

A ROMANTIC WEDDING

~ GATHERING WORDS AND WELCOME ~

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, and welcome. My name is Terri Hope. I perform this ceremony today, as a representative of the Ontario Humanist Society. Humanism is a secular philosophy of life affirming that humans by our very nature have the capacity and the responsibility to lead meaningful, ethical lives based on reason and compassion. It is in that spirit that we are gathered here today as witnesses to the marriage of _____ and _____.

Before we begin, may I remind those of you with a cell phone or pager to please flip it off during the ceremony. Thank you.

Novelist George Eliot said:

“What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined together to strengthen each other in all labour, to minister to each other in all sorrow, to share with each other in all gladness, to be one with each other in the silent unspoken memories?”

And so, _____ and _____ have invited us here today to participate in a celebration of their love and commitment to one another- their wish “to be at one with each other”. Theirs is a partnership freely chosen and founded on friendship, trust and respect, a relationship that encourages an enthusiasm for life and living. _____ and _____ believe that they experience life more fully together. Their own, and the special qualities possessed by the other, bring about a deeply fulfilling partnership.

At the same time they understand that marriage is a commitment that must not be entered into lightly, nor must it be based on the vain hope of what the other will or will not do, might or might not become. Instead, their commitment to one another, which they celebrate with you today, must be, and is, based on a firm belief in their own individual worth. They will remember that the pledge they make today will remain valid only as long as they look upon it, not as a license to control, but as an expression of their appreciation of each other as individuals, and their decision to nurture one another through all that life will bring them.

Today _____ and _____ are dedicating themselves to the most precious, and at times, the most fragile, of all endeavors _____ a long-term human relationship. They are aware that the words spoken today will not alone constitute a relationship worthy of the label marriage. They believe that their love and commitment to one another are, and will remain, strong enough to sustain such a relationship. Through love, respect and honesty, they intend to match their words with action.

~ **VOWS AND BETROTHAL** ~

_____, _____, have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage? (We have)

_____, will you have _____ as your life partner? Will you cherish — uniqueness and respect — individuality in this union of love and trust?

_____, will you have _____ as your life partner? Will you cherish — uniqueness and respect — individuality in this union of love and trust?

~ **STATEMENT OF SUPPORT** ~

_____ and _____ have chosen to make their commitment to one another in the presence of the people they love the most, their families and friends.

And so do you, the families and friends of _____ and _____, offer your support to their union and their home? Say *We do*.

~ **RING CEREMONY** ~

May we have the rings please.

_____, please put the ring on _____'s finger and repeat after me:
_____, this ring is a symbol of our union, a token of my faith and love. With this ring, I marry you.

_____, please put the ring on _____'s finger and repeat after me:
_____, this ring is a symbol of our union, a token of my faith and love. With this ring, I marry you.

READING

~ **CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN** ~
an excerpt, by louis de bernieres

Love is a temporary madness; it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides. And when it subsides you have to make a decision.

You have to work out whether your roots have so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is.

Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of eternal passion. That is just being in love, which any fool can do.

Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art, and a fortunate accident.

Those that truly love have roots that grow towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from their branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.

~ **PRONOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE** ~

_____ and _____ have agreed to go forward in life together, seeking an ever richer and closer relationship. They have pledged themselves to seek joy and overcome sorrow together.

Therefore I, _____, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Marriage Act of the Province of Ontario declare that you are married and I invite you to share a kiss in token of the vows you have made to each other this day.

~ **CLOSING MEDITATION** ~

To _____ and _____ who gather here to pledge their love and join their lives; may theirs be a shared adventure, rich with moments of serenity as well as excitement; vital with problems that may test their strength, as well as successes that lift their spirits; marked by a sense of personal freedom as well as mutual responsibility.

May they continue to find in each other, companionship as well as love, understanding as well as compassion, challenge as well as agreement. May the home they establish be an island where the pressures of a cluttered world can be sorted out and brought into focus, where accumulated tensions can be released and understood, where personal needs do not tower over concern for others, and where the immediate does not blur more distant goals; where the warmth of humour and love puts both crisis and dullness into perspective.

May the relationship which today is publicly expressed and formalized continue to develop richly in the days to come, providing for them, _____ and _____, a home rich with affection, warmth and collective strength.

And above all, may they find an ever-richer meaning and joy in the high adventure of lifelong loving and learning together. This is our wish for _____ and _____.

~ **SIGNING OF THE REGISTER** ~

The wedding party will now accompany me to the table to sign the marriage documents, after which we will return to present our couple.

~ **PRESENTATION** ~

Ladies and Gentlemen: It is my great pleasure to present _____ and _____, now partners in marriage. Best wishes to them and congratulations to everyone of us.