AN EMBRACING EXCELLENCE FIELD GUIDE

The Four Types of Wedding Couples

KEENERS · PLANNERS · JUST GET MARRIEDS · HOLY CRAPERS

How couples plan — and what it means for the officiant who marries them.

WAYNE & ROSANNE PREVETT
Executive Life Celebration Coaches
7,000+ life celebrations · 2,000+ officiants and celebrants certified · @the3kofficiant

PREFACE

A Note From the Authors

We've spent the better part of the past thirty years training and certifying wedding officiants, first through our own practice and later through Life Celebrations Academy, where we have now worked alongside more than 2,000 officiants and celebrants across Canada and the United States. Between us we have had the honour of officiating more than 7,000 ceremonies.

Every one of those couples arrived at our inboxes differently. Some emailed before they'd even set a date, spreadsheet already open. Some called eighteen months out with a venue booked and a clear plan. Some reached out a couple of months before the big day, having handled everything else and finally remembering the ceremony itself needed a person attached to it. And a rare, memorable few called in something close to genuine panic, having somehow gone this entire time without booking an officiant at all.

This guide is about those four types of couples, and what each one actually needs from the person who ends up marrying them. It's a companion to the guides we've written about officiants themselves, but the lens is flipped: instead of asking what kind of officiant you are, it asks what kind of couple is on the other end of the booking, and how to meet them well, whichever type walks through the door.

We wrote this with real affection for all four types, including the Holy Crapers — especially the Holy Crapers, if we're honest. There is no wrong way to arrive at your wedding day. There is only a difference in what kind of help you need once you get there, and our hope is that this guide helps officiants recognize the difference quickly, and helps couples recognize a little of themselves in these pages too.

Thank you for spending this time with us. It's a subject we care about deeply, and we're glad to share it with you. Where a personal story appears in these pages, it is Wayne's unless we say otherwise.

— Wayne & Rosanne

Founders, Life Celebrations Academy

CONTENTS

What's Inside

Preface — A Note From the Authors

Introduction — It's Not About Being Right, It's About Timing

Chapter One — The Keeners — 24 to 18 Months Out

Chapter Two — The Planners — 18 to 12 Months Out

Chapter Three — The Just Get Marrieds — 6 to 2 Months Out

Chapter Four — The Holy Crapers — We Forgot the Officiant

Conclusion — Every Timeline Deserves a Good Ceremony

Now What? — There Is a Next Step

INTRODUCTION

It’s Not About Being Right, It’s About Timing

Every couple plans a wedding on their own timeline, and every timeline quietly reveals what that couple is going to need from their officiant. A couple who books two years out needs something very different from a couple who calls in a mild panic three weeks before the ceremony — not better or worse, just different, and worth recognizing early.

Over years of booking, consulting with, and marrying thousands of couples, four recurring timelines emerge, almost like clockwork. They are not judgments on the couples themselves — a Keener bride can easily be married to a Just Get Married groom, and the wedding turns out beautifully regardless. But naming these timelines matters, because it tells an officiant exactly how much runway they have, and exactly what kind of reassurance or urgency the couple in front of them actually needs.

This short guide walks through each of the four: how to recognize them, what drives their timeline, and what it means for the officiant who ends up marrying them. It is written for officiants who want to meet each couple where they actually are, and for couples curious to see a little of themselves in these pages.

> There is no correct number of months. There is only the number of months this particular couple actually needed.

Four timelines. One question running underneath all of them: how much runway does this couple actually have, and what do they need from me because of it?

CHAPTER ONE

The Keeners

24 to 18 months out. Booked before the ring has finished being sized.

The Keeners get engaged, and within days — sometimes hours — they have a spreadsheet. Venue shortlist, budget tab, a folder of Pinterest boards sorted by theme. By the time they call an officiant, they've often already researched three, read every review, and have a specific question ready about ceremony structure. This is the couple that books furthest in advance, and knows exactly why.

How to Spot the Keeners

- They reach out 24 to 18 months before the wedding, often before the venue deposit has even cleared.
- They arrive with specific questions, not just "what do you charge?"
- They've usually researched multiple officiants and can tell you what they liked about each.
- They want to lock in a date and a person quickly, then move on to the next planning task.
- They may follow up periodically over the following year just to stay in sync.

What Drives This Timeline

Keeners are usually driven by a mix of genuine excitement and a low tolerance for uncertainty. Booking early removes one more unknown from a long list, and for many Keeners, the planning process itself is part of how they enjoy the engagement. This isn't anxiety dressed up as organization — for most Keeners, building the plan is the fun part.

What It Means for Their Officiant

Keeners need patience more than urgency. They may want to revisit decisions, ask follow-up questions eighteen months before they matter, or check in periodically just for reassurance. The temptation is to treat this as overkill; the better response is to match their pace — answer thoroughly, stay responsive over the long runway, and resist the urge to say "let's revisit that closer to the date" more than once or twice.

> A Keener isn't asking you to hurry up. They're asking you to still be paying attention eighteen months from now.

An Example

A couple once booked me twenty-three months out, then emailed every few months with small updates — a reading they'd found, a change to the guest count, a question about whether I'd officiated at their venue before. None of it was urgent. All of it mattered to them. By the time the

wedding arrived, we'd effectively built the ceremony together over two years, and it showed — it was one of the most personalized ceremonies I've delivered, simply because we'd had the time to get there.

CHAPTER TWO

The Planners

18 to 12 months out. Organized, on schedule, and right on time.

The Planners are the steady middle of the timeline — not the first to book, not cutting it close, just reliably on schedule. They've usually secured a venue and a date before reaching out, they know roughly what they want, and they treat booking an officiant as one solid item to check off a well-organized list, rather than a source of anxiety or a fun hobby in itself.

How to Spot the Planners

- They reach out 18 to 12 months before the wedding, venue and date already confirmed.
- They come with a general sense of what they want, open to guidance on the details.
- They respond promptly to emails and keep to whatever timeline you propose.
- They ask practical questions — pricing, availability, what a consultation involves.
- They rarely need convincing; they're ready to book once they like what they hear.

What Drives This Timeline

Planners tend to be methodical rather than anxious. They've likely built a wedding-planning checklist and are working through it in a sensible order — venue, then catering, then officiant, then the smaller details. Booking at the twelve-to-eighteen-month mark isn't urgency or excess; it's simply where "find an officiant" falls on a reasonable timeline.

What It Means for Their Officiant

Planners are, in many ways, the easiest couple to work with — they're organized enough to make your job simpler, but not so far out that the relationship needs two years of nurturing. The main thing they need is a clear, professional process: a straightforward consultation, a reasonable timeline for delivering a draft ceremony, and confirmation that things are on track as the date approaches.

> A Planner doesn't need to be sold. They need a clear, trustworthy process, delivered on schedule.

An Example

A couple reached out fourteen months before their wedding with a tidy, numbered list of questions — availability, pricing, process, timeline for the first draft. I answered each one plainly, sent a simple next-steps email, and they booked within the week. The whole relationship stayed exactly that clean right through to the ceremony: I told them what I needed and when, they delivered it reliably, and neither of us ever had to chase the other.

CHAPTER THREE

The Just Get Marrieds

6 to 2 months out. Everything else is handled. The ceremony is next.

The Just Get Marrieds have often already done the hard part — venue, catering, dress, guest list — and are circling back to the officiant later than a Planner would, not out of carelessness, but because the ceremony itself simply wasn't the first thing on their minds. They tend to be refreshingly low-drama: they know what they want (to be married), and the specifics of the ceremony are secondary to that fact.

How to Spot the Just Get Marrieds

- They reach out 6 to 2 months before the wedding, with most other logistics already locked in.
- They're refreshingly easygoing about ceremony specifics — "whatever you think is good."
- They may be eloping, having a small ceremony, or simply prioritizing other elements of the day.
- They want an efficient process — a short consultation, a solid template, minimal back-and-forth.
- They're rarely anxious about the booking itself, just ready to get it settled.

What Drives This Timeline

This timeline usually reflects priorities, not disorganization. Many Just Get Marrieds couples have deliberately kept their wedding simple, or have been together long enough that the ceremony feels like a formality around a commitment they've already made in every way that matters to them. Others are simply busy people who handled the biggest logistical pieces first and are working through the rest efficiently.

What It Means for Their Officiant

These couples need efficiency and reassurance more than an elaborate process. A short, focused consultation, a solid ceremony template they can approve quickly, and clear communication about what happens next will serve them better than a drawn-out, deeply customized process they never asked for. The risk is mistaking their ease for indifference — they still deserve a ceremony that reflects them, just delivered efficiently.

> Simple isn't the same as careless. Give them an efficient process and a ceremony that still feels like theirs.

An Example

A couple called four months out, laughing about how they'd booked everything else and "completely forgot the actual wedding part." They wanted something short, warm, and low-key — no elaborate readings, just their story told simply. We did one thirty-minute call, I sent a draft within a week, they approved it almost as-is, and the ceremony came off exactly as easy and genuine as they'd hoped. Not every couple needs months of back-and-forth to get something real.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Holy Crapers

We forgot the officiant. Days or weeks out, and suddenly it's urgent.

The Holy Crapers are the couple every officiant remembers by name. Somewhere in the whirlwind of venue, caterer, photographer, and family logistics, the actual person who marries them fell entirely off the list — until someone, often a parent or a wedding planner, asks the question that triggers real panic: "wait, who's marrying you?"

How to Spot the Holy Crapers

- They reach out days to a few weeks before the wedding, sometimes less.
- The tone of the first message is some version of genuine, slightly embarrassed panic.
- They need availability confirmed immediately, before anything else gets discussed.
- They're usually apologetic about the timeline and worried you'll say no.
- Once booked, they're often enormously relieved and easy to work with from there.

What Drives This Timeline

This almost never happens because a couple doesn't care. It happens because wedding planning has dozens of visible, deadline-driven tasks — and "book an officiant" can feel deceptively simple, easy to assume is already handled, or easy to mentally file under "the venue probably provides one." By the time the gap becomes obvious, there's genuine time pressure attached to it.

What It Means for Their Officiant

Holy Crapers need speed and calm, in that order. The first job is simply confirming availability and taking the panic off the table — everything else can follow. Once that's settled, keep the process tight and efficient: a focused, single consultation call, a usable ceremony draft quickly, and a very clear list of what's still needed and by when. Reassurance matters here as much as ceremony content; these couples need to feel like the crisis is actually over.

> They don't need a lecture about planning ahead. They need you to say yes, and mean it.

An Example

I once got a call nine days before a wedding from a groom whose original officiant had simply never confirmed and had gone silent. His first words were, essentially, "please tell me you're free." I said yes immediately, and I could hear him exhale. We did the entire consultation that same evening, I sent a draft two days later, and the ceremony went off without a hitch. Nine days felt like an emergency to him. To me, it was simply a shorter version of the same process — just

compressed, and handled calmly instead of frantically.

CONCLUSION

Every Timeline Deserves a Good Ceremony

None of these four timelines is the right one. A Keener's two years of planning doesn't guarantee a more meaningful ceremony than a Holy Craper's nine frantic days — it just means a different process got them there. What actually determines whether a ceremony lands is the same regardless of timeline: real attention, a real consultation, and an officiant who treats the couple in front of them as the only one that matters.

For the officiant reading this: your job isn't to wish every couple were a Planner. It's to recognize which of the four is on the other end of the call, and adjust your pace, your process, and your patience accordingly — without ever cutting corners on the ceremony itself.

For the couple reading this: wherever you land on this spectrum, however early or late you're reading this book, a good officiant will meet you there without judgment. If yours doesn't, that tells you something worth knowing before the day arrives.

> Keener or Holy Craper, every couple standing in front of an officiant deserves the same thing: full attention, and a ceremony built for them.

> Chapter Seventeen of Book Two — The Accomplished Wedding Officiant takes these four types further.

NOW WHAT?

There is a next step.

Over thirty years we have trained and certified more than 2,000 officiants and celebrants. We are more than a ‘get ordained online’ organization — we care deeply about the people we invest in. Wherever you are in your journey, there is a next step, and we would like to walk it with you.

Keep reading, free. The whole Embracing Excellence library, all 365 Pro Tips and every field guide — open to everyone, no membership needed.

Go deeper — the books. This guide named the thing. The books teach it. **Book One — I’m Ordained, Now What?** for your first ninety days. **Book Two — The Accomplished Wedding Officiant** for the craft and the business. **Book Three — Making the Most of the Moment** for the three minutes a couple never forgets.

Ask us something today. Voice Message Coaching is open to everyone, from $27 CAD. Send us a voice message and we reply — no appointment, nothing to book.

Stop doing this alone. The Crossroads is our members’ community — the Officiants Café twice a month with us, the Our Ceremony builder, ready-to-use website templates, ceremony scripts and business tools.

Get certified. Wedding Officiant, Funeral Celebrant and New Life Celebrant certification, live with Wayne and Rosanne. Open to anyone, anywhere. No experience required.

Start anywhere you like — **lifecelebrationsacademy.com**

FOLLOW THE 3K OFFICIANT @the3kofficiant · Facebook · Instagram · TikTok

© 2026 R. Wayne Prevett and Rosanne Prevett. All rights reserved.

This material, including all written content, frameworks, ceremonies, and training resources, is the intellectual property of R. Wayne Prevett and Rosanne Prevett. No part may be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, adapted, or used in any form without prior written permission, except for brief quotations with proper attribution. Unauthorized use is strictly prohibited.