

Meghan Kennedy
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“As a species, we are truly magnificent in our capacity to incite meaning and express what is of value to us. And we are even more magnificent when we see the same human-ness expressed in different ways across different cultures, subcultures, families and individuals.”

Meghan Kennedy, Siem Reap, 2007

I have been in the field of exploring, finding and honoring meaning in the lives of human beings for more than two decades. With a long-standing interest in *trans-cultural* interpretation, I’ve come to a deep appreciation for the myriad ways human beings can express their joys, sadness, laughter and love.

As a therapist and trans-cultural clinical consultant, I’ve assisted individuals, families and communities in reconnecting, re-creating or simply understanding value and meaning in their lives. After years of stateside and international clinical and community work, it is my belief that human beings are happier, healthier, more engaged and most compassionate when they are involved in what is personally, and communally, meaningful to them.

With the belief of this wisdom at the core of our being, the leap to celebrant was no more than a step for me: It seems a natural offshoot of my life’s work to create custom ceremony for important passages of the life cycle. I’ve been working with it all for decades!

Transposing skills from therapist to celebrant are only a step away, too. Many years as a psychotherapist and diagnostician have allowed me to hone listening skills, expand observational inquiry, and deepen interpretative understanding.

The same may be said for learning other languages and living overseas. Travel has been expanding my world for years: undergrad studies in music and graduate Italian literature; work with special populations under siege in warring countries and assessments/upstarts

in third world countries; and ongoing cross-cultural consultation. To explore, and most importantly, to PLAY across the planet, is what I consider my adult “continuing education credits.” It’s the juxtaposition of these experiences that contribute to my particular excitement for interfaith, multicultural and “trans-anything” ceremonies – “traditional” lies within the individuals involved.

What is a celebrant?

Celebrants are trained to create, write and officiate custom ceremonies. They study the history, theory and practice of ceremony, ritual and rites of passage across various belief systems, ethnicities and cultural overlays.

Given the current global setting we live in, combining out systems of meaning is becoming the norm. It’s great! A celebrant is trained to create a ceremony that comprises any elements that express unique meaning to the client. In order to do so, the I will conduct an in-depth interview with the clients. I may also speak to family members and close friends (with permission) to get a more in-depth understanding of the story – all of which contributes to the customization of the writing and the utilization of symbolism and ritual.

I studied at the [Celebrant Foundation & Institute, USA](http://www.celebrantinstitute.org) - an international leader in this field. I am certified and an active member of the Foundation. Feel free to contact them: <http://www.celebrantinstitute.org> with any questions about me or my formal training.

On that note, I consider my life work, travels, and overall everyday experiences as equally important “training.” It’s where we all live, no?

Why choose a celebrant?

If your ceremony is important to you, a celebrant has the skill and takes the time to understand your beliefs and values. A celebrant also considers the needs of the family and guests, and most of all, makes sure that your ceremony is a true reflection of who you are, and what it all means to you. A celebrant will ensure that every aspect of your ceremony is taken care of so that you are left with the freedom and energy to be fully present to experience it and enjoy the actual meaning of it!

How does it work?

Please contact me by phone or email to see if there’s a 'fit.' We may then make a plan to meet in person, if practical, and explore the possibilities for your ceremony. At that time, I will inquire about your interests and ideas and may offer you examples of possibilities and resources for creating what you want. **There is no obligation whatsoever.** You may then decide if it’s a good match and if so, we go from there.

*For more information please contact me at info@ethosceremony.com or mobile: 312-339-6665
Website under reconstruction!*

Special Services

Wedding and Commitment Ceremonies

Your wedding day is one of the most important days of your life. Thus, your wedding ceremony should be a true reflection of your world-view, your taste and style, and of course, your love. I will help you find ways to express and share the joy of this day with the perfect ceremony for you and your family and guests.

Together, we can be as unique, creative, formal, or informal, as you wish. I will listen to you and make suggestions, offer resources, come up with new ideas or put a twist on old ones - and in the end, you will have the exact ceremony you want.

Once I have your input, I create and write your ceremony. Then I send the first draft to you for your input, corrections, and changes. Drafts will be passed back and forth until I get it just right (this often takes no more than 2-3 drafts.) You have unlimited consultations and complete final approval of the ceremony. There are no surprises. Because of this, you will be more relaxed and ever-present as you exchange your vows and move into your new status.

Whether secular, spiritual, multi-cultural, inter-faith, or any degree of traditional, I am committed to honing sensitivity and being aware of the diverse needs of today's communities. It will be special, memorable... and yours.

Life Cycle Celebrations

As human beings we transit many developmental stages. Contemporary society can, through technology and powerful institutions, usurp our own innate sense and awareness of the thresholds we cross at different times in our lives. They are still there. And they merit support, honor and celebration. Please inquire for specific thresholds and I'll forward you information on how each works.

They include:

- * Becoming engaged
- * Bearing a child
- * Marriage and life partner commitments
- * Giving a child a name
- * Adoption of a child
- * Adoption of a pet
- * Supporting an adolescent as s/he approaches adulthood
- * Blessing your home, new space, boat
- * Reaffirming/renewing marriage vows

- * Divorce or separation
- * Retirement
- * Honoring an elder/mentor
- * Approaching menopause, Crone
- * Death of a family member or friend
- * Dealing with a serious illness

Fees

This depends on a number of things, most importantly the complexity of the ceremony. Fees are structured to support time to personally design, research and write your ceremony while also working with your budget. Factors include the date, time, location, and travel time; informing and guiding ceremony participants and coordinating with venue staff.

Once the fee is established, I will spend as much time as it takes to make the ceremony just how you want it. Attunement and quality are what drive my work. Those who favor this level of focus understand what it brings to the meaning and honoring of their ceremony.

The range for ceremonies is \$750 - \$1500 with the majority of requests in the mid-range of \$900-\$1100. The lower end reflects a simple, more straightforward and shorter ceremony (10-15 minutes). The mid-range involves researching and creating a ritual newly and specifically designed for your circumstances (20-35 minutes); the higher end involves more research and complex ritual, and often involves more participants and lengthier overall preparation and ceremony. Travel time to and from rehearsal and ceremony is also a factor. No matter which you choose, it will be custom, made-to-order and perfectly yours!

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