

Below is a non-religious ceremony that at the time of creating this document is yet to be performed. It includes many personal details and particularly a focus on the couple's daughter as that was their request. They provided me with their Personality Questionnaire responses and I selected the remainder of the readings and vows based on what I learned about them from that document. Their response to receiving the rough ceremony draft was:

We love the ceremony script. The only part we have concern about is the part mentioning Courtney's grandmother's passing just because we don't want to stir any emotions. We were thinking maybe taking off that line?

(The couple had initially given that information but decided that it was too poignant, and so the below script was revised to remove any mention of that topic).

Overall we are very pleased though, and love how you included Layna into the ceremony. We also like the idea of the third ring!

Ceremony Script

Joseph & Courtney

September 12, 2015 @ 5:30 pm

Processional

TBD in the rehearsal.

Opening

Officiant: "Friends and family, thank you for being here today on this special occasion. We have been brought together not to witness the beginning of what will be but rather to celebrate what already is!

Joe and Courtney have invited us to share in the wondrous and joyful occurrence that has already taken place in their lives, and they consider all of you important to them – enough so to be present for the unique commitment they are making to one another today.

Through their time together, living as faithful partners and loving parents they have come to realize that their personal dreams, hopes, and goals are more attainable and more meaningful through the combined effort and mutual support provided in love, commitment, and family. This ceremony for them solidifies the ultimate commitment of marriage as well as declares in a very personal way that they are in this together - for life.

Please enter with us into this ceremony with a happy spirit, enjoying the day that they have prepared and sharing your love and appreciation with them today as you will into the future of their life together.

Today, Joseph and Courtney, you officially embark as partners on one of the grandest human adventures. Along with Layna, you will build a family and a set of loving relationships that will shape your joint futures.

Through your commitment to this marriage and to providing the best for your family, may you continue to grow and nurture the type of love that makes both of you better people, a love that continues to give you greater and newer experiences of joy, and also a passion for living that provides you with energy and patience to face whatever responsibilities life happens to send your way."

Personal Words for the Couple

Officiant: "There's a quote that says,

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

Of course, this is meant to be funny, but there's some truth in it. As anyone who has experienced it can attest, marriage is definitely a serious endeavor. At the same time, the strength of the marriage commitment through the challenges of life isn't maintained simply by "gritting one's teeth and bearing it" so to speak. Much of the work of keeping a relationship positive and progressive is accomplished in little things like learning to laugh together and being able to laugh at ourselves.

Indeed, one of the things that Joe and Courtney appreciate about their relationship is their ability to share humor with one another and to enjoy each other's company. On that note, I'm sure that on their wedding day they won't mind if I share with all of you one of their most important humorous and personal moments.

First of all, if you know these two then you know how happy they are for an opportunity to dote on Layna. And, of course, they also know this about themselves. So, when it came time for Joe to devise a clever way to propose to Courtney he took advantage of this very fact.

Courtney thought it a little funny that Joe would suggest a 1/2 yr. old birthday party for Layna, but taking it as nothing more than another opportunity to spoil their daughter she didn't suspect a thing. Joe even pushed it a step further by volunteering to help wrap gifts. This apparently was highly unusual, but playing it off as enthusiasm for the party he again kept his secret, quite literally, under wraps.

As Courtney helped Layna to unwrap one of her gifts, lo and behold she found something inside for her too – an engagement ring. Courtney was somewhat caught off guard, and Joe himself became a little anxious with the emotion of the big moment. Yet, even when the somewhat nervous proposal of her strong, responsible ex-Marine ended in awkward laughter, Courtney still said ‘yes.’

Later, on their first family vacation to a San Diego beach Joe also took the opportunity to re-propose to her in the traditional, down-on-one-knee style. This one came as a big surprise to Courtney, and she continues to treasure both moments as more meaningful and amazing than she could have hoped.

In addition to their fun personal moments, Joe and Courtney have developed a sense of trust in one another that there will be openness and honesty as well as commitment through thick and thin. Courtney knows Joe to be her hard-working provider, a man who values his military background, and someone who maintains many personal activities and interests while always keeping time for his family. And Joe knows Courtney as a caring, generous, nurturing and self-sacrificing woman, a family-oriented person who is a wonderful mother to Layna.

A great motivator in their relationship is to be the best individuals and parents that they can be for the sake of their daughter. The ceremony and commitment that they share today is just one of the many ways that they hope to set a good example, something positive for Layna to imbibe for her own future life.”

Exchange of Vows

Officiant: “Joseph and Courtney, we will now recite your vows. Please repeat after me.”

Officiant (with Joe repeating): “I, Joseph, take you Courtney to be my wife ■ my constant friend ■ my faithful partner ■ and my love from this day forward. I vow to always put you, Layna and our family first ■ finding my greatest joy in helping you to find yours.”

Officiant (with Courtney repeating): “I, Courtney, take you Joseph to be my husband ■ my constant friend ■ my faithful partner ■ and my love from this day forward. I vow to always put you, Layna and our family first ■ finding my greatest joy in helping you to find yours.”

Exchange of Rings

Officiant: “Please bring the rings forward.”

(The rings are brought by the ring bearer)

Officiant: "You have for each other special rings – symbols that love is the most precious element in your life together. The ring has no beginning and no ending, which symbolizes that the love between you will never cease. And because this is the significance of your rings there is just as much a ring for Layna on this special day as there is for each of you."

(At this point Joe and Courtney will place the third special ring for Layna on her finger)

Officiant: "Joe and Courtney, you now place these rings upon each others fingers as a visible sign of your vows this day, which will make you husband and wife. Please do so with the words, 'With this ring, I thee wed.'"

Concluding Words

Officiant: "Joe and Courtney, as you go forward together from today's ceremony remember to treat yourselves and each other with respect, and remind yourselves often of what brought you together.

Take responsibility for making the other feel safe, and give the highest priority to the tenderness, gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves.

Whenever frustration, difficulty and fear assail your relationship, as they threaten all relationships at some time or another, remember to focus on what is right between you, not just the part that seems wrong.

In this way, you can survive the times when clouds drift across the face of the sun in your lives, remembering that, just because you may lose sight of it for a moment, does not mean the sun has gone away.

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

Declaration of Marriage

Officiant: "And now, by the vows that you have taken here today, I hereby declare you husband and wife. Joe, you may now kiss your bride."

Then the First Kiss and introduction of the newly joined couple to the attendees:

Officiant: "Family and friends, I present to you for the first time Mr. & Mrs. (name removed for privacy)."