***Toni Paget Celebrations***

***Rituals***

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Rose/Flower Ceremony

After the vows, the bride and groom can give each other a flower as their first gift as husband and wife. It can be a promise that whenever they argue through their marriage they will always present each other with a flower to say sorry. Alternatively, the bride and groom can present their mothers with a flower as a token of their thanks and love. In fact, a flower can be given to anyone at the ceremony!

Rose ritual for bride and groom-

Bride and Groom have chosen a Rose Ceremony as a symbol of their love for each other. Your gift to each other for your wedding today has been your wedding rings, which shall always be an outward demonstration of your vows of love and respect; and a public showing of your commitment to each other. You now have what remains the most honourable titles that may exist between a man and a woman – the titles of “husband” and “wife.” In the past, the rose was considered a symbol of love and a single rose always meant only one thing – it meant the words “I love you.” So it is appropriate that your first gift as husband and wife would be a single rose. Please exchange your first gift as husband and wife. That rose says the words: “I still love you.” The other should accept this rose for the words which cannot be found and remember the love and hope that you both share today.

Rose ritual for mothers-

Long before our bride and groom were standing here, they were loved and nurtured by two very special ladies. Can our two mothers please come forward and stand next to their children?

Bride’s Mother and Groom’s Mother, our bride and groom wanted to acknowledge you on their wedding day with a gift of a single rose as their way of saying thank you for everything you have done to make them the person they are today. Thank you mums! (Bride and groom give their mothers a rose)

Sand Ceremony

The bride and groom pour coloured sand (or salt) from individual glasses into a larger centre glass as a symbolic act of the blending of their lives and families. As the grains of sand will never be able to be separated, so the couple are bonded for life. Two variations on a wedding sand ceremony:

• A parents’ variation of the sand ceremony is a great way to involve the couple’s parents. Each set of parents, the bride and the groom have a vase with different coloured sand. The parents take turns to pour their sand into the central vase before the couple, creating a layered effect. This symbolises their support of the couple in marriage.

• A children’s variation of the sand ceremony is perfect if the couple have children together already, or have children from a previous relationship. Each child, the bride and the groom have a small vase with coloured or white sand and they pour this into the central vase just before the couple finish pouring in their sand. This provides a layer where the couple’s and children’s sands are mixed. The children can then pour the rest of their sand on top of the couple’s sand. Bride and Groom, the individual urns of sand represent your two families and your separate lives. As these urns of sand are poured into the family urn, the individual urns of sand will no longer exist, but will be joined together as one. Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual urns, so will your marriage and family be, united as one for all of your days. Please unite your sand.

OR Bride and Groom today you are making a life-long commitment to share the rest of your lives with each other. Your relationship is symbolised through the pouring of these two individual containers of sand; one, representing you, Bride and all that you were, all that you are and all that you will ever be; and the other representing you, Groom and all that you were and all that you are and all that you will ever be. As you each hold your sand, the separate containers of sand represent your lives to this moment; individual and unique. As you now combine your sand together, your lives also join together as one. You may now blend the sand together symbolising the uniting of the Bride and Groom into one.

Lovers Knot/ Hand Fasting

The bride and groom’s hands are tied with ribbon or rope (usually when they say their vows) and then their hands are removed and the knot is fastened. The tied knot symbolises their eternal tie. Bride and Groom have chosen to have a hand fasting. Hand fasting is a Celtic ritual that involves tying together the hands of the Bride and Groom, to symbolise the coming together and staying together of the couple throughout their lives.

Bride and Groom will you link your hands please? (Celebrant drapes a ribbon over the hands) As this ribbon is tied, so are your lives bound together.

With the entwining of this ribbon, we tie all the dreams, love and happiness wished here in this place to your lives, for as long as love will last.

Woven into this ribbon, into its very fibres, are all the hopes of your family and friends as well as your own dreams, for your new life together.

OR

 This silken ribbon entwines two hearts in love together. Friendship’s dearest pledge is made in joy forever. United you will walk through life sharing Earth’s pain and pleasure. Hand in hand you shall strive for achievement in life together.

Should the path be rough and thorny let love sustain and guide you. Should the way be strewn with roses let the joy of life sustain you. Now I tie this lovers’ knot, you two are joined in oneness. Gentle are the bonds of this union, pull one way and the bonds are strengthened, pull the other way and they are loosened.

OR

Seven coloured ribbons will now be loosely tied around Bride’s and Groom’s joined hands, each with a separate blessing:

Red – for strength and courage, good health, prosperity, and longevity;

Orange – for open hearts, sensitivity and understanding;

Yellow – for enthusiasm, spontaneity and equality;

Green – for compassion, affection and caring;

Blue – for sincerity, easy self-expression and honest communication;

Purple – for clear vision and wisdom, for peace and harmony in all ways; and Gold – for unity, divine blessing and presence in your lives.

Release of Butterflies

The bride and groom release butterflies and the celebrant invite guests to make a wish for the couple. This is an old American Indian legend. If anyone desires a wish to come true they must first capture a butterfly and whisper that wish to it.

Since a butterfly can make no sound, the butterfly cannot reveal the wish to anyone but the Great Spirit who hears and sees all. In gratitude for giving the beautiful butterfly its freedom, the Great Spirit always grants the wish.

So, according to legend, by making a wish and giving the butterfly its freedom, the wish will be taken to the heavens and be granted. We have gathered to grant this couple all our best wishes and are about to set these butterflies free in trust that all these wishes will be granted.

Candle Lighting Ceremony Unity

Candle-lighting is quite common as a symbolic act of blending and binding. Whilst this ceremony can take many forms, it’s common that the bride and groom light individual small candles and together light a larger centre candle as a symbolic act of their union.

Bride and Groom, the two individual candles represent your two families and your separate lives. They also represent the brightness and warmth of your love that you bring into your relationship. Bride and Groom, please light your candles. (Bride and Groom light individual candles) I ask that each of you take your candles and that together you light the centre marriage candle. (Bride and Groom light marriage candle) The individual candles represent your lives before today. The flame from the first candle is not diminished when it lights the marriage candle but is made stronger and brighter. May this marriage candle represent the joining of your love, your lives, families and cultural heritage.

Candle Lighting Ceremony Honouring

A candle lighting ceremony can also be performed as a memorial to acknowledge a family member or close friend who is no longer with us.

“Before we start the official proceedings of the ceremony, may we have a moment of silence while Bride and Groom light a candle in memory of those who can’t be here but are certain to watching on. This candle represents the memories and loving wishes of (those being honoured) who are in the thoughts, hearts and minds of everyone here today.

Today, each of us, including those here in spirit, are here to wish Bride and Groom well, as we anticipate their future happiness. May the friendship and love between them be a solid base on which their marriage will grow strong.”

“We would like to take a moment to recognize those that could not be here today. While they may not physically be with us, BRIDE and GROOM feel their love and support.”

“At this time, we’d like to take a moment of silence to remember those who are not here with us. Even though they are not here physically, they are a part of the foundation that makes BRIDE and GROOM the people they are today.

May we always remember (names of those who passed).

Please cherish the memories of these friends and family and all others who live on in our hearts.”

Ring Warming Ceremony

The wedding rings are passed around the guests (all or just the immediate family) and each person makes a wish for the couple. This ritual is especially touching if the bride and groom have young children from a previous relationship – it involves them in the ceremony and asks for their blessing.

(To CHILDREN) I ask you to bless these rings and as you hold them in your hands, may the warmth from your hearts bring warmth to the rings. (CHILDREN pass the rings to Bride and Groom) (To Bride and Groom) These rings, now warmed by those you love the most, will forever show the world that you are one and they will carry with them the eternal love and blessing of your children.

Parents Vows

The Celebrant says, "'Life without love is like a tree without blossom and fruit.' With that thought in mind, we turn for a moment to the parents who have given so much to these two through the years. (Groom's parents) and (Bride's parents), you have great joy in your hearts today. You've watched your children grow up, so fast it seems. You've watched them mature and develop in spirit, in emotions, in knowledge and in wisdom. You've watched as they have entered into this relationship with each other and seen their love grow. You've cried, laughed & realized many of your dreams come true for your children. You've provided guidance to help them become the people they are today. You've expressed your love for them in countless ways over the years, and now today do so again by pledging your continued love and support. If you indeed commit yourself to loving and supporting (groom and bride) in their life together as husband and wife, will you now acknowledge so by saying "we will?"

Parents Blessing

\*Will all the parents please stand: Bride and Groom offer their gratitude to you for all the love and care you showed in raising them. The unconditional gifts of love and support that you have continually offered have inspired them to become who they are today, and they thank you for guiding them to this celebration of their love. Without you, this day would not be possible. With this in mind, I ask (Bride’s parents), as representatives of your family: Will you take this man into your family and into your hearts? Parents: We will. And I ask (Groom’s parents), as representatives of your family: Will you take this woman into your family and into your hearts? Parents: We will. Thank you and may the blessing of their marriage extend throughout your families forever.

\*Will [Mother of the Bride] and [Father of the Bride] and [Mother of the Groom] and [Father of the Groom] please stand? As our sons and daughters find partners and find homes for the next generation, each family is enriched and enlarged. Do you, who have nurtured these two, bestow your blessing on their union and their family?