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## THE CELEBRANT

Humanist weddings that celebrate you as a couple.  
Personalized ceremonies that are filled with  
warmth, love, fun and laughter.

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## The Celebrant® Officials

Christine Ball and Julia Bailey are Humanist Officials, registered with the Ontario Humanist Society, and licensed by the Registrar General of Ontario to perform legal, secular, non-religious weddings in Ontario.

When it comes to life celebrations, whether it be a wedding, a vow renewal or an elopement, it should be a personalized, meaningful ceremony that will leave a wonderful lasting memory for you and your guests. The Celebrants are here to assist you in creating a ceremony that reflects your own personal style and vision, and it's our job to support you, to listen to you, and to guide you through your event with ease.



If you're doing this for the first time you likely have a lot of questions and that's natural. We've explained the basics of the process and included a list of the most frequently asked questions about what to expect when you are planning a wedding; decisions you'll need to make, what needs to be done prior to the day and who is responsible for what. If we've missed something, don't hesitate to reach out to us. That's what we're here for.

## What is Humanism?

Humanism is a non-religious, democratic and ethical philosophy of life that emphasizes human rights and respect for all humans and the environment. Humanism support the belief that humans have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. A Humanist creates a more humane and responsible world through rational and reasonable thought, a respect for the scientific process, and empathy for others.

## Is a Humanist wedding ceremony right for you?

- A humanist ceremony celebrates the joy and beauty of life that the humanist spirit affirms and has its roots in love, compassion and inclusivity.
- A humanist ceremony is non-religious. We make no mention of God or religion and we don't include statements like "love, honour & obey". We replace them with words like love, commitment, support, and togetherness.
- The average wedding is about 15 -25 minutes. The timing depends on the vows, readings, rituals and music chosen by you. Elopement style weddings can be as short as 10 minutes!
- There are only three parts of a marriage ceremony which are legally required; statement of intent, witness affirmation and declaration of marriage. There will also be the signing of the marriage licence and register. Everything else is your personal choice. We can include a ring exchange, rituals like hand-fasting, candle or sand ceremonies. Ask us about these ... and if someone would like to do a reading, let us know, we'll figure out a way to incorporate it.
- We have the ability to customize a large portion of your ceremony and we want very much for the ceremony to reflect your personality as a couple and the love you have for each other. After all, this is your day, it should be magical and memorable.

## What is the responsibility of an Officiant?

- We are the hands-on support that will guide you through the entire ceremony part of your wedding
- We work with you to create content for the ceremony including help to write your own personal vows if you choose
- On the day of the wedding we arrive approximately 30 minutes prior to the ceremony. That gives us an opportunity to familiarize ourselves with the venue, and have a quick chat with other wedding professionals; the photographer, musicians and event planner, to help ensure a stress-free wedding day experience
- We leave very shortly after the ceremony is complete and do not stay for any of the post ceremony festivities
- Following the ceremony, it is our responsibility to file your Marriage Registry and mail your completed marriage licence to the Office of the Registrar General

## How much will a Humanist Wedding Cost?

- There are so many variables it's really hard to quote a price until we know what you envision.
- The rate can be affected by the ceremony location (amount of travel required), the amount of ceremony customization, and if a rehearsal is required.
- Once you have worked out the details for your ceremony, you will be asked to complete a Client Wedding Questionnaire. When we have determined the requirements for your wedding we will be able to provide you with a price.

## What is the process of an Officiant consultation and booking?

- The first consultation (usually virtual) includes an explanation of the legal requirements for getting married in Ontario
- We would check dates to confirm our availability and then have a discussion about you as a couple and the vision you have for your wedding
- We discuss the kind of ceremony you would like to have; traditional, contemporary, or a short and simple elopement. This is your time to share your visions and to ask us questions. It's our time to listen!
- We go over all the possible components and options for your ceremony: vow options, ring exchange, music, readings etc. We hope by the time we're done, you'll know if we're the right fit for you.

## We think The Celebrant® is the right fit for us... Now what?

- We book anywhere from a year to a day out and we've planned weddings in as little as 24 hours – but booking ahead is strongly recommended. And if you're planning to get married on a holiday or other popular date we suggest booking as soon as possible.
- First we'll ask you to provide us with a deposit and to sign a Wedding Ceremony Agreement.
- Once we have that paperwork complete, we'll meet with you to start collecting any additional information we need to start creating your wedding ceremony.
- Don't worry, you will be involved in the entire process and have the opportunity to review and approve the ceremony content and flow before your wedding day. We want to be sure you are both happy ...
- Finally, we'll give you a to-do list. It will tell you what you need to do prior to the wedding day - things like getting your wedding licence, and organizing your witnesses, etc.

Our goal at The Celebrant® is to support you through the process of getting married and help you in any way we can to make your wedding day everything you hoped for.

# Wedding Ceremonies

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Can you help us with our personal wedding vows?

Because vows are personal, we encourage you to give it a try yourself. But of course we are happy to review them. If you'd rather not write your own vows we'll provide you with some wonderful pre-written options.

### Do we need to bring witnesses to our wedding ceremony?

Legally, you must have two witnesses present to sign your marriage licence. They should be at least 18 years of age. They may be related to you, and may live in any country, so long as they have identification.

### Can our friend/family member perform our wedding ceremony?

This is a tricky one. Legally, no. For a legal marriage, it is required that you have a licensed officiant or commissioner sign your marriage licence and file it for processing. With that said, if you have a friend or family member you would like to perform your ceremony, we can work with them to lead the ceremony while we take care of the legal part.

### Do you allow photos and filming of the ceremony?

Of course... you'll want photo's to capture the magic of your day. But, we don't want it to be a papparatz event either. We typically ask guests to turn-off the ringer on their cellphones and stay seated while taking photos. We'll also work with your photographer to decide when and where they want to take photos so you'll get the best results possible.

### Do you offer Officiant services at alternate times or locations?

We are often available for non-standard days, times and locations. We can do weddings in backyards, on balconies or beaches, in your home, hotel, on a boat or at a cottage. We're happy to discuss options.

### Do we need a Rehearsal?

That's up to the individual couple. If your ceremony has more complex components, a rehearsal may help you feel more confident going into the day, but typically a rehearsal is not necessary.

### Getting your Marriage License

The Marriage License is the most important item at the wedding. You cannot get married without it!

- The couple is responsible for the application and collection of the Marriage Licence
- It can be issued at any issuing municipality in Ontario; and it is valid for only 90 days
- Application forms are often on municipality's websites; print, complete, sign
- There is a fee; check with the municipality as to what fee, what ID are required, what are the accepted methods of payment, and if an appointment is required.
- Both parties to the marriage do not have to apply; one can go without the other but must take the signed application and both sets of ID
- Issuing takes approximately 15-20 minutes; you will be given a copy to proof before it's printed.  
Check it carefully to ensure all of the information is correct
- With the Marriage Licence you will be given additional information describing how to order the Marriage Certificate and an envelope for mailing the Marriage Licence. The Officiant must have either the original Marriage Licence or a scanned and e-mailed copy prior to the wedding date
- The officiant must have the complete Marriage Licence, the pre-addressed mailing envelope before the ceremony begins



## Readings

There are literally thousands of readings suitable for a Humanist wedding ceremony. Here's just a sampling;

### "Love Sonnet 17" by Pablo Neruda

*I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where,  
I love you simply, without problems or pride:  
I love you in this way because I don't know any other way of loving  
but this, in which there is no I or you,  
so intimate that your hand upon my chest is my hand,  
so intimate that when I fall asleep it is your eyes that close.  
I love you as the plant that doesn't bloom and carries hidden within itself the light of those flowers,  
and thanks to your love, darkly in my body lives the dense fragrance that rises from the earth.*

### "Love Is Friendship Caught Fire" by Laura Hendricks

*Love is friendship caught fire; it is quiet, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving.  
It is loyalty through good and bad times.  
It settles for less than perfection, and makes allowances for human weaknesses.  
Love is content with the present, hopes for the future, and does not brood over the past.  
It is the day-in and day-out chronicles of irritations, problems, compromises, small disappointments,  
big victories, and working toward common goals.  
If you have love in your life, it can make up for a great many things you lack.  
If you do not have it, no matter what else there is, it is not enough.*

### "Friendship" by Judy Bielicki

*It is often said that it is love that makes the world go round.  
However, without doubt, it is friendship which keeps our spinning existence on an even keel.  
True friendship provides so many of the essentials for a happy life - it is the foundation on which  
to build an enduring relationship, it is the mortar which bonds us together in harmony, and it is the calm,  
warm protection we sometimes need when the world outside seems cold and chaotic.  
True friendship holds a mirror to our foibles and failings, without destroying our sense of worthiness.  
True friendship nurtures our hopes, supports us in our disappointments, and encourages us to grow  
to our best potential. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ came together as friends.  
Today, they pledge to each other not only their love, but also the strength, warmth and,  
most importantly, the fun of true friendship.*

## Ceremony Rituals

Unity rituals can make a memorable addition your ceremony. These rituals have no strict rules so we can create something unique to you as a couple.

- Knots and Handfasting
- Sand/Water Ceremony
- Oathing Stone
- Time Capsules
- Unity Painting
- Broom Jumping
- Wine and Chocolate Ceremony
- Tile or Glass Breaking
- Flower/Plant/Tree Ceremony
- Unity Candles
- Seven Steps
- Circling Ceremony

