

The Alt Officiant - Sample Ceremony

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Welcome Statement

Today is a celebration. A celebration of love, of commitment, of friendship, of family, and of two people who have invited you all here today to make it legal.

Introduction

You don't have to have a ceremony to have a marriage. And when you think about it, the whole thing is kind of weird, right? You're standing on a stage, looking fancy, holding flowers, and being stared at by pretty much everyone who has meant anything to you in the past twenty-something years. So why do we do it? The marriage ceremony has been an important feature across nearly every culture, religion, generation, and society. We have thousands of important moments that happen throughout our lives, but this one is regarded as one so critical, we acknowledge its special status by sharing it with others. Why this moment?

Because despite all of our differences, love is what we all share. It's the great unifier — our one universal truth. That no matter who we are, where we've come from, what we believe, we know this one thing: love is what we're doing right. That's why you both are standing here. That's why you all are here to watch them stand up here. We have all loved in our lifetimes, and in this moment, we're reminded that the ability to love is the very best part of our humanity. All of us here today have our own love stories. Some are short, others long. Some are yet unwritten, while others are just getting to the good part.

Love Story

Now, I'd like to share the story of Kim and Steve and how they came to be and it begins approximately 13 years ago and 2,515 miles apart. They briefly chatted online about music, but then found each other again 2 years-later, by coincidence, through mutual circles of friends and acquaintances and continued to run into each other in and around Worcester and Boston. There was always a spark, something there that kept bringing them together time and again, but back then I don't think either of them knew that they were seeing their future spouse across the room. Because, like all of the great things that happen in life, it's all about timing. As Kim and Steve orbited a bit closer, a bit more often, they found themselves perfectly aligned and inspired to be together.

Over the last 5 years, they've been attached at the hip. These two have an admiration for each other like no other coupled with a mutual free spirit that can be summed up by "If you're there, I'll be there, and it will be the best". I'd like to argue that the best marriages start with two people

who become best friends before they even consider romance, and as they'll tell you, Steve and Kim liked each other before they loved each other.

Now, these two are pretty modest when it comes to expressing their love publicly but if you corner them they have some pretty heartfelt things to say about each other.

Steve loves, and is proud of, Kim's passion, intelligence, ambition, assertiveness, and strength. She lives with purpose and devotes herself to causes and work that has an impact - she uses her powers for good. And really, it's just something about her that he can't quite put into words.

Kim however, she can put it into words. She always thought Steve was cute, and tall, and had a great sense of humor, but was struck by his intelligence and emotional maturity - which was deeper than she expected and added to the connection. He is constantly supportive, always encouraging, and ready and willing to do anything at any time. Kim also admits that Steve is the real adult and rock in their relationship, despite appearances; so don't be fooled everyone.

And that brings them here. A time to pause, look back, and smile at all the moments that brought them here. And a time to look ahead at all the moments that are still to come.

We're all here today because we want those moments for you. We're here to hope with you, to support you, to be proud of you, and to remind you that love isn't happily ever after, love is the experience of writing your story. It's not one moment — not even this moment. It's every moment.

Big ones like saying "I love you," meeting the parents, moving in together, listing each other as the designated emergency contact — but mostly a million little ones that come in between the big moments. Spending time in Somerville and trips to Oregon, Cape Cod vacations that are always a little bit tragic, going to shows, lazy nights home with the kitties, afternoon hikes up Mount Wachusett and excursions in the Redwoods, and cooking and sharing good food and drinks with friends and family.

These everyday moments fuse together into one big experience. And even though this experience is so incredible, words fail us when we try and explain it. That's just the way it is with love — it's meant to be felt, not described.

Albert Einstein once said "Gravitation cannot be held responsible for people falling in love. How on earth can you explain in terms of chemistry and physics so important a biological phenomenon as first love? Put your hand on a stove for a minute and it seems like an hour. Sit with that special girl for an hour and it seems like a minute. That's relativity."

Now, I will ask Jon to share a reading for Kim & Steve.

Reading

Jon:

May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring, and may life grant you also patience, tolerance, and understanding.

May you always need one another - not so much to fill your emptiness as to help you to know your fullness. A mountain needs a valley to be complete; the valley does not make the mountain less, but more; and the valley is more a valley because it has a mountain towering over it. So let it be with you and you.

May you need one another, but not out of weakness.

May you want one another, but not out of lack.

May you entice one another, but not compel one another.

May you embrace one another, but not out encircle one another.

May you succeed in all important ways with one another, and not fail in the little graces.

May you look for things to praise, often say, "I love you!" and take no notice of small faults.

If you have quarrels that push you apart, may both of you hope to have good sense enough to take the first step back.

May you enter into the mystery which is the awareness of one another's presence - no more physical than spiritual, warm and near when you are side by side, and warm and near when you are in separate rooms or even distant cities.

May you have happiness, and may you find it making one another happy.

May you have love, and may you find it loving one another.

Consecration

As many of you may be aware, yesterday was the Autumnal Equinox, one of two days in the calendar year when day and night hours are almost equal to one another. Whereas the first day of Spring is treated as a time of birth and rebirth, the first day of Autumn is the time when things begin to shed, and the growth which was young in the springtime has now reached maturity. Animals begin preparing for winter, tree leaves turn colors, and the air takes on a chill. Most cultures consider this a time for harvesting crops and taking stock of life's fragility. In every culture the Autumnal Equinox signals the return of weather that favors slowing down, introspection, conservation, and reflection. It's about being willing to change the way we think, feel, and act in the small, everyday things of life. I encourage you to keep all of these concepts at the forefront of your mind throughout your marriage, because adaptability and willingness to change will keep you strong as husband and wife, while balance and gratitude will allow you to be your best selves.

In the past, you may have fallen in love by chance but you stay in love through hard work and intention. You're here today because you're making a choice, you are choosing each other and choosing to be together through the good and the bad. You've chosen to be with someone who enhances you, who makes you think, makes you smile, and grows with you as the seasons pass. You're about to make promises to each other that you intend to keep. You're going to vow to take care of each other, to stand up for one another, and find happiness in one another. There's a simple premise to each of these promises: you're vowing to be there.

Declaration of Intent

Minister:

Kimberly and Stephen, please join hands.

Will you be each other's partners from this day forward? Will you bring out the best in one another, share your happiest moments together, and love each other absolutely — for the rest of this lifetime and for whatever may come next?

Kimberly and Stephen:

We will.

Exchange of Rings

Minister:

Kelly and Jay , will you please pass the rings?

(Rings passed to Kim and Steve)

May these rings remind you that marriage is not a destination but a journey, with no beginning and no end, just a moment to moment opportunity to love and be loved to the best of your ability.

Minister:

Stephen, please share your vows to Kimberly.

Steve:

I promise to talk and to listen.

I promise to stand by you and challenge you.

I promise to give and to be present.

But most of all I promise to work on this, on us. I promise to try. I promise to choose you and us and our family every day. I promise to set aside my pride and work on a partnership, filled with two people.

I promise to be great to you.

I love you, and I like you.

Minister:

Kimberly, please share your vows to Stephen.

Kim:

I promise to talk and to listen.

I promise to stand by you and challenge you.

I promise to give and to be present.

But most of all I promise to work on this, on us. I promise to try. I promise to choose you and us and our family every day. I promise to set aside my pride and work on a partnership, filled with two people.

I promise to be great to you.
I love you, and I like you.

Pre-Pronouncement

Before I pronounce you married partners, there's just one more thing I want you to do. Your wedding day is going to go by quickly. It's a day filled with emotion, family, friends, food, drinks, and dancing. Many people remember how fleeting their own wedding day was. So I want you to take a few seconds to look into each other's eyes. Think about the happiness that you're feeling in this place, in this moment. Really let that feeling register in your heart and your mind. Now, I want you to think about your life together in twenty years. Where are you? What are you doing? We all know that your visions of the future are not identical, but always complimentary. Wherever you find yourselves over the years it's obvious to the world that you'll keep loving, keep laughing, and keep being up for just about anything as long as it's together. Enjoy every bit of it.

Pronouncement

Family and friends, by the power vested in me by the Universal Life Church and by the state of Massachusetts, I am pleased to pronounce Kimbro and Steve Tasl as wife and husband, sealed together today in law and in love.

Kiss

Steve, you may kiss the bride.

Presentation

Ladies and gentlemen, for the first time, Mr. and Ms. Stephen Smith and Kimberly Smith!