

Can Anyone Officiate at a Wedding?

MY FRIEND WILL MARRY US Because it looks so easy, hey, anyone can do it, right? Well no, when the rubber hits the road, it's terrifying for many.

Don't pick a family member OR pastors who don't really do this very often; because they can be just as nervous and inarticulate as a family member.

Please don't put professional officiants in this category. This is what professional officiants do; that's why we're good at it, and that's why we charge for what we do. We make a living doing this; it's not a sideline. **So, let's unpack this together.**

"It'll be more personal because they know you." Maybe but they'll probably just go to the internet, copy a ceremony from some website and be happy to get through it without throwing up. OR they will attempt to make it personal by telling rambling stories about you that might or might not be appropriate.

They're legal in my state. Eh, maybe. But if there is a glitch in the license, do they know how to spot it before hand or fix it afterwards? Probably not. I know how to check questionable documents before it goes to the records office so the process is streamlined.

"They're great public speakers; they do corporate training" It's not just public speaking; it's orchestrating an arc of emotion and sentiment that is inspiring and meaningful to the couple, with empathy for their parents and relatives. It's not just a recitation; this is very, very specific work delivered to an emotionally charged audience, not a legal brief (no offense to lawyers; I could never do that.....)

With all due respect, while personal stories are a gorgeous addition to the ceremony IN THEIR PLACE, stories about when you were a baby do not belong in a ceremony. Even if it's a civil ceremony, it's still a sacred experience and it should be constructed that way, with specific things said to elicit specific emotions from the guests. Of course, we want them to be happy for you, but ideally, they are inspired by your story, renewed by talk of love and soulmates and they should leave thinking they know you better. And themselves better.

Hire a pro. Not just because I am one, but because it's a better idea. And don't forget, if you hire a great officiant, they can lead you to other great pros, they can work with your venue, they can put your processional together; they're like a mini wedding coordinator.

Your cousin probably is not this knowledgeable and would be much more comfortable being an honored guest at your wedding.

If you really, really want a friend or family member to officiate, I will be happy to help them create the ceremony. I can offer examples of ring and wedding vows, rituals, readings and sample ceremonies. We can meet and talk about the ceremony, the rehearsal...any questions or concerns he/she might have.

My consulting fee is \$200. Let me help so your ceremony is just what you want 😊