



## When Life Changes

ceremonies for remembering and celebrating life

### Make your Wedding or Civil Partnership totally you

#### Some Tips On How To Create An Absolutely Unique Day

- ✓ How to engage your guests so they have more fun
- ✓ The easiest, cheapest ways to make your day totally you
- ✓ How to find your unique style to create a civil partnership day that really represents you
- ✓ Many ways to create a unique, unforgettable civil partnership

Have you ever walked into a beautiful, historic building, or climbed to the top of a hill with a gorgeous view, or heard such powerful music that you just lost your words for a moment? You were so overwhelmed by what you saw, heard or felt that it just took your breath away? That overwhelming moment of emotion where you are so moved that you can't even express it.

When your guests really get who you are, and why you choose this partnership day, this location, each other, then they can connect with you better emotionally too through your ceremony.

It's a bit like transporting your guests to another world...your world...and making them a part of it.

Your guests are entranced when your ceremony is a totally unique expression of you, and this happens when you have people involved, connected, and physically, mentally and emotionally engaged in what's going on.

**Action** - Invite them to participate in a reading, performance or group activity

**Thought** – Challenge their minds with a quiz or game, get them remembering and imagining - before or after the ceremony.

**Emotion** – Get your guests involved and invested in the events of your wedding/partnership by touching their feelings.

These three levels for engaging your guests can be combined for the greatest effect. Emotional engagement is the most suited technique.

#### Who are you?

The secret of having a day that really feels like you, is that you weave your personality into your day as much as possible...and so you need to know who you are!... Think about both of your personalities, interests, hobbies, to find dozens of ways to make your day totally unique. Once you've come up with them it's easy to work them into your wedding or civil partnership.

For instance, if you share a love of travel, it might be fun to name the tables after places you've visited together. You might create a scrapbook of your travels, or have your DJ or musicians play songs from the countries that are special to you. That's one of your wow factors, and sharing these with your guests gets them emotionally engaged. Once they are engaged, they start actively participating in your wedding/partnership...which translates to fun, fun, fun!

### Your wow factors

Use this checklist of your hobbies and interests to include as ways to wow your guests:

| Wow factors          | You | Partner |
|----------------------|-----|---------|
| Hobbies/Interests    |     |         |
| Sports – fan/play    |     |         |
| Studies              |     |         |
| Group member         |     |         |
| Animals              |     |         |
| Books/Authors        |     |         |
| Music                |     |         |
| Crafts/Art/Design    |     |         |
| Cooking              |     |         |
| Travel               |     |         |
| Movies/TV            |     |         |
| Theatre/Opera/Ballet |     |         |
| Work                 |     |         |
| School               |     |         |
| Other                |     |         |

Pick out one or two of the activities you have starred above as wow factors to work into your day. Keep them in mind as you explore the ideas in this chapter.

### Telling Your Story

My favourite way to get guests engaged is to tell them your love story. They get emotionally engaged. They may laugh, tears might come into their eyes... it draws them into the meaning and uniqueness of your special day. As your Celebrant, I will share your love story as part of your Ceremony, and help you to think of and share your special vows.

You might be daring, and ask couples attending your wedding/partnership to write short love letters to each other, before your day...and NOT share these with each other...then before the first dance...someone can read these out.

You may want some slides of your adventures together, showing during refreshments or at some other point in your day. The object is to touch your guests emotionally...getting them laughing works really well too. The more your guests feel, the more involved they will be and the more fun everyone will have.

Answer the following questions about you and your partner –

- How did you meet your partner?
- How/ when/ why did you decide on commitment?
- Describe your relationship over the years
- What is an ideal Date for you both?
- Choose 3 little stories that are funny, quirky, romantic or interesting to share with your guests..
- For each of these stories come up with one way to share them with your guests... In your ceremony, before and at your reception,
- Select your favourite story, and make a plan with your partner to share it on your day in a way that fits your personalities.

### **Involve Your Talented Guests**

Have your family and friends participate directly in your day. This goes way beyond just inviting them to do a reading during your Ceremony. If a friend is a professional musician, or photographer, or entertainer...then ask them to participate in your day.

### **Music Makes The Memories**

Is there a song or tune that brings back a funny or romantic memory? Music is an incredibly powerful way to engage your guests both emotionally and physically.

Here are some great places to include your favourite music in your day:

- Your processional down the aisle and at other points during your ceremony
- Your parent dances at the reception
- Your introduction music at your reception
- Ask your entertainer/musicians to include your favourite music in your day

Get your guests moving and participating: At your reception try participation music, ice breaker games, inviting guests to dance.

### **Remember Your Guests**

A part of making your day special for you is making it special for your guests. Take a moment to think about who is coming to your day. What songs and artists might they like and what activities. Announce any birthdays and anniversaries coming up. Make a special dedication or tell a story. You can thank friends with a circle dance. Have someone announce that you would like to thank everyone for coming by sharing the last dance.

### **Ways To Wow Your Guests**

- ✓ Weave in your personality
- ✓ Others – get others involved
- ✓ Why – explain the significances of your choices

1. A list of trivia questions about you for each table to answer
2. Favours that relate to your hobbies or special interests
3. Childhood photos of you and your partner displayed on a table
4. Your parents and grandparents meeting and wedding pictures
5. Pictures of your pets
6. Decorating a 'sweetheart' table with mementos or collectables
7. Put together a collage of things that represent you ... love letters, photos, poems, and so on
8. A cake decorated in honour of your hobbies
9. Choosing your favourite flowers for the centrepieces
10. Playing your favourite music
11. Doing a line/ dance you and your friends learned in earlier years
12. Cardboard cut outs of any friends who introduced you but can't be at your day

13. Performances by your singer, musician or dancer guests
14. Sharing your love story during your Ceremony
15. Giving your guests table tasks to do throughout the reception
16. A special thank you friendship dance with all your friends
17. Play or dedicate a song to a friend as an inside joke
18. Wear an item of jewellery from a beloved family member and share this information with your guests
19. Name your tables to represent one of your favourite things
20. Choose your favourite poems as non traditional Ceremony readings
21. Leave a joke gift at all place settings and photograph your friends wearing them
22. A scavenger hunt using disposable cameras to hunt for images
23. Announce birthdays, anniversaries or engagements
24. Give a dance lesson at your reception
25. Hold a ring warming during your Ceremony where you pass your rings to friends and family before your vows
26. Write special vows that unite family and friends
27. Include special cultural traditions, dances and music
28. Play a song or speech together – you and your partner
29. Make a donation to your favourite charity
30. Treat your guests to a favourite dessert or drink and tell them about it
31. Play your guests wedding/partnership songs
32. Include your signature animal, team, activity, hobby in your wedding/partnership theme
33. Take instant photos of your guests for your guest book
34. Have your guests write their thoughts and wishes for a time capsule that you'll open in 10 years time
35. Share your special homemade cakes at your reception and give your guests the recipe
36. Surprise you guests by revealing your secret talent or skill

Wowing your guests is about more than coming up with fresh, unique ideas and working them into your day. It's about expressing yourself through the look and feel, as well as by the people you are surrounded by on your day.

Do this exercise to put together all of the pieces you'll need to make your day truly unique.

### Wowing Your Guests

1. Are any of your guests performers who you'd like to have perform at your day?
  2. What kind of music and performer might your guests enjoy?
  3. Are there any songs that remind you of your guests, or of places you have been?
  4. Any birthdays or anniversaries around the time of your day?
  5. Are there any inside jokes, college songs or memories that it might be appropriate to share?
  6. Is there anyone special at or absent from your wedding/partnership that you'd like to honour. How might you do this?
  7. Think of at least 2 ways that you can thank your guests.
- ✓ Pick out at least one of your wow factors, one story, one song and one way to include your guests that fits your dream wedding/partnership.
  - ✓ Come up with a plan for using them at your day.
  - ✓ Schedule the first step into your calendar.