



# how to human better

*releasing the power of consciously-constructed relationships*

## Description of Services • Jennifer Nicolaisen

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### Initial Consultation • 90-minutes

*Consultation to be held in client's home or other mutually-agreed location (travel costs billed separately), or via FaceTime/Google Hangouts at client's discretion.*

The initial consultation is intentional time for us to get to know each other better. It's important for me to get a feel for your vibe as a couple so I can design a ceremony flow that is specific to your background and personality. It's intentionally unstructured time, and often best accomplished by sharing a meal together (I'll bring groceries to cook together, or we can go dutch on a restaurant bill. No extra cost if we go over 90mins).

### Guided Intention-Setting Sessions (*pre-marital counseling*)

*Intention-setting sessions to be held in client's home or other mutually-agreed location (travel costs billed separately), or via FaceTime/Google Hangouts at client's discretion.*

1. **Celebration.** This 60-minute couples session is a time to draw your attention to where you come from as a couple and all that you have to be grateful for and celebrate together. I'll ask you to bring some physical mementoes and/or photographs from your past for us to review together, and we'll spend some time doing focused acknowledgements of one another to strengthen the foundation for a spirit of ongoing celebration in your marriage.
2. **Boundaries.** This 90-minute couples session is a time to dig in and address the personal growth challenges that are relevant for both of you during this time in your relationship. It's also a time to intentionally verbalize needs that are or are not being met through the existing configuration of the agreements you share, and to define clear boundaries to protect the needs of both partners now and going forward in your relationship.
3. **Planting.** This 60-minute couples session is a time to set and strengthen your intentions for your partnership. By taking the time to symbolize and verbalize your intentions, you will maximize the potential for real manifestation of your shared dream(s) as a couple. We will literally and figuratively plant the seed for long-term health & happiness in your marriage, and work through a basic vision-boarding exercise together.
4. **Grounding.** These 60-minute sessions are real game-changers and take place sometime during the week before your ceremony or during the day before the rehearsal dinner. It's a time set aside to help you get grounded and find peace before your big day. Weddings can be stressful, for many different reasons, and this private ceremony is a way to help you minimize anxiety and focus on each other before the energy ramps back up and your guests begin to arrive. The session will incorporate some practical mindfulness tools from academic psychology, a guided meditation, as well as some grounding rituals from various spiritual traditions and ancient cultures (*customizable at your discretion for your personal tradition/heritage/background*).
5. **Launch.** This 60-minute couples session is designed to be held after your marriage ceremony, and after any "honeymoon" or other intentional holiday that you take as a couple. We will use the time for an intentional review of your promises & commitments, observation of and connection to emotional dynamics, and focused discussion of practical next steps. The session will end with a unique guided meditation and blessing for your path forward together.

## Ceremony Components

1. **Ceremony.** The basic non-religious ceremony is typically about 30 minutes long and includes a customized flow & sequence of the following basic elements:

*(processional)*

- Opening Remarks
- Memorial Moment
- Invocation
- Present Moment Awareness
- Reading 1
- Declaration of Intent
- Symbolic Ritual
- Charge to the Couple
- Exchange of Promises & Community Wishes
- Reading 2
- I Do's
- Exchange of Rings
- Blessing
- Pronouncement of Legal Marriage

*(recessional)*

2. **Memorial moment.** This is a moment of silence at the beginning of the ceremony for any loved ones who are no longer with us but whose support & presence is still important. We can honor them however you choose, for example, light candles as I speak their names, or lay white roses on their seats in the front row.
3. **Symbolic Ritual.** Your ceremony includes a symbolic cultural or modern unity ritual of your choice. We can either custom design a ritual that reflects you and your partner's unique set of experiences and culture, or you can select one of the following:
  - Unity painting.
  - Unity candle.
  - Modern hand-fasting (adapted from Celtic tradition)
4. **Promises Box.** This the signature element of my ceremony style. It's a modern take on the vows process and will make your wedding memorable in a way people haven't encountered before.

I will guide you and your partner through the process of developing some simple promises to each other in advance of the ceremony. We'll end up with a mix of promises that range from practical and serious, from "I promise to give you a back rub at least once a month" to more serious commitments about your personal growth & being a better partner like "I promise to work on not taking things personally."

The first time you hear your promises to each other will be on your wedding day, and I'll write them out in calligraphy on wooden plaques that you will place in a box during the ceremony. I usually procure a simple wooden box on your behalf, but some couples like to go all out and get one custom-designed in advance. It's up to you. The point is that the box becomes a keepsake that you and your partner will treasure for years and can use when it comes time to renew vows, or revisit for other reasons during the course of your relationship.

The sequence is designed to bring a moment of vulnerability and intimacy to your ceremony. It feels much more authentic than the traditional religious version of personal vows. Without fail, the feedback from guests is that it's something they've never seen before and that made them feel included in the story of your relationship. It's a great way to bridge the gap between traditional religious ritual and having a sacred moment in a way that actually feels genuine to you.

I usually follow the Promises Box sequence with a set of “I do’s” that include the traditional “till death do us part” vow, as well as some focused ones from the Toltec wisdom tradition about effective & intentional communication. We can discuss this more during our consultation and customize as necessary.

5. **Community Wishes.** This is a complement to the Promises Box and allows your guests & witnesses to contribute directly to your Promises Box. We work together to email your guests a few weeks before and ask them to email me directly with any blessings, wishes, ways they commit to supporting you, sage advice, or humorous advice that they have to offer you on your wedding day. I will coordinate with the wedding guests via email, write out the submissions in calligraphy on similar wooden plaques, and read them aloud (and anonymously) during the ceremony before placing them symbolically in your Promises Box.
  
6. **Post-ceremony private grounding session.** Immediately following the ceremony, you’ll meet me in a private space that I’ve prepared with natural elements and cleansed prior to your arrival. I’ll give you 5 minutes alone together, then lead you through 10 minutes of guided mindfulness so you can catch your breath and focus on each other before heading back into the reception. We will also sign the legal marriage license during this time.

## **Additional Services**

**Private yoga session.** 60-minute *vinyasa*-style yoga session including guided meditation during closing *svasana*. Offered for the wedding party morning of the event (\$99.00)

**Day-of coordination services.** In the absence of a wedding planner or day-of coordinator, I can plan and direct the music and movement of the processional and recessional (\$75.00)

*\*Able to provide music via Bluetooth to pre-approved devices*

**Energetic cleansing of ceremony space.** Sage-cleansing, blessing, management of space for optimal energy flow, and intentional physical preparation. (\$75.00)