AN EMBRACING EXCELLENCE FIELD GUIDE

# Anatomy of a Ceremony

BUILDING · LEADING · DELIVERING

What a ceremony is made of, and how the pieces hold together.

WAYNE & ROSANNE PREVETT
Executive Life Celebration Coaches
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PREFACE

# A Note From the Authors

By the time the ceremony begins, most of the hard work is already done. You've met the couple, earned their trust, and gathered their story. What's left is the part everyone actually sees — and the part where an officiant is either made or quietly exposed.

I've watched beautifully prepared officiants come undone in the final twenty minutes because they treated delivery as an afterthought. And I've watched others turn a simple script into the emotional centre of the entire day. The difference was never raw talent. It was preparation, presence, and a handful of habits practised on purpose.

This guide is those habits — how to build a ceremony that could only belong to this couple, and then lead and deliver it so the whole room feels it.

— Wayne & Rosanne

Founders, Life Celebrations Academy

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INTRODUCTION

# The Twenty Minutes That Matter Most

A wedding has one irreversible moment, and it isn't the reception. Everything you built across the consultations now has to land in real time — once, with no second take. The ceremony is the reason the party is happening at all, and the couple will replay it for years.

This guide covers the three phases of getting it right: building the ceremony from the couple's story, preparing so thoroughly that presence becomes possible, and delivering it with the calm authority the moment deserves.

> The ceremony is not the warm-up to the party. It is the

> reason the party is happening at all.

Every ceremony must also include the legal essentials required where you serve — typically a declaration of intent, the vows, the pronouncement, and the signing of documents. Know yours exactly, and build them in so they feel like part of the story rather than an interruption to it.

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CHAPTER ONE

# Building the Ceremony

From their story to a script that could only be theirs.

Start from the couple, not a template. Everything you gathered in the second consultation — how they met, what they fear, what this day means — is the raw material. A ceremony that could belong to any couple belongs to none of them.

## The arc

Most strong ceremonies move through the same shape. Learn it well enough that you can bend it to each couple:

(cid:127)Welcome — gather the room and name why everyone is here.

(cid:127)Their story — who these two are, in a way only you could tell it.

(cid:127)The meaning of marriage — the weight beneath the celebration.

(cid:127)The vows and the exchange of rings — the promises, in their words where possible.

(cid:127)The pronouncement, the kiss, and the send-off — the release into joy.

Weave the legal essentials into that arc so they carry meaning instead of stalling it.

## Write for the ear

A ceremony is heard, not read. Write in short sentences, read every line aloud as you go, and cut anything your mouth stumbles over. If a phrase doesn’t sound like something a caring human would say out loud, it doesn’t belong.

> A ceremony that could belong to any couple belongs to

> none of them.

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CHAPTER TWO

# Before the Day

Preparation & rehearsal — the quiet work that makes presence possible.

## Know three things cold

(cid:127)The content — your script, well enough that you're guiding it, not reading it.

(cid:127)The couple — names, pronunciations, family sensitivities, the details that must not slip.

(cid:127)The context — the venue, the timeline, the order of events, who enters when.

## Memorize the bookends

You can glance at your script in the middle. You cannot be looking down for the two moments that frame everything — the opening, where you set the tone, and the closing, where you land it. Memorize both, eyes up.

## Rehearse out loud, on your feet

Read-throughs in your head lie to you. Rehearse standing, aloud, at full voice, as seriously as any performer prepares for a show. That is where you find the awkward transition, the name you keep tripping on, and the places to breathe.

> Preparation is simply what lets presence happen.

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CHAPTER THREE

# The Hour Before

Arrival, setup, and owning the room.

Arrive early — at least thirty minutes — settled, not scrambling. The calm you bring in the hour before is the calm the couple will feel at the altar.

## Connect and confirm

(cid:127)Find the coordinator and the key players; introduce yourself and confirm the timeline.

(cid:127)Confirm the essentials: rings are present, readers are ready, documents are in hand.

(cid:127)Make sure the couple knows exactly where to stand and when to move.

## Own the setup

You are the frame, not the furniture. Clear the sightlines between the couple and everyone who came to see them — no podium, no binder, no music stand planted between you and the guests. Position the couple so the room, and the cameras, see their faces rather than your back.

> A binder on a podium is a wall between the couple and

> everyone who came to see them.

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CHAPTER FOUR

# Delivering the Ceremony

Presence, pacing, and quiet power.

Be authentic and be confident; the room borrows its ease from you. If you are steady, the couple is steady, and the guests settle in to feel something.

## Slow down

Nerves speed everyone up. Your deliberate pace sets the tempo of the whole room. Let a laugh land. Let a tear breathe. Silence, held on purpose, is one of your most powerful tools.

## Hold the big beats

(cid:127)The opening — memorized, eyes up, tone set in the first ten seconds.

(cid:127)The vows — step back and let the couple have each other; you are not the moment here.

(cid:127)The pronouncement and the kiss — step aside cleanly. Never put yourself in the photo.

And when something small goes sideways — a dropped ring, a gust of wind — recover with a smile. The couple takes its cue from your composure, never your perfection.

> The couple should feel you are entirely theirs — not

> performing at them.

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CHAPTER FIVE

# After the Last Word

The close — and the graceful exit.

Your final skill is disappearing cleanly. Guide the recessional, then step out of the couple's moment and let it belong entirely to them.

(cid:127)Handle any documents or next steps quietly, at the right time — never turn the glow into

- paperwork in front of guests.

(cid:127)Leave the couple lighter, and the room more connected, than you found them.

(cid:127)Then go — graciously and promptly, memorable only for the right reasons.

> Your final skill is disappearing cleanly, and leaving the

> moment to them.

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> A ceremony is built of parts. One of them is unlike the others — Book Three — Making the Most of the Moment is about that one.

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.

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