**WEDDING CEREMONY**

**FOR**

**JEREMY EDELSTEIN**

**Introduction**

Hello everyone…. Welcome to this very special moment and thank you all for bearing witness to this rite, one that has been taken for granted by some, and denied to others. Today we will all participate in attesting to the simple truth that **love is love** and we are **all** equal in the eyes of G-d…. And Cupid. For those of you that may not know, I am Jeremy Edelstein and for the past twenty years I have had the privilege of calling Andrew Rosenberg one of my closest friends. Little did I realize, twenty years ago, as I entered that elevator at (**give the address of the building**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on my first day of work at Ernst and Young, that I would be sharing a wedding ceremony with that funny, friendly, charismatic guy that filled an otherwise dull space with wit, repartee, and a laser sharp game of Jewish geography… we instantly bonded and became best friends quickly. While some of you may not …. **YET** be fluent in Yiddish, there are moments in this life that make clear the meaning of **bashert**. Our friendship was **meant to be** and stretched from work to “Must See TV” as we maintained our ritual of breaking down the Thursday lineup with the girls at work to road tripping, being roommates in college, confidantes, and eternal “wingmen” as we navigated life, MBA’s, and whatever shtick that came our way. Over the years and across the miles, our friendship grew…. And with each conversation and confession, our bond strengthened. Three weeks before I moved to Atlanta to attend Emory with Drew, he felt the need to call me and reveal a deep dark “secret….” He was **gay**. **Like I DIDN’T KNOW.** Like it would **make a difference?** … not in the least… our friendship was honest, unconditional, and every circumstance served to cement that bond….. and as long as I was still able to make gay jokes and call him “Mandrew” all was good. What we have is a great, pure genuine **brotherhood**. Boy are we **blessed**.

Drew even met my wife Janna before I did and channeled his inner Yenta as he plotted with a friend to introduce me to her. He knew in his guts (**too much to say “kishkes?”**) that she was **THE ONE** for me (**I'm not including that you met Janna before because I think this should be more about Drew and James. Let me know what you think**) and he was **RIGHT**.

I believe it was Albert Einstein who said, “You can't blame gravity for falling in love.” Twelve years ago, “a man walked into a bar….” No. **Really**. Our gregarious Drew was in Tampa and a young man caught his eye. Clearly Drew flourishes in small crowded spaces…. Remember the elevator? … someday he’ll have to work on that “shy” streak (**Wait for the laugh**) … getting back to Tampa, he struck up a conversation with the guy…. who was **on a date**…. Oh well… let’s hear it for the **THIRD** appearance of “**bashert**…” and the rest is history. The “long and winding road” that lead to the door of this wedding reception began that night with cocktails and incandescent conversation…. As only Drew has mastered. The next day they went on their first date. …. To an auto show, the beach… dinner…. And no, they **WEREN’T** sick of each other…so hey…. They did a movie!!! It turned out to be a **TWELVE HOUR DATE**. I get tired just **thinking** about that marathon… They continued seeing each other, lived together **(?**) in Tampa for two years, moved to New York, and then moved to Atlanta where they have been for the past nine years.

When I met James, I instantly saw why Drew loves him so much…. He is a **light**…. A **great audience**… always with a **big smile**, always **ready to participate**…. Always ready to generously share that irresistible, infectious **laugh**…. I remember thinking at that first meeting, “**WOW**! Drew found a less Jewish grandmother-y version of himself!! What are the odds??? (**wait for the laugh**)

Their beautiful family is crowned by their two precious four-legged babies, Cookie and Cooper, who apparently had a hand in making this “official.” It seems (**is it too much to say “those two bitches”? If not you can say fur babies or however Drew and James refer to them**) even **those two bitches** saw the tax advantages in getting married and helped their daddy Drew pop the question. Although Drew and James were and have been committed to each other for life, they felt that until marriage was recognized by the Supreme Court…. Until they were able to feel confident that their marriage was legal in **all fifty states**… Until the right to marry was fully recognized, and dignity for **ALL** was preserved, they would not get engaged. Fortunately for them and us, humanity has prevailed (**Do you want to say**) or as they say in Ancient Rome, “**Amor Vincit Omnia**.”

I would like to say something further. I've been to a “few” weddings. I have had the joy of being the groom to my beautiful wife Janna,, and although I have been blessed with having several good male friends in this lifetime, and have had the opportunity and honor to serve as best man, to be asked to **officiate** today is really the privilege of a lifetime. … and although my first thought was, “**Whuuuuuuu**?…” it didn't take long for me to absorb what an honor it would be to participate in something so important to two of the greatest people I know as they take these next important steps on their life’s path together. I also want to acknowledge that my grandfather was an Orthodox rabbi in Montreal…. In a way, this act, as an officiant, fulfills a personal legacy… more **bashert**!

Alfred Lord Tennyson coined the phrase, I am part of all that I have met, and as I am so proud to be a part of your lives, Sparky and Sprinkles, (**wait for the laugh**), I want to take a moment to recognize those closest to you… those who have been by your side, shared their DNA with you, stood by you, supported you, and helped to make the two of you exactly who you are today…. To Mona and Steve, Drew’s parents, Mazel Tov! I don't have to tell you what a great son you have. You've done a wonderful job loving your kids, teaching by example, and honoring one another for just about **forty eight years** …. Almost as long as “Days of Our Lives!” (**Wait for the laugh**). I want to wish heartfelt congratulations to Drew’s sister Amy, and her husband Todd and their kids, Zoe, Jordan, and Jacob.

To James’ mother Kim, Mazel to you as well. I don't have to tell you what a fine, good man your son is. I am so happy that these two have found such great love. James, although your father has passed, I know he is here with us in spirit and is so proud of you. To James’ sister Susan (**Does Susan have a husband? If so, we should mention him**) and her kids Ben and Emily, congratulations to you as well, for officially welcoming your newly extended family. Also, Ben and Emily, for you and Zoe, Jordan, and Jacob, there’s a message that all of you will carry to future generations…. And that's one of tolerance and respect and equality **for all**. Remember what I said earlier…. “**Love is love**” and marriage must remain a non-negotiable human right for every human being.

**Introduction of the vows portion**

Ram Dass said, “Unconditional love really exists in all of us. It is part of our deep inner being. It is not so much an active emotion as a state of being. It’s not, ‘I love you’ for this or that reason, not ‘I love you if you love me.’ It’s love for **no** reason, love without an object.” Andrew and James, I know you have written your own vows. Please recite them now.

**Ring Exchange. ...**

Insert your part here

**Pronouncement of Marriage. ...**

Insert your part here

**Kiss. ...**

**Closing Remarks.**

Clearly there has been lots of planning and anticipation to get us to this point, and now that Drew and James are officially married, I would like to tell a little story that will shed some perspective on how we, as a culture, hopefully will view marriage and most of all, **acceptance** from now on. My kids …. I have a seven year old daughter, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and a five year old son, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, are usually shy when they meet new people.  Even though Drew and James live in Atlanta and we don’t see them that often, the kids have ALWAYS taken to them very easily; sitting on their laps and asking the couple to read them books… they are very comfortable with the guys. Growing up as an orthodox Jew, I thought the only option was to marry a Jewish girl.  Until recently, even many adults in this country thought that men could only marry women.  When we brought Drew and James here to take a tour of the club, we started the day with brunch with the kids.  When the general manager of the club came over to say hi, the kids asked what was going on and we told them that Drew and James were thinking about getting married here.  Their natural follow up question was “where are their girlfriends?” We explained to them that they were marrying each other because you can marry **anyone** you love.   So my son picked up his fork and said “I love you fork.  Will you marry me?” I find it amazing that my kids, at such a young age, already know that you can marry anyone you love….

With every wedding, with every declaration of dignity, we move one step closer to continued, pervasive, respect and acceptance for all…. And we must be vigilant in pursuing that objective.

To Drew and James, you're **STUCK** with each other now! (**Wait for the laugh**). Drew, may you continue to amaze, inform, and charm James with your stories and adventures every single day of your lives…. To James, may your laughter continue… spontaneously, explosively, perpetually…. And may both of you enjoy a life filled with health and happiness, love and joy, family, friends, adventures, and a substantial tax break! Congratulations…. We love you!

(**I didn't add the Streisand mention… I can throw something in like, “I know this is non-denominational, but in the words of Saint Barbra of Streisand…”, or a bit about coming from 2 different worlds… namely Tampa and the FIVE TOWNS, or some jokes about their wedding registry like “I know this is an emotional experience for the two of you… when you get home and look back on tonight’s events, it's okay…go ahead…. Have a good cry… it looks like you're getting plenty of those Hudson Park Luxe Towels in white… from your Bloomingdales registry” etc…. Let me know what you think… didn't want to get to shticky… thanks).**