

## **A Traditional Secular Ceremony Script**

**Knot Note: Some names and information have been redacted for the couple's privacy.**

### **Introduction**

#### **Celebrant:**

Family and Friends of Groom and Bride – welcome to their wedding ceremony this evening at *Astra* in the heart of the upper east side of New York.

From this location you can see the hustle and bustle of the city at your feet. You can see the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge...fascinating us with its own lights and movement. In this place, we take ourselves out of the usual routines of daily living to witness a unique moment in the lives of Bride and Groom. Today they join their lives in the union of marriage.

To all their guests, they are happy to share this moment with you. They have known most of you for several years. You watched them grow up, you went to school with them, or you worked with them. Because you are the ones who have supported them and known them so well, it is only fitting that you are the ones to share this once-in-a-lifetime moment with them.

Groom and Bride are pleased to have their parents in the front row...close to them for the ceremony. Bride thanks her mother for providing her with every opportunity possible and being the best mother anyone could ask for.

Groom appreciates all the love and support his parents gave him over the years.

A wedding day is often a day when couples miss family members no longer with them. For Bride and Groom, there are family members whose memories they hold dear.

Groom's maternal grandmother passed away a few years ago. Groom misses her very much and finds that she is always in his heart and mind.

Bride also had grandparents who were important people in her life. She remembers Grammy and Papa especially today for the wonderful example they provided of a successful marriage, one of love and respect.

May memories of your well-loved grandparents brighten this day and warm your hearts.

Bride would also like to take a moment to remember her father. She wishes that he could be here today and that he could have met Groom, but she knows that he is watching and happy for them both.

And so it is that Groom and Bride present themselves to be married today...surrounded by the people they love the most.

### **Love Story**

**Celebrant:**

As Groom and Bride prepared for the ceremony part of this wedding celebration, they reflected on what it is that they love about each other. It was easy for them!

Groom, Bride loves that you blend in so comfortably with her family. She is pleased that you are terrific with children and that you love your dog, Lily. She sees in you a funny, kind, and sweet man. She loves that you think she is funny and that you always find a way to compliment her.

She loves that you always want to be close. You remember details of the stories she tells. You want to be part of her family and circle of friends. You help her around the house. Most importantly, you are so close that even when she is at her worst, you have never made her feel like you want anything but to be closer to her.

Bride, Groom loves that you always think about your relationship and put it first in your decisions and actions. He loves your brain, your smile, and your beauty. He appreciates that you are “low maintenance.” He likes that you can be really silly. He loves your emails and texts. He loves your cooking. He loves your kisses. He just really loves you!

You both look to a shared future that includes raising a happy healthy family. That future also includes a richly lived life together...going out to New York restaurants, hanging out with family, relaxing at home in front of the TV, singing and dancing...Bride will do the singing, and Groom will do the dancing.

The years will come and go...you won't take each other for granted, you will laugh a lot, you will be the best parents you can be, you will grow older and wiser together. It's a good story, and the ending is not in sight!

**Reading****Celebrant:**

The reading Bride and Groom selected for their wedding ceremony is titled “On Marriage,” by Kahlil Gibran. The words talk about the intense melding of two people in marriage...and at the same time, about two people who maintain an intense separateness...a separateness that keeps their individuality intact and flourishing. It's a lovely conundrum...and perhaps a formula for a successful marriage.

The reader is Candice Mancini, Bride's cousin.

**Reader:**

You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore.  
You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.  
Ay, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.  
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,  
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.

Love one another, but make not a bond of love:  
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.  
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.  
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf  
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,  
Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same  
music.

Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.  
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.  
And stand together yet not too near together:  
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,  
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.

“On Marriage,” *Kahlil Gibran*

## MARRIAGE VOWS

### **Celebrant:**

We come now to the words Bride and Groom want to hear the most today...the words that take them across the threshold from being engaged to being married.

A marriage, as most of us understand it, is a voluntary and full commitment. It is made in the deepest sense to the exclusion of all others, and it is entered into with the desire and hope that it will last for life.

Before you declare your vows to one another, I want to hear you confirm that it is indeed your intention to be married today.

Bride, do you come here freely and without reservation to give yourself to Groom in marriage? If so, answer "I do."

### **Bride:**

I do.

### **Celebrant:**

Groom, do you come here freely and without reservation to give yourself to Bride in marriage? If so, answer "I do."

### **Groom:**

I do.

### **Celebrant:**

Bride, please give your bouquet to Wesley.

Groom and Bride, having heard that it is your intention to be married to each other, I now ask you to declare your marriage vows.

Please face each other and hold hands.

**Celebrant:**

Bride, please repeat after me...

I, Bride  
take you, Groom  
to be my husband.  
I will share my life with yours,  
Build our dreams together,  
Support you through times of trouble,  
and rejoice with you in times of happiness.  
I promise to give you  
respect, love and loyalty  
through all the trials and triumphs  
of our lives together.  
This commitment is made in love,  
kept in faith,  
lived in hope,  
and made new every day of our lives.

**Celebrant:**

Groom, please repeat after me...

I, Groom,  
take you, Groom,  
to be my wife.  
I will share my life with yours,  
Build our dreams together,  
Support you through times of trouble,  
and rejoice with you in times of happiness.  
I promise to give you  
respect, love and loyalty  
through all the trials and triumphs  
of our lives together.  
This commitment is made in love,  
kept in faith,  
lived in hope,  
and made new every day of our lives.

**Exchange of Wedding Rings**

**Celebrant:**

Your wedding ring are the outward and visible sign of the inward and invisible bond which already unites you two hearts in love.

The ring that Bride will receive today comes from her mother's. Her mother wears her grandmother's ring which is identical. As this ring represents a family heritage, may it be a joy for Bride to wear for the rest of her life.

I ask Best Man to give Bride's ring to Groom.

Groom, place the ring on Bride's finger and repeat after me....

I give you this ring.  
Wear it with love and joy.  
As this ring has no end,  
My love is also forever.

Best Man, now please give Groom's ring to Bride.

Bride, place the ring on Groom's finger and repeat after me....

With this ring,  
I marry you.  
Wear this ring forever  
As a sign of my love.

May the wedding rings you exchanged today remind you always that you are surrounded by enduring love.

### **Unity Candle Ceremony**

#### **Celebrant:**

Groom and Bride, you have just committed yourselves – one to the other – by the pledge of your marriage vows and the exchange of wedding rings. Your life is now one. To celebrate your new union, we light the candles on the table before us...the unity candles.

Bride and Groom, as you light the two side candles, we are reminded of your individuality...the families of your birth, your many gifts and talents, your strengths and weaknesses...all that you individually bring to your marriage.

*[Celebrant dips the individual side candles into the flame of the votive candle and they place the lighted side candles back in their holders.]*

The individual lights now shining before us tell us that each of you is a bright light on this earth...living with honor, taking your responsibilities seriously, and offering care and love to those who are important in your life. And the light also symbolizes the life given to you by your parents.

Now I ask Bride and Groom to take the individual candles and light the center unity candle together.

*[Groom and Bride light the center candle with the individual side candles.]*

As the flame from the center candle rises upward, may the light of your combined lives shine to the heavens in a beam that is now stronger and brighter because it unites the two flames of your hearts. May the flame of your love shed its light on your married life in all the years to come.

### **Signing The Marriage Documents**

**Celebrant:**

While this wedding is a celebration of love and commitment, it is also a legal ceremony. I ask Maid of Honor and Best Man to join me and the bride and groom at the table.

**Celebrant:**

The signing of a marriage certificate is not just a legal requirement. It is in fact an ancient custom that represents the concept that not only must marriage be entered into consensually by both parties, but that it is also a social contract between a couple and their community...for the good of all.

Signing the marriage documents is also a self-defining moment for Groom and Bride...perhaps one of the most impactful and consequential moments of their lives.

So I ask them to sign the documents before them.

**Celebrant:**

I ask Maid of Honor and Best Man to sign the marriage license as witnesses to this moment.

**Celebrant:**

May the legal benefits and obligations of marriage enhance your life for all the years to come.

### **Good Wishes**

**Celebrant:**

Everyone has advice for newlyweds, especially on their wedding day.

The institution of marriage has inspired many cultural icons to express what they think it takes for a marriage to be successful. I ask Groom's friends to come forward and share a few sayings about marriage to encourage and inspire Bride and Groom today.

Some of these words are filled with wisdom, some with humor, some have the ring of seasoned experience, some have a surprise twist, and some simply express the obvious.

**Groom's Friend:**

Never go to bed angry. Stay up and fight.

*Phyllis Diller*

**Grooms's Friend:**

When in doubt, tell the truth.

*Mark Twain*

**Groom's Friend:**

A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person.

*Mignon McLaughlin*

**Groom's Friend:**

Success in marriage depends on being able, when you get over being in love, to really love. You never know anyone until you marry them.

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

**Groom's Friend:**

Love is like quicksilver in the hand. Leave the fingers open and it stays. Clutch it, and it darts away.

*Dorothy Parker*

**Groom's Friend:**

The great secret of a successful marriage is to treat all disasters as incidents and none of the incidents as disasters.

*Sir Harold Nicholson*

**Groom's Friend:**

You have to walk carefully in the beginning of love; the running across fields into your lover's arms can only come later when you're sure they won't laugh if you trip.

*Jonathan Carroll*

**Groom's Friend:**

Love is not a matter of counting the years; it is making the years count.

*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

**Groom's Friend:**

To keep your marriage brimming,  
With love in the loving cup,  
Whenever you're wrong, admit it;  
Whenever you're right, shut up.

*Ogden Nash*

**Groom's Friend:**

Chains do not hold a marriage together. It is threads, hundreds of tiny threads which sew people together through the years. This is what makes a marriage last.

*Simone Signoret*

**Celebrant:**

Bride and Groom, I offer these good wishes to you on this special day.

- May your life together be blessed with prosperity and good health.

- May you always share open and honest communication between each other.
- May you respect each other's individual talents and gifts and give full support to each other's professional and personal pursuits.
- May you cherish the home and family you will create together.
- May all the years to come be filled with moments to celebrate and renew your love.
- May your love be a life-long source of excitement, contentment, affection, respect, and devotion for one another.

### **Declaration of Marriage**

#### **Celebrant:**

Now by the power vested in me by the City of New York, it is my honor and delight to declare you husband and wife. You may seal this declaration with a kiss.

#### **Celebrant:**

I am pleased to present the newlyweds, Mr. and Mrs. Groom Rossman!

Your wedding ceremony is over; it is time to celebrate!

### **Recession**

By Celebrant Julie Laudicina, [JulieLaudicina.com](http://JulieLaudicina.com)