AN EMBRACING EXCELLENCE FIELD GUIDE

# Side Gig or Calling?

MOTIVE · ORIENTATION · EVERYTHING AFTER

A field guide to why you officiate — and why it changes everything.

WAYNE & ROSANNE PREVETT

Executive Life Celebration Coaches · Founders, Life Celebrations Academy

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FROM THE AUTHOR

# A Personal Note

I've spent the better part of the past thirty years training and certifying wedding officiants, first through my own practice and later through Life Celebrations Academy, where Rosanne and I have now worked alongside over 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, establishing life-celebration businesses and ministries, and leading a team that officiated thousands more.

I've written before about the character an officiant brings to the room, and about the stage of mastery they've reached. This guide is about something underneath both of those: why they showed up in the first place. I have trained officiants who saw this as a weekend side hustle, and officiants who saw it as the clearest calling of their life. Both can legally marry a couple. Only one of them tends to leave a couple genuinely moved.

I don't say this to look down on anyone earning a little extra money on weekends — there's nothing wrong with that, on its own. What I've learned over three decades is that the orientation an officiant brings — side gig or calling — quietly shapes every decision downstream of it: how much they prepare, how deeply they consult, how they price their time, and whether they're still doing this, and doing it well, ten years from now.

I wrote this because couples deserve to know which one is standing in front of them, and because officiants deserve an honest mirror. My hope is that you'll close it with real clarity about which one you actually are — and which one you want to be.

— Wayne & Rosanne & Rosanne Prevett, Life Celebrations Academy

INTRODUCTION

# Why It Doesn't Just Come Down to Skill

Two officiants can have the same certification, the same number of ceremonies behind them, even similar natural ability in front of a room — and still deliver wildly different experiences to the couples who hire them. After thirty years of training officiants, I've come to believe the difference usually isn't skill. It's why they showed up in the first place.

Some officiants approach this as a side gig: a way to make some weekend money, use a fun certificate, or help out friends and family. There's nothing shameful in that on its own. Other officiants approach it as a calling: something they feel genuinely compelled to do well, regardless of the fee, because they believe the moment in front of that couple actually matters. Same job title.

Completely different orientation — and that orientation quietly decides almost everything else.

“A side gig asks what officiating can do for you. A calling asks what you can do for the couple in front of you.”

Two orientations. One question running underneath both of them: if the fee disappeared tomorrow, would you still show up and give this ceremony everything you’ve got?

CHAPTER ONE

# The Side Gig

Doing it for the weekend. A fun certificate, a little extra cash, a favour for a friend.

The Side Gig officiant treats this the way they’d treat any occasional freelance work — something they do a few times a year, alongside a day job that pays the real bills. They got ordained because it seemed interesting, or because a friend asked, or because a bridal-show booth looked like easy money on weekends. None of that is dishonest. It’s just not the same starting place as someone who feels compelled to do this.

### How to Spot the Side Gig Officiant

(cid:127)Talks about officiating as something they “also do,” alongside their main job.

(cid:127)Prices ceremonies to cover their time, with little regard for the couple’s budget or story.

(cid:127)Uses a single script or template across most ceremonies, with light customization.

(cid:127)Is available inconsistently — only some weekends, only certain months.

(cid:127)Sees the booking, not the couple, as the primary transaction.

> WHAT’S AT STAKE
>
> The risk isn’t that Side Gig officiants are incapable of a good ceremony — many are perfectly competent. The risk is a ceiling: without a deeper reason to keep improving, the ceremony rarely becomes more than ‘fine.’ And couples can feel the difference between someone delivering a script and someone delivering their story, even when they can’t quite name what’s missing.

“A side gig can still be done well. It rarely gets done unforgettably.”

### An Example

A young man once asked me to help him get ordained so he could officiate his buddy’s wedding — he had zero interest in doing another one afterward. He asked me, half-joking, “What’s the least

amount of prep I can get away with?" I respected the honesty, and I gave him an honest answer: enough that the couple in front of you never wonders whether you took this seriously. He did the reading. The ceremony was warm and well-delivered, and he never officiated again — which is fine. A side gig, done with real care for the one ceremony it covers, is still a gift. The trouble starts when the care doesn't come with it.

CHAPTER TWO

# The Calling

Doing it for the couple. A conviction that this moment deserves someone's full attention.

The Called officiant didn't necessarily plan for this to become central to their life — but somewhere along the way, standing at the front of a room while two people made the biggest promise of their lives stopped feeling like a task and started feeling like a responsibility they couldn't treat casually. They would keep doing this even if the fee disappeared tomorrow, because the reason was never really the fee.

### How to Spot the Called Officiant

(cid:127)Talks about officiating as a purpose, not a job title — something core to who they are.

(cid:127)Invests unpaid hours in consultation, research, and rehearsal beyond what any fee would

- justify.

(cid:127)Turns down bookings that don't feel like the right fit, rather than taking every one available.

(cid:127)Keeps studying the craft — other officiants, other traditions, other ways to do this better.

(cid:127)Remembers couples by name, story, and detail years after their wedding.

> THE PAYOFF
>
> None of this requires a religious framework or a dramatic origin story. It requires deciding that the couple in front of you deserves your full effort regardless of what you're being paid, and then actually behaving that way, booking after booking, for years. The officiants who build lasting, referral-driven careers are, almost without exception, the ones who made that decision early and never stopped acting on it.

"A calling doesn't ask to be paid fairly for the ceremony. It asks to be worthy of the moment, whatever it's paid."

### An Example

I once drove four hours through a snowstorm to reach a ceremony I could have easily, defensibly cancelled — the roads were bad enough that no one would have blamed me. Somewhere around hour three, I remember thinking the fee didn't come close to covering what the day actually cost me. I made it with twenty minutes to spare, soaked and exhausted, and married them anyway. That drive is the clearest definition of calling I can give you: it's what you do when the reasonable, defensible option is to not show up, and you show up anyway.

AT A GLANCE

# Side Gig vs. Calling

Neither orientation is announced out loud — couples have to read it in behaviour. Here's what tends to give each one away.

### Motivation

Side Gig: extra income, novelty, or a favour for someone. Calling: a genuine sense that the moment deserves someone's full effort.

### Preparation

Side Gig: a template, lightly personalized. Calling: real research, rehearsal, and revision for this couple specifically.

### Consultation

Side Gig: a short intake form or a single call. Calling: multiple real conversations, aimed at understanding the couple's story.

### Growth Over Time

Side Gig: flat — the same approach, booking after booking. Calling: compounding — each ceremony sharpens the next.

"You can't always tell from a resume. You can almost always tell from a consultation."

CONCLUSION

# Why You Showed Up

There's no shame in a side gig, honestly done. Plenty of couples have had lovely ceremonies from officiants who never intended to make a career of it. But if something in the Calling chapter landed harder than you expected, that's worth paying attention to. It usually means the reason you started

doing this has already outgrown the reason you're still charging for it.

You don't need a dramatic conversion story to move from one orientation to the other. You need to start treating your next ceremony — just the next one — as though the fee were irrelevant, and see what changes in your preparation. Do that enough times, and the orientation will follow the behaviour, not the other way around.

"A side gig can marry a couple. Only a calling can honour them."

NOW WHAT?

# There Is a Next Step

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> If the answer turned out to be calling, Book One — I'm Ordained, Now What? is where you begin.

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