

Tailored Ceremonies

Custom-designed, non-denominational weddings

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Holly and Daniel
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This longer, custom ceremony took place in an elegant ballroom with 200 invited guests to witness the ceremony. The bride and groom chose to write statements of appreciation to add a more personal touch to the ceremony rather than using statements of intent. While this is a wine ceremony, it could easily be a unity candle or sand ceremony. The hand ceremony and rose ceremony are also used here.

The mothers of the bride and groom each pour wine into a separate glass carafe: the bride's mother pours white wine, while the groom's mother pours red. The two mothers greet each other after the bride and groom are at the "altar." After they pour, they embrace and congratulate each other.

OFFICIANT:

Today, we come together to celebrate the love Holly and Daniel have found in each other. With us here as witnesses today, they have chosen to formalize their commitment to each other in marriage. Holly and Daniel wish to extend their gratitude that so many took time to share this day with them.

Who blesses this union here today?

ASSEMBLED GUESTS:

We do!

OFFICIANT:

Holly and Daniel, while today marks the official beginning of your life together as husband and wife, it is also part of the journey you began when you decided to marry. Our words here today publicly recognize the path you have chosen together. Remember that in marriage, the journey is what counts—not the destination. There will be many joyful times in your future, just as there have been in your past. When things are difficult, remember the moments of joy to keep you focused on what is important. English writer Harold Nicolson wrote, "The great secret of a successful marriage is to treat all disasters as incidents and none of the incidents as disasters." Every obstacle you overcome together will make your bond stronger to handle those "incidents" that may arise in the future, and the many obstacles you have already encountered make your current relationship a solid one.

Side by side, hand in hand, you will find that in turning to each other, you deepen your relationship in a way all the happy times together cannot. Make time to talk to each other about the events in your lives, large or small. Listen to each other—those shared intimacies about the mundane moments in your lives will bring you closer together. Your

friendship will make your marriage happier than anything—that you remember to look to each other for strength rather than for simple diversion. It is easy to find someone to laugh with you in good times; it is much harder to find someone to help you find the good times again and to laugh with in between. As Andre Maurois said, “A happy marriage is a long conversation which always seems too short.”

DANIEL:

Holly, since you came into my life, I feel glad each day to wake up. I never thought someone could change the way I feel about so many things: the beach, Japanese food, the Rangers. Thank you for making me a better person than I ever thought I could be. I am so happy to marry you today.

HOLLY:

Daniel, I love you. I am thankful every day that you came into the restaurant that day. Being with you makes me feel stronger and more confident in what I can do. With you beside me, I know we can do great things together. I have waited for this day my whole life. Thank you for marrying me.

OFFICIANT:

[Hand Ceremony]

Holly, please take Daniel’s hands into yours, palms up.

Holly, these are the hands of the man you marry today, your best friend.

These hands will hold yours so you know you are not alone.

These hands will help you build your future, working alongside you.

These hands will comfort you, embrace you, and offer you strength when you need it.

When you grow old, these hands will still reach for yours, wordlessly showing you the love you are promising today.

Daniel, please take Holly’s hands into your, palms up.

Daniel, these are the hands of the woman you marry today, your best friend.

These hands will hold yours so you know you are not alone.

These hands will help you build your future, working alongside you.

These hands will comfort you, embrace you, and offer you strength when you need it.

When you grow old, these hands will still reach for yours, wordlessly showing you the love you are promising today.

Joel Flynn will now reflect on the meaning of marriage from Rainer Maria Rilke's *Letters*.

READER #1:

[from "Letters" by Rainer Maria Rilke:]

"Marriage is in many ways a simplification of life. It combines the strengths and wills of two people so that, together, they seem to reach farther into the future than they did before. Above all, marriage is a new task and a new seriousness, - a new demand on the strength and generosity of each partner, and a great new danger for both.

"The point of marriage is not to create a quick commonality by tearing down all boundaries; on the contrary, a good marriage is one in which each partner appoints the other to be the guardian of their solitude, and thus they show each other the greatest possible trust. A merging of two people is an impossibility, and where it seems to exist, it is a hemming-in, a mutual consent that robs one party or both parties of their fullest freedom and development. But once the realization is accepted that even between the closest people infinite distances exist, a marvelous living side by side can grow up for them.

". . . [The question is] whether you are willing to stand guard over someone else's solitude, and whether you are able to set this same person at the gate of your own depths, which [s]he learns of only through what steps forth, in holiday clothing, out of the great darkness."

OFFICIANT:

Marriage is not to be entered into lightly, but thoughtfully and reverently.

Daniel, will you take Holly to be your wife from this day forward, to love and respect her, to comfort and to hold her, to bring joy to her life, and to be her companion and best friend on this journey you now take together?

DANIEL:

I will.

OFFICIANT:

Holly, will you take Daniel to be your husband from this day forward, to love and respect him, to comfort and to hold him, to bring joy to his life, and to be his companion and best friend on this journey that you now take together?

HOLLY:

I will.

OFFICIANT:

Daniel and Holly will now engage in the wine ceremony. Daniel's mother, Tara, and Holly's mother, Candace, each poured wine from the bottles into separate carafes already, symbolizing their families.

[Daniel and Holly each pour some of the wine from their "family" carafes into a single wine goblet. Daniel offers it to Holly first, who sips and then hands the glass back to Daniel. Daniel also sips from the glass as the two stand close together.]

Daniel and Holly, the two wines represent the blend of both bitter and sweet which make up all of our lives, and which the two of you now share together. The wines, which represent each of your families, have blended together, representing the joining of your friends, families, and selves. By sharing the wine from the same goblet, you also symbolically show the union of the two of you, sharing your lives, sorrows, and celebrations.

The rings:

DANIEL:

I, Daniel, give you this ring as a gift from heart. Wear it always, and think of my love for you.

HOLLY:

I, Holly, give you this ring as a gift from heart. Wear it always, and think of my love for you.

OFFICIANT:

Anna McLaughlin will now bless this union with the Native American marriage blessing.

READER #2:

May the sun bring you new energies by day;
May the moon softly restore you by night.
May the rain wash away any worries you may have
And the breeze blow new strength into your being.
And the, all the days of your life,
May you walk gently through the world
And know its beauty.

Now you will feel not the rain, for each will shelter the other.
Now you will feel not cold, for each will warm the other.
Now you will feel not solitude, for each will company other.
Now you are two persons, but both will lead one life.
Go now to your dwelling to enter into the days of your life,
And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

OFFICIANT:

Holly and Daniel, you have pledged yourselves to each other here today before us. May your love grow deeply, nurturing and uplifting your spirits.

Holly and Daniel would now like to recognize the love of their families.

[Rose Ceremony: Holly and Daniel hand a rose to her mother and grandmother, with Holly hugging them first, then Daniel. The couple then present roses to Daniel's mother and grandmothers, with Daniel embracing them, then Holly.]

OFFICIANT:

I call upon those assembled here to witness that Daniel and Holly have declared their love for one another and exchanged vow. Holly and Daniel, I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride!

Presenting for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Fisher!