



The Celebrant Survival Podcast

Episode 43:

How to choose the right celebrant training for you

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Transcript

In this episode, solo host Claire talks about celebrant training and the things you should look out for when you're looking into training as a celebrant. She looks at the pros and cons of the different types of celebrant training and gets you thinking about all the questions you should be thinking and asking! This is a must-listen to episode if you're thinking about training as a celebrant sometime soon! And of course, if our celebrant training stands out for you, you can get more information about it, [here](#).

Natasha: Welcome to the celebrant survival podcast.

Claire: Awesome advice and top tips for celebrants worldwide. I'm Claire one half of the Celebrants Collective.

Natasha: And I'm Natasha, the other half of the Collective.

Natasha: Together it's our mission to help celebrants to be the best that they can be and have fun doing it.

Claire: Yep, that's right. We're here to help celebrants to ditch the overwhelm, stop the comparisons, and get fully aligned with who they are, and what they want for their celebrant business.

Natasha: We are your cheerleaders, brow wipers, and butt kickers, everything you need to get where you want to be with your celebrant career.

Claire: So stay tuned, get comfy, and open your ears for our latest episode.



Celebrant training - How to choose the right celebrant training course for you

Claire: Hello, it is Claire here flying solo today. And I thought I would just talk a little bit today about training. Now I know that we have a lot of listeners who are celebrants already and they're doing lots of celebrating around the place and that's fantastic.

But there are also quite a lot of people I know that listening to this podcast who are celebrant curious, who perhaps are loving the idea of becoming a celebrant, but haven't quite taken that leap yet. Also, let's just add as well that there are quite a few celebrants out there who have started their celebrant journey but who perhaps haven't had any training or who feel that their training wasn't perhaps what it could be and fancy doing a little bit of a retrain.

There's all that going on.

And basically, if you're interested in any way in training, then this podcast is for you.

However, if you are also a celebrant who has trained, you've been doing this for donkey's years, and you're very happy, thank you very much, don't forget that it's really important to keep an open mind in regard to life-long learning.

So, of course, I know I'm hoping I'm preaching to the converted here. But I'm hoping that all of you experienced celebrants, who are listening to this, know that there's plenty that you can do to keep your celebrant skills topped up and refreshed all the time.

Obviously, you can join the Celebrants Collective and have lots of lovely, CPD stuff that we do there. But also there are things like going to a creative writing class in your town or perhaps going to a public speaking group. So don't forget that the learning is never finished, you know, we're never done as it were when it comes to our training.

Anyway, I said I was going to talk about celebrant training. And so that is exactly what I'm going to do.

As you may know, there is no actual need as such, to do any official celebrant training in most countries. That isn't necessarily the case in Australia and Canada, I know for sure. There may be odd specific things in different states in America as well.

But generally speaking, in Europe and the UK, certainly, you don't actually need to have any professional qualifications. And in the US, actually, you can, you can be somebody who can officiate a legal wedding, but it doesn't necessarily give you the wherewithal to create a really beautiful ceremony around it.

Anyway, so this as may be we don't actually need to have any training at all. But of course, it's always a really good idea to actually do some training, because then you know that you're not basically using couples or families as your guinea pigs really.

You might have loads and loads of transferable skills, and that's brilliant. But just being able to know how to put it all together and into a ceremony and creating something that's really unforgettable for all the right reasons, is something that does take a little bit of know-how. So



we're not saying it's absolutely necessary, but we absolutely recommend it. Of course we do. Of course we do!

Anyway, you will have noticed by now that there are a lot, a lot, a lot of different training providers out there. In fact, I know it can be - well it can be - quite a dizzying thing. When you first look out at the training and the training world. And I'm sure that if you're listening to this and you are interested in training, you've probably started to look through them all. And you've probably started to notice the ones that you are drawn to, and the ones that you most definitely aren't drawn to and something that we say a lot at the Celebrants Collective is, it's really important to trust your guts.

And that is very, yeah, that's very pertinent here as well, your guts, your heart, or however you want to say it, your instinct plays an important part here- a very important part in fact. Of course, you have to do your research, but it's really the feelings that you particularly need to listen to as well.

So I'll give you a good example of why this is important. Many, many, many, many years ago, back in the mists of time, when I was looking to train to become a life coach, there weren't an awful lot of coaching academies around at that time, unlike now.

And I did start to look around at what there was, and there were about three that were in my kind of, my sphere. And I really, I was really, really interested particularly in two of them. The one of them was in America, and I knew that that was going to be something that was really not impossible, but very difficult logistically and financially to go to. That was sort of off my list really, for practical reasons. And, then there were two others, one of them, I just loved, I really, really loved and just felt that they spoke my language, it felt very in line with my values and who I am.

And the other one, well, it, it got the job done, you know, it trained you to be a coach. And the thing was, that was more local and it was a lot cheaper than the one that I really felt in tune with.

And at the time, I mean, this was a long, long time ago, I had all sorts of money mindset issues going on. And also I had a small child. And there were lots of mitigating factors as to why on paper, it was totally the right thing to do the course that I didn't feel so attracted to.

My husband, he said at the time. Well, you know, they're both of them going to get you to be a coach. And then you can be your own coach, however it works and he was right, of course, but I did go to the course that I didn't really feel as aligned with.

And although it did what it said on the tin, I became a coach, I kind of created my own style and everything was fine.

Every time I met other coaches who had trained with the other coaching organisation, I just really felt that twinge - they were really my sort of people so much more than the colleagues as well, they were lovely, the people I trained with, they were just a different sort. They were really my people. And I always regretted or just had that niggly that I really should have done the other course.



So it was a long, long example as to why it's really, really important just to listen to your guts with this sort of thing and just make sure that you're not going to regret it later on down the line. Because you just went for something that really was just, you know, you made the decision on price or whatever.

Do I want to do online celebrant training or in-person celebrant training?

Okay, so one of the main questions you need to ask yourself pretty early on is, 'Do I want to do online training, or do I want to do in-person training?'. And there are a ton of pros and cons either way on this. And again, you might be that kind of person that just has that feeling 'I need to do it this way'. And that's fine. Again, listen to that, but also start to think about some of the some of the questions around it.

The pros and cons of face-to-face, in-person celebrant training

So let's think about the face-to-face, the in-person training.

Now some of the pros of in-person training, are that it's often very intensive, you normally are away for perhaps three days or so, and you are spending all of that time with your fellow trainees and the trainer, and you are really going intensively at the celebrant training, which is fantastic if that is the sort of learning that you'd like to do and it's all kind of in like one big download.

And of course, the other pro is that you get to meet people in real life. There is nothing like that is there? Especially as we've just come out of two - pretty much two - years of not being able to see people very much.

There is something just really lovely still about all being together in a room and just having no distractions. You haven't got your kids or your dogs wandering in halfway through - that kind of thing. You are all together in a room and you're able to just kind of have that bond and learn together. I mean, that is fantastic.

The cons however - so the things against the in-person training - is that there is a lot of information to take in over a short time. It's our brains - they're brilliant, they soak up lots and lots of things, and you might take loads and loads of notes and that sort of thing, but it is quite difficult to retain the knowledge, when it kind of comes as a big info dump like that.

It can feel lonely afterwards. So you've had this really intensive time with your other trainees and, and then you've absolutely filled your brain, it's been super intense. And then the kind of contrast afterwards is you're like, 'Oh, I'm on my own. Now what I do?', so there can be that as well, so just be aware of that.



And then, of course, the main thing with in-person training that can be an issue is - like I had when I was telling you about with the coaching course - the travel and the accommodation.

So the course for me, the best one for me, was absolutely definitely the one that was in America, but there was no way that realistically at that time, I could get over to America and be able to stay over there, leave my small child behind all of that kind of thing, it just, it just wasn't going to happen.

So you've got to think about the accommodation, you've got to think about the travel. And you've got to think about taking out those times, those days. So that might be perhaps you have to take holiday off work or whatever. So there's a logistical stuff involved.

And also you have less flexibility about the dates. So let's say that you have decided, right, I want to get trained, and I want to do it now. Now. Now! It might be that the course that you want to start is actually only starting in three months' time and you're kind of going 'Come on, come on, come on, I want to do it now'.

So those are some of the cons. But there are some like I say really good pros. And definitely I know, for me being in a room with people is massive.

So then you might think okay, so maybe face-to-face training isn't for me, perhaps I'll look at the possibilities of online training.

The pros and cons of online celebrant training courses

Now, the brilliant pros of online training of course are that you can do it without leaving your house, which I know also means that that means the dog is going to come in and the child's going to come in and all of those things. But you are able to do it without all of that stuff of having to carve out the big amount of time, without having to - yeah - spend all that money on accommodation and things. Brilliant.

Often as well, you have flexible timings when it comes to online courses, not all of them. I mean, sometimes they will start in three months or whatever. But there's generally more flexibility with timings when it comes to the online training.

And the other really big pro is that because of the fact that you don't have to travel, it often means that you're going to meet a much more diverse range of students. So, for example, some of our online training sessions, I've literally had one where we had somebody from Canada, somebody from Ireland, somebody from France, somebody from Switzerland, and about four people from the UK. It was, you know, it was brilliant. And I did think well, you would definitely not get that with a face-to-face course.

But of course, the cons and the major con with online is, well, you know, you're not meeting people face-to-face, I get that that's important for people. However, a lot of online courses do give you that opportunity to meet even if it is in a virtual way. And I know we've all had quite a lot of that thank you very much over the last couple of years. But it is still a really valid and really positive way of meeting up with other trainees.



I say that - meeting with other trainees - do actually check if you're looking at an online celebrant course whether you do get to meet other trainees because sometimes, some celebrant courses are literally just home study and you don't get to meet any of your other trainees at all.

So yeah, that's something really important, it's really nice to be able to bounce off other people who are in the same position, to be able to speak to your mentor or your tutor. So you really probably are going to want to have something that gives you the ability to meet other people. And that's not always a given with online courses.

What features should you look out for in a celebrant training course?

Whether you have chosen to do an online training course or whether you've decided to go for something that's in person, then what sort of things should you look for what kind of questions would it be good to ask, what is, you know, important in a training course?

The celebrant training organisation's values, and how they fit in with yours

Well, I have talked a little bit about this already, but the number one thing is the feel. You do need to do your research. Absolutely. And I'm going to give you lots of things to look into. But do you feel that the values the beliefs, the style of this training course matches who you are?

Does it feel that they're your kind of people?

That's a really, really important thing to work out. And a good way of working this out is - how do you feel when you get an email from them? Do you feel excited? Do you feel a bit annoyed? Or hustled at? Or do you feel something else?

Does it feel like a friend's getting in contact? Or does it feel like this is - oh my god - this is the beginning of my new career!

So there's lots of lots of things, just notice how you start to feel whenever you think about this particular company that you're considering, it's really, really important to get that feel right.



How much support do you get after the celebrant course has finished?

You might want to look at or ask how much after care your training provider has, after you finish the course. Because it's so important to have that continuing support.

It's inevitable - especially if you've done a course where it's all kind of big info dump, whether it's online or in person - if you've done it over a short amount of time, your brain is going to absorb so much, and that's brilliant.

But then inevitably, you're going to be processing that and go, 'Oh, hang on a minute, what about this?' Or have some question pop up. And you need to be able to ask that. You need to have somewhere that you can go and actually talk about what it is that has just occurred to you.

And preferably, you need to have that ongoing as well.

So it's all very well, for example, you start to you do a funeral course, let's say, and you're feeling absolutely brimming with the possibility and excitement about it, you come out of the funeral course you go and meet all the funeral directors in your area, you go and do all the stuff and then you get your first booking, and you're over the moon.

And yet you're like, 'Oh, my God!

You're suddenly terrified. Suddenly your head empties, because that's the way we work.

And you think, right, okay, well, what do I do about this particular situation? I don't remember us talking about this on the course. Or I know that we did talk about this at some point. But I, this feels a bit different. They have a question. Can you go back and ask that? Do you have the support of your fellow trainees? Do you have the support of the tutors on the course? What happens there? And that might be something in an ongoing tutorial-type situation. Or it might be a busy Facebook group, not just 'Oh, yeah, we've got a Facebook group that doesn't have anything going on on it'.

You know, what actual support do you get and how long after the course do get it for?

Because actually, there's another thing, if you're doing a funerals course, just the way that it works, normally, you will be starting to do funerals faster than you would be starting to do, for example, weddings, just because they have a longer lead time generally.

So it may well be that it could be a good few months after your course that you're about to create your first wedding. And that's really when you start to need that extra support.



How much contact will you have with other celebrant trainees?

Also have a think about how much contact you would like to have with your fellow trainees.

Now, you might be a bit of a lone wolf, you like to do your own thing in your own time, and you don't really particularly need the input of other people, and that's fine.

Or you might really like to be with people who are at the same stage of a new career as you are to be able to bounce off them and be able to brainstorm with them and all of those kinds of things.

So do have a think. Is that important to you? And what does the course that you are considering give you in this respect? Do you have plenty of opportunity to chat and meet with your trainees, whether that's online or offline.

What is your learning style?

Another thing to think about is what your learning style is. Are you a visual learner? Or are you somebody who likes to listen to the words of the trainer? Or do you learn by doing? Are you a kinesthetic learner?

What kinds of things go in better for you? And for example, do you prefer to have a big input in one go? Or do you prefer to have bite-sized chunks of information that you can then process and go on to the next one?

You know, and then is the course that you are considering going to feed into your learning style?

Let's say for example, the whole thing is written down, and you have a few sessions where you kind of meet up with a tutor but the rest of it is written down and you have to read it all. Is that going to suit you if you are very much a visual learner, for example? Is it going to suit you, if you much prefer to hear that stuff?

You know, have a think about that 'Is this going to do my head in if I sit there, for example, and listen to a whole load of recordings, but I don't have any written work?'

It totally is very, very different for every single person, and just be aware of what you prefer - what your learning style is.



What time will you have available to do your celebrant training course (and when do you need it by?)

And also - which is kind of linked as well - how much time do you have to do this in your, in your week, in your, in your day in your months? And how much time do you have, maybe you've just been asked to do a funeral, and it's in two weeks' time and you need to learn like pronto.

Or maybe you've wanted to do this for a long time, you're doing another job, perhaps you're parenting as well, you've got a load of things going on. And you know that you've perhaps got a couple of hours a week max to give to your training, but you want to stretch it out, make sure that that is going to fit your needs.

So if you're going to have a three-day, intensive training that might be perfect if you're the person that's going to be doing the funeral in the next couple of weeks. But that's clearly not going to be the case for the person who's got a full-time job, is parenting, and who wants to take it slowly.

Is there any flexibility with the timing of your celebrant training course?

Another thing about timing is, can you be flexible with the timing or is there a set timeframe? Now, obviously, there's going to be a set timeframe if you're doing an in-person training, then that will be fairly obvious.

But if you are doing an online training, sometimes they have times where there are sessions and you have to be there at you know, five o'clock on a Tuesday or whatever it is.

And also, sometimes, with some online training, you have to have completed it in a certain time.

Is that going to be suitable for you? Is that something that you need to be able to do? Or do you need to do it faster? Do you need to stretch it out? What do you need in terms of your timing?

And make sure that you've got that all sorted in that course.



The experience of the tutors on your celebrant course

Another question to ask when you are looking at a celebrant training course is are the tutors experienced practising celebrants themselves? And when I say experienced, I mean, they haven't just started doing it a few months ago.

And are they actually still doing it? Is their knowledge something that they had from years ago, and they haven't evolved because they've stopped doing it? Or have they still got, you know, are they still doing the actual on-the-ground celebrating themselves, because that can be really, really important.

Homework and assignments on your celebrant training course

And last thing to look at is the homework and assignments.

Again, it's going to really depend on you and what you need and how you feel that you learn.

But plenty of the courses that are out there, they will have varying degrees of homework and official assignments that you need to complete in order to be qualified with them.

Now, in terms of assignments, it is good to have at least you know, a couple of written assignments because it is part of your training - this is something that you will need to be doing.

So I would be a little bit wary if a course doesn't have anything that is looked at by a tutor in order for you to pass.

That said, if it's very, very, very heavy on the assignments, and you need to get this done quickly, and you feel really confident in your abilities in that area, then perhaps that's not so important.

However, it is really good to have a variety of assignments and variety of different homeworks, because then that gives you the opportunity to expand beyond what it is that you're learning, it gives some output to the input that you've just been taking in, and really enables you to start to flex your creative muscles and see whether you can actually do this.

There's one thing to learn all about a subject. And there's another thing to process that and to create something from it. And that is a really important part of the assignments. However, like I say, if there's absolutely tons of it, and you struggle with such research things or the timing of it, then you might start to think that that's a negative in your book. I'm gonna take a little break now and on the other side, we're going to talk about qualifications.



Kim: *Hello, my name is Kim and I'm delighted to say that I'm a wedding celebrant based in East Sussex. I started training with the Celebrants Collective in the middle of 2021, after contacting a number of other organizations. From the start, I really connected with the values upheld by the Celebrants Collective and the incredibly supportive way in which they nurture all their trainees. I feel that they give you the opportunity to really grow organically in your own unique way, encouraging you to understand just who you are as a celebrant, and where you fit within the community.*

And it really is a community with support and cheers freely given from everyone along the way, celebrating successes and picking you up if perhaps things aren't going so well.

I've loved the training. It's been excellent, very thorough, and I've also loved connecting with others on the course. Claire and Natasha are both amazing, they really walk their talk, they're super knowledgeable, incredibly experienced, and always there to hold your hand, as well as hold you accountable when needed. Seriously, if you're on the fence, pop off and come and join, I promise you won't be disappointed.

Qualifications to become a celebrant

Claire: Now, just before the break, I mentioned that I was going to talk about qualifications. And as I said at the beginning, there are actually no qualifications necessary at present in the UK in Europe. There are in some countries, including Australia and Canada. However, we do still recommend that you do some kind of training.

There are an awful lot of courses, particularly in the UK, which offer NOCN qualifications, which I think stands for National Open College Network, something like that, I believe.

Now, the NOCN is great. It's a nationally-recognised qualification. However, it's not necessarily a celebrant qualification, if you see what I mean.

If you did an NOCN in celebrant training, you would get that NOCN, but the NOCN qualification itself is a national qualification, it's still not like a professional qualification. If that makes sense.

They're a fabulous thing to have. I know some people like to have a recognised qualification. And I totally get that.

However, please be aware that for a celebrant course to be a good one, the the NOCN qualification doesn't make a difference to the quality of the course.

And no matter what some people might infer about training, if they haven't NOCN qualification, it doesn't mean that you are any more likely to be able to be at the front of the queue if and when celebrants get to do the legal bit and all that kind of thing, which I know some people have the idea that NOCN qualifications will give them an advantage, if the Law Commission passes the decision that we are going to be able to do the legal parts of the weddings.



So please don't worry too much about NOCN qualifications. If it's something that floats your boat, fantastic. But it really, really isn't necessary in terms of you becoming a celebrant, and it really, really doesn't mean that the course is any better than any other.

Celebrant course prices

Let's talk a little bit about pricing.

You will see that there are a big range of prices on celebrant training courses.

And it can be very, very tempting to just go for the cheapest one.

But as I talked about earlier, when I was telling you about my coaching training experience, going for the cheapest one isn't always the best option.

And certainly it's not the reason to make your decision. Certainly it's a factor. And of course, you can't necessarily do the course that that is out of your reach financially. But do remember that you are training to become a professional. You are you're getting professional training to start a new career. And this is something that you really want to be able to invest time and money into. If you're going to do it well, you know, it's really not worth doing it on the cheap.

That said, it's important not to overreach financially, you don't want to be in huge amounts of debt for this for ages. But as I said, do not make a decision based solely on price either.

And also find out whether your course will enable you to pay in installments. That's also some possibility with some courses. And some courses also qualify for learner loans and that sort of thing as well.

But go back to your gut and back to your bank balance as well. Yes, like I said, you need to invest money and you need to invest time, but you still need to be very aware of the time and the energy that you can afford, and the time and the energy and the money that you can afford.

And you know, yeah, reach a little bit, but don't get yourself in debt on any of those levels.

So you've done your research, you've looked at all of the different options, hopefully you've sent some - kicked them to the curb, and they're not for you, but you know now the best ones for you on paper.

Go back to them, have a look at them. Check in that they match your gut feeling too. Check in that you feel like you could hang out with these people, that these people would be people that you would want to spend time with.

Dig a little bit deeper if necessary, ask questions and needle them. Find out what they say.

And then go for it. Go for the one that you really, really want. And notice how easy or otherwise they make it easy to get in.

Again, just keep your research going all the time, and yeah, go for it.



About the Celebrants Collective celebrant training courses we offer

It would be a bit daft if I didn't tell you about our course at the end of this, of course!

So let me just tell you a little bit about us.

You can start anytime on a Celebrants Collective training course whether that's [the Weddings course](#) or the [Funerals course](#). And timing is very flexible as well. You can start anytime, you can take as long as you want, or you can do it as fast as you'd like.

We have tutorials twice a week and you can come to as many as you like.

And that goes for after you have finished your course with us as well, and you've been a celebrant for a year or two or three. You can still come back and share your wins or ask questions or just hang out with your fellow celebrants as often as you like.

Our lessons are presented with video, with audio and they are downloadable as well as PDFs.

And we have dedicated Facebook groups which are chatty and lively and a good place to hang out.

We do have homework at the end of most of our lessons but they are suggested homeworks, suggested activities which will get you to - yeah - just progress a little bit further and start to think about how you will become your own celebrant.

And then we have assignments which will stretch you but hopefully you will find fun and really, really useful when it comes to becoming a celebrant.

When you study with us you'll get your first year's membership of the HQ - the Celebrants Collective HQ - which has got tons and tons and tons of extra stuff in there. Really brilliant CPD celebrant learning.

At the time of recording this, our courses cost 1200 euros each. But if you do one of the courses with us, you get the second one half price. And your first year membership of the Celebrants Collective HQ is thrown into that as well. What a bargain!

If we feel like the right people for you then do check us out but please do go through all of those things.

And remember, if you take away nothing else from this whole podcast, to trust your gut.

I wish you so much luck and love on your celebrant journey, and maybe you'll come and join us as part of it.

We'd love that. Take care.

Claire & Natasha

x



[That's the end of this podcast]



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[Celebrants Survival Podcast Series](#)

