

Miscellaneous Ideas

Objection

This is a risky thing to do if you have friends with a sense of humor – and we all do. Three times have I been asked to say this. The friends kept quiet. In fact I don't think anyone took a breath – it was extremely silent.

Is there anyone here who has reason why this couple should not be joined in marriage? If so, speak now or forever hold your peace.

Pause

Butterfly Release

Butterflies can be purchased in separate small boxes. These boxes are distributed to the guests at the appropriate point in the ceremony.

The Legend of the Butterfly

To make a wish come true,
Whisper it to a Butterfly.
Upon these wings it will be
Taken to Heaven and Granted,
Because Butterflies are messengers to God.

Please make a special wish for Bde and Grm and release your wish with your Butterfly.

Dove Release

Doves are brought forward by the Ushers at the end of the ceremony.

Grm and Bde, have chosen these Doves to symbolize the peace, love and hope in their marriage.

Doves mate for life, and like married couples they are not necessarily obligated to stay side by side every hour of every day.

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And although they may separate and each pursue an individual flight pattern for a period of time.

In the evening, whether their day's journey has been together or apart, both doves always return home to the same nest.

The Doves are released.

Cardinal Directions

In times past, virtues were assigned to the cardinal directions; East, South, West and North. It is in this tradition that a blessing is offered in support of this ceremony.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the East. Communication of the heart, mind, and body Fresh beginnings with the rising of each Sun. The knowledge of the growth found in the sharing of silences.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the South. Warmth of hearth and home. The heat of the heart's passion. The light created by both to lighten the darkest of times.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the West. The deep commitments of the lake. The swift excitement of the river. The refreshing cleansing of the rain. The all encompassing passion of the sea.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the North. Firm foundation on which to build. Fertility of the fields to enrich your lives. A stable home to which you may always return.

Each of these blessings from the four cardinal directions emphasizes those things which will help you build a happy and successful union. Yet they are only tools. Tools which you must use together in order to create what you seek in this union.

The Basket of Stones

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This wedding ceremony today marks Bde and Grm's commitment in the presence of loving family and friends to create a marriage built on a strong and lasting foundation. I'm sure you all noticed the basket of stones at the entrance when you came in, and I hope you each chose one from the basket. In a few moments Bde and Grm would like to gather these stones from you to symbolically help them build this foundation, to create strong cornerstones and support for their life together. In the years to come, these stones will also remind them in a very clear, vivid and certain way to care for this foundation - to shore it up when necessary - to help it retain its ability to sustain them through life's challenges.

So to help them in this process, please hold in your hand the stone you have chosen. Now as you hold it, please call to mind a quality of your own personality which you would like to instill in this stone as a gift to the firm foundation of Bde and Grm's life together. It might be your great patience, your sense of humor, your resilience, or whatever comes to mind as representative of you. Bde and Grm will collect these stones and cherish them, and whenever they are in need of one of those qualities, qualities which at the time may seem to be far removed from themselves, they will remember this ceremony and bring those qualities, with which you have gifted them, into themselves.

In this way, they will take you with them on their journey, and you will help them build their unflinching and secure marital house. So let's take a minute to hold these stones while you think quietly about the image you have chosen to share.

Pause a few moments

Now we will collect them - with Bde and Grm's heartfelt thanks.

Anniversary Chest Ceremony

Grm and Bde, I have asked you as a couple, to find a strong wooden box that will hold two bottles of wine and two wine glasses. In addition, I have asked each of you to write a letter to one another, expressing your thoughts about the good qualities that you have found in your future partner, as well as your reasons for falling in love with each other. I requested that under no condition were you to read each other's letter, and that you were to seal them in individual envelopes and put them in the box with the wine and glasses.

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Grm and Bde, should you ever find your marriage enduring serious difficulties, I am asking that before you make any irrational decisions, that you both, as a couple, open the box, drink some wine together, and then venture off into separate rooms to read the letters that you wrote to one another when you were united as a couple. By reading these love letters, you will reflect upon the reasons that you fell in love with each other in the first place. The hope is that there will never be a reason for you to open this box, unless of course, it's for your 10th anniversary!

Grm and Bde, I now ask that you place these items into your anniversary chest and together seal it.

A Rose and a Vase

Note: The Groom will need to have a rose and the Bride will need a bud vase with water in it. Before the ceremony, the vase and rose should be placed in an easily accessible spot – on a table, for example. The Best Man, or the Maid of Honor, will get the rose and the vase just prior to this part of the ceremony.

This is a day steeped in tradition, a time when we are surrounded by symbols: Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue. Today Bde and Grm begin a new tradition, a custom which now becomes uniquely their own.

*Judge Armstrong hands a copy of the ceremony to the Bride
and a copy to the Groom.*

Groom: Bde, I give you this rose. Because it grew from a tiny seed, becoming stronger and larger until it burst into flower, it symbolizes the way my love for you has grown.

The Groom gives the Bride the rose.

Each year on our wedding anniversary, I will give you another rose. I'll remember this day and renew the vows we've made.

Bride: Grm, I give you this Vase of Water. /

The Groom takes and holds the Vase.

Because water is the one element without which we would perish, it symbolizes the importance of your love in my life. Each year on our anniversary, I will refill this vase, offering it to you as a symbol of my ever renewing love.

The Bride puts the rose in the Vase and they hold the Vase together.

Groom: Without water the rose would die.

Bride: Without the rose, / the vase of water would not be beautiful.

Groom: My gift is enhanced by yours, just as my life is enhanced by yours.

Bride: My gift is lovely because of yours, just as my life is better because of you.

*The Bride and Groom hand the Rose and Vase to the Best Man
and return the copies to Judge Armstrong.*

On each anniversary, as you give and receive the rose and the water, remember with joy this day when you pledged your love and your lives to each other.

May this be only the first of many cherished traditions in a home filled with happiness.

Handfasting – Four Chords

To Bride and Groom: Please join hands and look into each other's eyes.

To Groom: Gm, will you cause her pain?

Groom: I may.

Is that your intent?

Groom: No.

To Bride: Bde, will you cause him pain?

Bride: I may.

Is that your intent?

Bride: No.

To Bride and Groom: Will you share each other's pain and seek to ease it?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made. Please join your hands.

First cord is draped across the Bride and Groom's hands.

To Bride: Bde, Will you share his laughter?

Bride: Yes.

To Groom: Grm, Will you share her laughter?

Groom: Yes.

To Bride and Groom: Will both of you look for the brightness in life and the positive in each other?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made.

Second chord is draped across the couple's hands.

To Groom: Grm, will you share her dreams?

Groom: Yes.

To Bride: Bde, will you share his dreams?

Bride: Yes.

To Bride and Groom: Will you dream together to create a growing love, a stronger community, and a better world?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made.

Drape third chord across the couple's hands.

To Bride: Bde, will you honor him?

Bride: I will.

To Groom: Grm, will you honor her?

Groom: I will.

To Bride and Groom: Will you seek to never give cause to break that honor?

Bride and Groom: We shall never do so.

And so the binding is made.

Drape fourth chord across the couple's hands.

Tie chords together while saying.

The knots of this binding are not formed by these chords but instead by your vows. Either of you may drop the chords, for as always, you hold in your own hands the making of breaking of this union.

Once chords are tied together they are removed and placed on a table.

Handfasting – Six Chords and Declaration of Intent

Know now before you go further, that since your lives have crossed in this life you have formed ties between each other. As you seek to enter this state of matrimony you should strive to make real, the ideals which give meaning to both this ceremony and the institution of marriage.

With full awareness, know that within this circle you are not only declaring your intent to be handfasted before your friends and family, but you speak that intent also to your creative higher powers.

The promises made today and the ties that are bound here greatly strengthen your union; they will cross the years and lives of each soul's growth.

To Bride and Groom: Do you still seek to enter this ceremony?

Bride and Groom: Yes, we seek to enter.

In times past it was believed that the human soul shared characteristics with all things divine. It is this belief which assigned virtues to the cardinal directions; East, South, West and North. It is in this tradition that a blessing is offered in support of this ceremony.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the East. Communication of the heart, mind, and body. Fresh beginnings with the rising of each Sun. The knowledge of the growth found in the sharing of silences.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the South. Warmth of hearth and home. The heat of the heart's passion. The light created by both to lighten the darkest of times.

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Blessed be this union with the gifts of the West. The deep commitments of the lake. The swift excitement of the river. The refreshing cleansing of the rain. The all encompassing passion of the sea.

Blessed be this union with the gifts of the North. Firm foundation on which to build. Fertility of the fields to enrich your lives. A stable home to which you may always return.

Each of these blessings from the four cardinal directions emphasizes those things which will help you build a happy and successful union. Yet they are only tools. Tools which you must use together in order to create what you seek in this union.

To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, I bid you look into each other's eyes.

To Groom: Grm, will you cause her pain?

Groom: I may.

To Groom: Is that you intent?

Groom: No.

To Bride: Bde, will you cause him pain?

Bride: I may.

To Bride: Is that you intent?

Bride: No.

To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, will you share each other's pain and seek to ease it?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made. Please join your hands.

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The first cord is draped across the Bride and Groom's hands.

To Bride: Bde, will you share his laughter?

Bride: Yes.

To Groom: Grm, will you share her laughter?

Groom: Yes.

To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, will both of you look for the brightness in life and the positive in each other?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made.

The second chord is draped across the couple's hands.*

To Bride: Bde, will you burden him?

Bride: I may.

To Bride: Is that your intent?

Bride: No.

To Groom: Grm, will you burden her?

Groom: I may.

To Groom: Is that your intent?

Groom: No.

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To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, will you share the burdens of each so that your spirits may grow in this union?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made.

Drape the third chord across the couple's hands.

To Bride: Bde, will you share his dreams?

Bride: Yes.

To Groom: Grm, will you share her dreams?

Groom: Yes.

To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, will you dream together to create new realities and hopes?

Bride and Groom: Yes.

And so the binding is made.

Drape the fourth chord across the couple's hands.

To Groom: Grm, will you cause her anger?

Groom: I may.

To Groom: Is that you intent?

Groom: No.

To Bride: Bde, will you cause him anger?

Bride: I may.

To Bride: Is that your intent?

Bride: No.

To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, will you take the heat of anger and use it to temper the strength of this union?

Bride and Groom: We will.

And so the binding is made.

Drape the fifth chord across the couple's hands.

To Bride: Bde, Will you honor him?

Bride: I will.

To Groom: Grm, will you honor her?

Groom: I will.

To Bride and Groom: Bde and Grm, will you seek to never give cause to break that honor?

Bride and Groom: We shall never do so.

And so the binding is made.

Drape the sixth chord across the couple's hands.

Tie the chords together while saying:

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The knots of this binding are not formed by these chords but instead by your vows. Either of you may drop the chords, for as always, you hold in your own hands the making of breaking of this union.

Once chords are tied together they are removed and placed on a table.

Ceremony of Commitments and Gifts

No Rings are Exchanged

We are here today because Grm and Bde have decided to commit themselves to one another as husband and wife. They have shared their lives together, and during this time, they have thought frequently about the meaning of commitment. Our ceremony today was chosen by the Bride and Groom. As I speak, I speak for them. I speak their thoughts and feelings on what it means to be committed to one another for life as husband and wife.

Throughout our lives, we commit ourselves to various careers, ideas, and beliefs. One of the deepest commitments we can make as human beings is to our spouse, our partner in life. When you examine the essence of commitment, you come to realize that there can be no commitment without there first being a choice. An ongoing commitment such as marriage therefore requires a continuous choice made by the husband and wife. When we commit ourselves to marriage, we commit ourselves to making the right choices. We commit ourselves to choose compromise over controversy and partner over self. We commit ourselves to choose the same path at every crossroads. We commit ourselves to choose giving over our expectation to receive.

When we begin a new marriage, we fully expect that the marriage will flourish and continue to grow. As we all know, sometimes this happens, and sometimes it does not. The difference is made by the daily gifts that one partner chooses to give the other. We need to constantly bestow upon our partners the gifts that make a marriage successful, because without this close attention, even the most beautiful flower will fade. Like painters, we decide what kind of relationship we want to paint for ourselves.

Each stroke can either add or subtract from the overall beauty of our lives. Our Bride and Groom have spent years painting a very beautiful relationship together. They want to create the same kind of marriage – one filled with the greatest gifts they can give one another. Our Bride and Groom have chosen to forego the material gifts traditionally presented on a wedding day, and instead have chosen to present each other with gifts which more closely illustrate the choices they will make in their married lives together.

They choose to give:

- The gift of Respect, so that each partner can continue to feel confident about his or her status as a good spouse
- The gift of Dedication, so that the atmosphere in their home is one of a constant effort to try hard for each other, and for themselves
- The gift of Loyalty, so that doubts cannot get the better of them and cause them to restrict the expression of their emotions
- The gift of Support, because they realize that there are times when they will both need it from one another
- The gift of Companionship, because life is just better with two.
- The gift of Communication, because they are two separate minds trying to lead one life
- The gift of Honor, as recognition for how hard they try, and how much they have grown
- The gift of Humor, because you don't have a life if you don't have fun
- And the gift of Love, because they feel it, and it is all they need.