

RENEWAL OF VOWS

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Renewal of Vows. In two words: Anything goes. Unlike a wedding, where there are thousands of years of etiquette to sort through, a renewal of vows celebration has no rules. You can truly do whatever makes you feel fulfilled and happy. Here are some ideas and suggestions for planning your renewal of vows event.

Word To The Whys

You've made it this far, and after all these years you love each other more than ever. Now you know what real love is. Why not tell the world? Go ahead and celebrate! **If you have children, you might wish to include them in the planning of this momentous event.** If they are grown, your kids may even wish to host the party for you. Either way, you might just find yourself starting a tradition of celebrating renewed love, honor, and commitment for generations to come.

On the other hand, perhaps you recently eloped. Maybe you got married sooner than you would have liked, whether for legal, financial, or other reasons. Maybe you were wed in Vegas by an Elvis impersonator, or on the courthouse steps by a justice of the peace. The best made plans of brides and men often get delayed, and many couples have happily "made-do" with "I do." **Still, if you dream of that fairy tale wedding, why shouldn't you make your wishes come true?**

Now and Then

Renewal of vows ceremonies can be held at any time, at any place. **An especially magical time to hold this gala may be in connection with another celebration**, such as a milestone anniversary, a special birthday, baptism, or other family or social event. If your original wedding was a rushed affair, you may wish to hold a renewal of vows ceremony a mere few months after you legally married. If you were in the middle of planning your "big" wedding when you took time out to tie the knot, hold your wedding on the originally scheduled date. Feel free to renew your vows whenever it is important to you.

What To Wear

Don the original gown, design the dress you never did, or design to be different. You can wear anything you like. **Brides who were married years ago may choose to celebrate in their original attire.** If you've never had "the dress of your dreams," this is a great time to go out and get one. You may wish to omit the veil, but if you love the look, wear what makes you happy. **Consider wearing jewelry or accessories you've given each other over the years.** Something old, something new, something tomorrow, something of you.

Who Do You Love?

Invite anyone and everyone you would like to share your joy with you. Have an intimate celebration with family and friends, or a massive blowout with all the friends you've collected and kept in touch with over the years. Renew with just the two of you, or make it strictly a family affair. The invitation wording is up to you, too. **Generally, when the couple**

issues the invitations, the names of the hosts are omitted. For example, the wording might be, "The honour of your presence is requested at the reaffirmation of the wedding vows of..." **However, if your kids, family members, or friends are hosting, consider beginning the invitation with "The children/family/friends of [couple] request..."** This might be a chance for those who couldn't attend your original wedding to participate. You may wish to convey by word of mouth that gifts are out of the question. Or, if a particular charity is close to your heart, you may request that in lieu of gifts, guests may consider making a small donation instead.

On Ceremony

Duplicate the original ceremony, from the location and officiant, to the music and the vows. Or start from scratch. You may wish to **re-exchange your original rings**, or use this opportunity to replace them with new ones. It can be fun to **reunite the original wedding party**, or you may prefer to **honor your children and family with attendant roles**. If you read standard vows the first time around, this is a great chance to **create your own, full of special memories of your life together**. You might ask your children, family, or friends for their thoughts, or let them write their own tributes to be read during the ceremony.

Because there are no legal requirements for a vows renewal, **choose any officiant you want, or choose not to have one at all**. Typically the couple doesn't walk down the aisle at a renewal, nor does anyone give the bride away. But again -- anything goes. Renewal of vows can be held in conjunction with a regular worship service, or without religious association at all. Feel free to hold your renewal ceremony in a house of worship, at home in your garden, a castle, a courtyard, a gazebo, a sandy beach, or anywhere you feel comfortable.

Party On

Celebrate, celebrate; dance to the music! You have been making beautiful music together for years; here is your chance to share it with those you love. Your wish is your command, whether it's a private dinner at home, or a complete reception containing all the elements of a typical wedding event. You can have your cake and eat it too, a round of toasts celebrating your life together, and tributes to friends and family, old and new. **Consider incorporating photography, such as your original wedding album, your elopement or honeymoon photos, a video or photo collage of your life together. Have a photographer document the event.** And feel free to dance the night away.

Top it all off with a **second honeymoon, in the original spot or an exciting new location**. As a wedding is a symbol of a new beginning, a renewal of vows is a symbol of things past, present and future. Whether you celebrate what began long ago, or just yesterday, here's to you. May you feel that tingling of hope and excitement all over again!

<http://weddings.weddingchannel.com/wedding-planning-ideas/wedding-ceremony-ideas/articles/renewal-of-vows.aspx>