

Contemporary Ceremony Non-religious

Opening Words

Good afternoon (morning/evening)! We are gathered here today, not to witness the beginning of what will be, but rather what already is! We do not create this marriage, because we cannot. We can and do, however, celebrate with _____ and _____ and their friends and families the wondrous and joyful occurrence that has already taken place in their lives.

So let the ceremony begin!

The Celebration Of Marriage

Marriage is a supreme sharing of experience, and an adventure in the most intimate of human relationships. It is the joyous union of two people whose comradeship and mutual understanding have flowered in romance. Today _____ and _____ proclaim their love and commitment to the world, and we gather here to rejoice, with and for them, in the new life they now undertake together.

The joy we feel now is a solemn joy, because the act of marriage has many consequences, both social and personal. Marriage requires "love," a word we often use with vagueness and sentimentality. We may assume that love is some rare and mystical event, when in fact it is our natural state of being.

So what do we mean by love? When we love, we see things other people do not see. We see beneath the surface, to the qualities which make our beloved special and unique. To see with loving eyes, is to know inner beauty. And to be loved is to be seen, and known, as we are known to no other. One who loves us, gives us a unique gift: a piece of ourselves, but a piece that only they could give us.

We who love, can look at each other's life and say, "I touched his life," or, "I touched her life," just as an artist might say, "I touched this canvas." "Those brushstrokes in the corner of this magnificent mural, those are mine. I was a part of this life, and it is a part of me." Marriage is to belong to each other through a unique and diverse collaboration, like two threads crossing in different directions, yet weaving one tapestry together.

The secret of love and marriage is similar to that of religion itself. It is the emergence of the larger self. It is the finding of one's life by losing it. Such is the privilege of husband and wife - to be each himself, herself and yet another; to face the world strong, with the courage of two.

To make this relationship work, therefore, takes more than love. It takes trust, to know in your hearts that you want only the best for each other. It takes dedication, to stay open to one another, to learn and grow, even when it is difficult to do so. And it takes faith, to go forward together without knowing what the future holds for you both. While love is our natural state of being, these other qualities are not as easy to come by. They are not a destination, but a journey.

The true art of married life is in this an inner spiritual journey. It is a mutual enrichment, a give and take between two personalities, a mingling of two endowments which diminishes neither, but enhances both.

I would like to read to you a poem about this mingling, called "Married Love," which was written by a

medieval poet about seven hundred years ago. In the English translation, it reads:

You and I
Have so much love,
That it burns like a fire,
In which we bake a lump of clay
Molded into a figure of you
And a figure of me.
Then we take both of them.
And break them into pieces,
And mix the pieces with water,
And mold again a figure of you And a figure of me.
I am in your clay.
You are in my clay.
In life we share a single quilt,
In death we will share one coffin.

As the poem shows us, mingling in marriage is a mutual dedication, a cooperative venture in every sense. It is a relationship based on love, respect, and a determination by both partners to adjust to each other and support one another, in health and in sickness, in joy and in sadness, in ease and in hardship.

(SOME COUPLES WILL REPLACE THE ABOVE "MARRIED LOVE" with " THE PROPHET "

Through this co-operation, we give ourselves, our lives and love. into the hands of the one we love. We do so trustingly and generously. And so, each of us receives a gift: the life and love of the other. We receive this gift, not only from the one we love, but also from the parents who brought us into the world, and from our friends and families as well.

And so as _____ and _____s friends and family, we are here to share with them this joy and hope, and to see them off on the path they will walk together. May it be a path of blessedness, bright with flowers of prosperity and spiritual awakening; a path of ever deepening, ever broadening love that they will travel, arm in arm. through out eternity.

(The Commitment)

_____ and _____ this celebration is the outward token of your sacred and inward union of hearts, which the church and temple may bless, and the state make legal, but which neither state nor church can create nor annul. It is a union created by your loving purpose and kept by your abiding will. It is in this spirit and for this purpose that you have come here to be joined together.

VOWS

(You may pick other vows or write your own)

_____ (Groom) , will you have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together in marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, and honor her, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, so long as you both shall live?

I Will!

_____ (Bride) you take this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together in marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, and honor him, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, so long as you both shall live?

I Will!

(Ceremony of the Rings)

Traditionally, the marking- of the passage to the status of husband and wife is marked by the exchange of rings. These rings are a symbol of the unbroken circle of love. Love freely given has no beginning and no end, no giver and no receiver for each is the giver and each is the receiver. May these rings always remind you of the vows you have taken.

(Each places the ring on the other's finger and repeats this simple vow:)

"With this ring, I thee wed."

Apache Blessing

We will close with an Apache Blessing:

(Alternatively, you could use the Cherokee Prayer - [Click here](#))

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be the shelter for each other.

Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be the warmth for the other.

Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before.

Go now to your dwelling to enter into the days of your life together.

And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

_____ and _____, remember to treat both yourself and each other with respect, and remind yourselves often of what brought you together.

Give the highest priority to the tenderness, gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves. When frustration, difficulty or fear assail your relationship – as they threatened all relationships at one time or another – remember to focus on what is right between you, not only the part that seems wrong.

In this way, you can ride out the times when clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives – remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment, the sun is still there.

And if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your lives together, your life together will be marked by abundance and delight.

(The Unity Candle and/or The Rose Ceremony may be added at this point if you wish. Both are included on other sheets of the material sent to you. You also may add the Cherokee Wedding Prayer - from the "SPECIAL READINGS " section.

(You may also involve children in the unity candle ceremony - [click here](#))

PRONOUNCEMENT

Inasmuch as you have consented together in this ceremony to live in wedlock and have sealed your vows in the presence of this company and by the giving of these rings, it gives me great pleasure to pronounce that you are Husband and Wife.

Congratulations, you may kiss!

RECESSIONAL