

# 1 or a 5 Diamond Celebrant?

by Dally Messenger



There are no published standards of performance criteria for Celebrants. **Dally Messenger**, one of Australia's original celebrants, and author of many quality celebrant materials, has prepared the following as a guideline when considering your choice of celebrant.

## **The No diamond celebrant.**

He/she only has a legal view of marriage. The ceremony is not very important. Ceremonies are very short (2-3 minutes). Talks about the law and the forms he has to fill in. — very cheap. Not worth anything really. You'd have to be desperate to book one of these, but, unfortunately, there are plenty of these around.

## **The One diamond celebrant.**

A little bit more humane. Has been known to smile. Does not give clients a real choice (pretends to). Dismisses rehearsals as unnecessary - "waste of your time and mine". May have one small verse of poetry in a ceremony. Really loves people who say they want something "short and informal" or who start off by saying - "How much do you charge for a wedding?" Many of these are good salesmen and have enough personality to convince you that being one of six weddings in a weekend is fine. When he /she arrives late and dashes out in a mad hurry once the ceremony is over, you become sorry that you hired a cheapie, but then it is too late. There is only one bite at this cherry.

## **The Two Diamond Celebrant.**

Some of my best friends are two diamond celebrants and in certain suburbs they are very popular. They give people a choice (limited). They give a rehearsal of sorts in their lounge room in a quick sort of way. Often they are full of jokes and reassuring banter. They are reasonably interested in the job, but think in terms of numbers i.e how many marriages can they get through in a weekend. If you are not very interested in your wedding ceremony, they are probably good value.

## **The Three Diamond Celebrant.**

They basically have the same mentality as the Two Diamond but provide a better service because they have a PA System. This means that guests hear all the words of the ceremony - a big plus even if the readers are too fast. Music is given some attention but these celebrants do not consider the music to be their responsibility. But you are given a fair choice of ceremony, and a reasonable amount of attention. This celebrant does two or three each weekend.



### **The *Four* Diamond Celebrant.**

You are now among the professionals. The person has gained qualifications. They take responsibility for all aspects of the ceremony. You have a full choice of ceremony. You get resources and suggestions. There is a productive dialogue about all aspects of your ceremony. They have the attitude that they don't know it all, and learn something new every ceremony. The onsite rehearsal (unhurried) is a must. Attention is given to readers and slowing them down and making sure they practise. Liaises with musicians and photographers. Musicians are organised close to the wedding party. If CD music is the go, they make sure that a decent CD player with good sound quality is organised. The personal story and the introductions to the readings are well written and personal. You get the full eleven point standard wedding done well. The celebrant is well equipped with good quality PA system. He/ she is impeccably and appropriately dressed. Would never dream of doing more than two weddings in a weekend - but usually one, She makes you feel (and can make you feel) that yours is the most important wedding ever.

### **The *Five* Diamond Celebrant.**

This is getting hard now. This is about being everything the 4 Diamond status requires. But it is also about being an incurable romantic and loving the job. It is about extra attention to that level of detail, which makes all the difference. It is about the X factor, natural flair, ceremonial skills, sense of humour, sense of dramatic pause. It is about personality AND skill. It's about beauty in creative writing for speaking, and yes, it is about education - a deep and wide knowledge of what to suggest to you about poetry, music, choreography, ritual and symbolism. Fee? This celebrant is priceless.

### **Final note**

PS. Some celebrants are good at friendly personality, some are good at marketing, the one you are after may have these qualities - but the one you want should be good at **ceremony**. A bit like choosing a doctor - the good bedside manner or the one who is expert at diagnosis and operating. It is good if you can find both.