.

Section 5 – About Yourself

In this section, you will write something about what you enjoy doing, what inspires you, who you admire, what plans you have for the future. We can use these answers to help me better understand you and speak to you in a way that resonates with your spirit.

When you are done completing the questionnaire, you can also include a basic structure or outline that you would like for your wedding. You may also wish to have someone close to you say a few words based on your questionnaire responses.

If you do not wish to answer any of the questions, you can simply write a short paragraph about your feelings for each other. One from the groom and one from the bride.... Do not show each other what you have written and then we can include your words at an appropriate time in the ceremony.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: Contact Information

- ◆ List your full names as they will appear on your wedding certificate.
- ◆ List your names by which you wish to be addressed at the ceremony, if they are different from your given names.
- ◆ List the names of all close family members who will attend.
- ◆ List the names of any family members who will be in the wedding party.
(cousin's, sister-in-law, etc)
- ◆ If someone is helping coordinate the weddings, what is his/her name? Phone Number?
- ◆ List your postal code and preferred e-mail address (for the ceremony drafts) and your cell phone numbers (for last-minute coordination). If you will be staying with friends or relatives on the day of the wedding list the addresses and numbers where you can be reached.

Timing

- ◆ If known, give the date and time of your ceremony, and the address and phone number of the location.
- ◆ If you will have a rehearsal, do you want your Marriage Commissioner to be present?
- ◆ At what time do you wish your Marriage Commissioner to arrive for the ceremony? Take into consideration the signing of papers (ie: marriage license or other documents related to the service).

Venue and Guests

- ◆ How many guests are expected to attend?
- ◆ If the ceremony is outdoors, is there a Plan B for weather?

Wedding Party

- ◆ Names of the maid/matron of honor, bride's attendants, best man, the other groomsmen, flower girl, ring bearer.
- ◆ Bride. Will you be wearing a veil? If so, at what point would you like the veil lifted, and would you like to do that yourself or have the groom do it?
- ◆ What is the expected attire? Is there a wedding color palette to follow?

License and Witnesses

- ◆ Do you know how to get your wedding license?
- ◆ You will need at least two credible witnesses. Many couples choose their best man and the maid of honor however, you can choose anyone over the age of 18, even your parents. Just make sure they have been designated ahead of time.

Section 2 - Envisioning Your Ceremony

- ◆ Whom would you wish to conduct your ceremony? Will it be a member of one or both your faiths, an interfaith minister, or a judge or civil officiate.
- ◆ If you don't yet have a site selected, where would you like your service to take place?
- ◆ How long do you wish the ceremony to last? (Ceremonies can range from fifteen minutes to well over an hour, with the average about half an hour.)
- ◆ If your ceremony is outdoors, is there a Plan B for weather?
- ◆ What tone would you like for the ceremony? Intimate, ceremonial, minimal, sacred, warm, solemn, lighthearted?
- ◆ Do you want a spiritual, religious or personal service (or combination)?
- ◆ Are there any rituals or traditions you know you want to include?
- ◆ Are there any readings, prayers, blessings a song or poem or perhaps a piece of music played that you want to include? (The special readings or music can be performed friend(s) or relative(s))
- ◆ What do you definitely want and definitely not want for your ceremony?
- ◆ What would you like to convey to everyone in attendance?
- ◆ Do you wish to include, honor, or mention any family member or friends? If so, who?
- ◆ Do you want to mention anyone who has passed?
- ◆ Will you write your own vows? As Marriage Commissioner I have a few lines that must be repeated in order to be legal... however, we can incorporate these with your vows.
- ◆ Do you want to share brief letters of appreciation to each other before the vows?
- ◆ Do you want to say anything while exchanging the rings?
- ◆ Do you want a final blessing or reading before you are pronounced married?
- ◆ Do you have a bridal party? How do you picture your procession? (If you are not sure I have an outline for you to look at and follow)
- ◆ Bride, will you be accompanied down the aisle? Should I ask who presents you?

Section – 3 Your Background and Families

- ◆ What are your religions, cultural and family backgrounds? How were you raised?
- ◆ Are you close to your families? Please elaborate.
- ◆ Are there any sensitive issues between the two of you with regard to the ceremony?
- ◆ Are there any sensitive issue involving your families with regard to the ceremony?
- ◆ What did your parents and grandparents contribute to you as a person?
- ◆ For second marriages with children: How do you love them? Elaborate.

Section 4 - Matters of the Heart: About your Relationship

- ◆ How did you meet and fall in love with your partner?
- ◆ How long have you known each other?
- ◆ When did you realize he or she was your partner for life?
- ◆ What is special or unique about your relationship with your partner?
- ◆ What qualities do you most admire in her or him?
- ◆ Would you like to share any touching, funny or revealing stories about the two of you?
- ◆ When do you or did you feel closest to your partner?
- ◆ How and why do you love him or her? Don't hold back!
- ◆ How does he or she make you feel loved?
- ◆ What has your fiancée given to you as a person? How has she or he made you better.

Section 5 - About Yourself

- ◆ How would you describe yourself?
- ◆ What do you do for a living?
- ◆ What do you hold sacred?
- ◆ What inspires you?
- ◆ What are your priorities in life?
- ◆ What are your goals for the two of you as a couple?
- ◆ Do you hope to have children?
- ◆ How do you view marriage generally and your upcoming marriage in particular?
- ◆ Do you believe in God? If you do, how do you perceive or feel God.

- ◆ Anything else you would like to add?