

### *Readings, Poems, Scripture and Prayers*

The following are a collection of readings, poems and prayers that can be brought into your wedding ceremony. They are one way of adding a certain flavor to your ceremony to help shape it into the wedding of your dreams. For example, if you wanted to bring in a little religious flavor, you could choose a Bible reading. Or maybe you love poetry and want to express your feelings about your marriage through a beautiful poem. Or perhaps a certain reading distills the perfect essence of marriage and you would like to share it to inspire your loved ones. Please note that one way of honoring a loved one or a friend is to invite them to participate in the ceremony by sharing a reading, poem or prayer. This adds drama, warmth, connection and joy to your ceremony. You could also share the reading, poem or prayer yourself, either to your partner, or together.

#### "Love" by Roy Croft

I love you, not only for what you are, but for what I am when I am  
with you.

I love you, not only for what you have made of yourself, but for  
what you

are making of me.

I love you for the special part of me that only you bring out.

I love you for putting your hand into my heart and passing over all the frivolous and weak things that you cannot help seeing there, and drawing out into the light all the beautiful, radiant things that no one else has looked quite far enough to find.

I love you for ignoring the possibilities of the fool in me and for taking firm hold of the possibilities of good in me.

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*Kahlil Gibran, from his book: The Prophet, has written these words about marriage:*

*"... Let there be spaces in your togetherness. And let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another, but make not a bond of love: Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each others cup but drink not from one cup. Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf. Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone though they quiver with the same music. Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts. And stand together yet not too near together: For the pillars of the temple stand apart. And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow..."*

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Love is a sacred mystery.  
To those who love, it remains forever wordless.  
Love is a gracious host to her guests.  
Love is a night where candles burn in space.  
Love is a dream beyond our reaching;  
Love is a noon where all shepherds are at peace  
and happy that their flocks are grazing;  
Love is an eventide and a stillness and a  
homecoming;  
Love is a sleep and a dream.  
When love becomes vast love becomes wordless.  
And when memory is overladen it seeks the silent  
deep.  
( Kahlil Gibran)

### Hawaiian Song about Marriage

Here all seeking is over, the lost has been found.  
A mate has been found to share the chills of winter -  
now love asks that you be united.  
Here is a place to rest, a place to sleep, a place in heaven.

Now two are becoming one, the black night is scattered,  
the eastern sky grows bright.  
At last the great day has come!

*Love by Thomas a Kempis*

Love is a mighty power, a great and complete good; love alone lightens every burden, and makes the rough places smooth. It bears every hardship as though it were nothing, and renders all bitterness sweet and acceptable ... Love aspires to high things, and is held back by nothing base. Love longs to be free, a stranger to every worldly desire.

Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth; for love is born of God, and can rest only in God, above all created things.

Love flies, runs, and leaps for joy; it is free and unrestrained. Love does not regard the gifts, but turns to the Giver of all good gifts. Love knows no limits, but ardently transcends all bounds. Love feels no burden, takes no account of toil, attempts things beyond its strength; love sees nothing as impossible, for it feels able to achieve all things. Love therefore does great things; it is strange and effective; while they who lack love faint and fall.

Love is watchful, and while resting, never sleeps; weary it is never exhausted; imprisoned, it is never in bonds; alarmed it is never afraid; like a living flame and a burning torch, it surges upward and surely surmounts every obstacle.

*"The Promise" by Heather Berry* "Within this blessed union of souls, where two hearts intertwine to become one, there lies a promise. Perfectly born, and intimately shared, it is a place where the hope and majesty of beginnings reside. Where all things are made possible by the astounding love shared by two spirits. As you

hold each other's hands in this promise, and eagerly look into the future in each other's eyes, may your unconditional love and devotion take you to places where you've both only dreamed. Where you'll dwell for a lifetime of happiness, sheltered in the warmth of each other's arms."

**I PROMISE by** ~ Dorothy Colgan ~

I promise to give you the best of myself  
and to ask of you no more than you can give.

I promise to respect you as your own person  
and to realize that your interests, desires and needs  
are no less important than my own.

I promise to share with you my time and my attention  
and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship.

I promise to keep myself open to you,  
to let you see through the window of my world into my innermost  
fears  
and feelings, secrets and dreams.

I promise to grow along with you,  
to be willing to face changes in order to keep our relationship alive  
and exciting.

I promise to love you in good times and in bad,  
with all I have to give and all I feel inside in the only way I know  
how.  
Completely and forever.

**EXCERPT FROM "THE GIFT FROM THE SEA"** ~ By Anne Morrow  
Lindbergh ~

When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility. . . . And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity - in freedom, in the sense that the dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern.

Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. Relationships must be like islands, one must accept them for what they are here and now, within their limits - islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides.

*( from "The Irrational Season" by Madelaine L'engle )*

To marry is the biggest risk in human relations that a person can take...If we commit ourselves to one person for life this is not, as many people think, a rejection of freedom; rather it demands the courage to move into all the risks of freedom, and the risk of love which is permanent; into that love which is not possession, but participation...It takes a lifetime to learn another person...When love is not possession, but participation, then it is part of that co-creation which is our human calling.

## BLESSINGS

### The Wedding Prayer

Create in us a love, O Lord. An Eternal love... Your love.  
A love that forgives any failure, spans any distance, withstands any tempest.

Create in us a love, O Lord. A new love. A fresh love. A love with the tenderness of a lamb, the grandeur of a mountain, the strength

of a lion. And makes us one. Intimately one.

As you made a hundred colours into one sunset, a thousand cedars into one forest, and countless stars into one galaxy... make our two hearts as one. (Max Lucado)

My marriage blessing for you is this: That you will always remember the qualities that attracted you to each other when you first met and how you felt as your feelings of attraction turned into feelings of respect, admiration, and finally love. That you will work hard to turn your feelings of love into acts of love so that nothing and no one can divide you. That you will always have kind and loving hearts that are quick to ask for forgiveness when you are wrong, as well as to forgive when your partner is wrong. That your love might grow to bear all things, believe all things, and hope for all things, endure all things.

#### CELTIC (IRISH) BLESSING

May the road rise to meet you  
may the wind always be at your back  
may the sun shine warm upon your face,  
the rain fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
may God hold you in the palm of his hand.

When two souls,  
which have sought each other  
for however long in the throng,  
have finally found each other,  
when they have seen that they are matched,  
are in sympathy and compatible,  
in a word, that they are alike, there is then  
established for ever between them a union,  
fiery and pure as they themselves are,  
a union which begins on earth and continues

for ever in heaven.

VICTOR HUGO (1825-1885)

Marriage is a commitment to life, the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other relationship can equal. It is a physical and an emotional joining that is promised for a lifetime.

Within the circle of its love, marriage encompasses all of life's most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other's best friend, confidant, teacher, listener, and critic.

Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller, memories are fresher, commitment is stronger, even anger is felt more strongly, and passes away more quickly.

Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing a love that is deeper than life.

When two people pledge their love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique unto themselves which binds them closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, a potential made in the hearts of two people who love each other and takes a lifetime to fulfill.

#### WHY MARRIAGE BY Mari Nichols-Haining, 1995

Because to the depths of me, I long to love one person,

With all my heart, my soul, my mind, my body...

Because I need a forever friend to trust with the intimacies of me,

Who won't hold them against me,

Who loves me when I'm unlikable,

Who sees the small child in me, and

Who looks for the divine potential of me...

Because I need to cuddle in the warmth of the night  
With someone who thanks God for me,  
With someone I feel blessed to hold...

Because marriage means opportunity  
To grow in love in friendship...

Because marriage is a discipline  
To be added to a list of achievements...

Because marriages do not fail, people fail  
When they enter into marriage  
Expecting another to make them whole...

Because, knowing this,  
I promise myself to take full responsibility  
For my spiritual, mental and physical wholeness  
I create me, I take half of the responsibility for my marriage  
Together we create our marriage...

Because of this understanding  
The possibilities are limitless.

From "When Harry met Sally"

"I love that you get cold when it's 71 degrees out. I love that it takes you an hour and a half to order a sandwich. I love that you get a little crinkle above your nose when you're looking at me like I'm nuts. I love that after I spend the day with you, I can still smell your perfume on my clothes. And I love that you are the last person I want to talk to before I go to sleep at night. And it's not because I'm

lonely, and it's not because it's New Year's Eve. I came here tonight because when you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible."

May God bless you and keep you;

May the sun of many days and years shine upon you;

May the love you have for one another grow and hold you close;

May the good true light within you guide your way on together;

May your dreams come true, and when they don't, may new dreams arise.

And long, long years from now, may you look at one another and be able to say,

"Because of you, I have lived the life I always wanted to live - because of you I have become the person I longed to be."

God bless, God bless, God bless.

From a Native American ceremony

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be shelter for the other.

Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other.

Now there is no more loneliness.

Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you.

Go now to your dwelling to enter into the days of your life together.

And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

Treat yourselves and each other with respect, and remind yourselves often of

what brought you together. Give the highest priority to the tenderness.

gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves. When frustration, difficulty and fear assail your relationship - as they threaten all relationships at one time or another - remember to focus on what is right between you, not only the part which seems wrong. In this way, you can ride out the storms when clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives - remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment, the sun is still there. And if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight.

This is from a book by Naomi Wolf, about her parents:

Their relationship is like a 3 decade long 3<sup>rd</sup> date: The two are alert to each other; their feelings are fresh. They are still courting. They still storm off and make up as if for the first time. They are still trying to please each other, they dress for each other, they try to make each other laugh, and they give each other room for separate journeys. My father will ask my Mother to dance as if there were still a possibility that she would turn him down.

His example has suggested to me that words between lovers, especially married lovers, have magical power over time, to help or hurt passion. My father decided that my mother was going to be eternally beautiful, and he told her so, so my Mother grew older in this way.

My 80 year old dad still leaves poems about my mother, who is no

longer 18, on the refrigerator, on her desk by the computer, and on the front door when she comes home from a trip. Posted on the fridge among the usual list of mundane tasks...call about the wiring, recycling on Thursday, buy orange juice.... my father has written, for my mother: *How sweet it was to find your little shoes beside my bed when I awoke this morning.*

*How do I love thee? by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1860)*

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.  
I love thee to the level of everyday's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;  
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.  
I love thee with a passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints, --- I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life! --- and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.

*"I Do, I Will, I Have" ~ by Ogden Nash*

How wise I am to have instructed the butler  
to instruct the first footman to instruct the second  
footman to instruct the doorman to order my carriage:  
I am about to volunteer a definition of marriage.  
Just as I know that there are two Hagens, Walter and Copen,  
I know that marriage is a legal and religious alliance entered  
into by a man who can't sleep with the window shut and a  
woman who can't sleep with the window open.  
Moreover, just as I am unsure of the difference between  
flora and fauna and flotsam and jetsam,

I am quite sure that marriage is the alliance of two people one of whom never remembers birthdays and the other never forgets.

And he refuses to believe there is a leak in the water pipe or the gas pipe and she is convinced she is about to asphyxiate or drown.

And she says Quick get up and get my hairbrushes off the windowsill, it's raining in, and he replies Oh they're all right, it's only raining straight down.

That is why marriage is so much more interesting than divorce. Because it's the only known example of the happy meeting of the immovable object and the irresistible force.

So I hope husbands and wives will continue to debate and combat over everything debatable and combatable.

Because I believe a little incompatibility is the spice of life, particularly if he has income and she is patable.

#### **A READING** by Robert Fulghum:

You have known each other from the first glance of acquaintance to this point of commitment. At some point, you decided to marry. From that moment of yes to this moment of yes, indeed, you have been making promises and agreements in an informal way.

All those conversations that were held riding in a car or over a meal or during long walks - all those sentences that began with "When we're married" and continued with "I will and you will and we will"- those late night talks that included "someday" and "somehow" and "maybe"- and all those promises that are unspoken matters of the heart.

All these common things, and more, are the real process of a wedding.

The symbolic vows that you are about to make are a way of saying to one another, "You know all those things we've promised and hoped and dreamed- well, I meant it all, every word."

Look at one another and remember this moment in time. Before this moment you have been many things to one another- acquaintance, friend, companion, lover, dancing partner, and even teacher, for you have learned much from one another in these last few years.

Now you shall say a few words that take you across a threshold of life, and things will never quite be the same between you. For after these vows, you shall say to the world, this- is my husband, this- is my wife.

### -- Captain Corelli's Mandolin

Love is a temporary madness. It erupts like an earthquake and then subsides. And when it subsides you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your roots have become so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of promises of eternal passion. That is just being "in love" which any of us can convince ourselves we are.

Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident. Your mother and I had it, we had roots that grew towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossom had fallen from our branches we found that we were one tree and not two.

### Buddhist Homily

"Nothing happens without a cause. The union of this man and this woman has not come about accidentally. This tie can therefore not

be broken or dissolved. In the future, happy occasions will come as surely as the morning. Difficult times will come as surely as night. When things go joyously, meditate and think clearly. When things go badly, meditate and think clearly. To say the words 'love and compassion' is easy, but to accept that love and compassion are built upon patience and perseverance is not easy. Your marriage will be firm and lasting if you remember this."

Blessings For A Marriage ~ James Dillet Freeman ~

May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should

bring, and may life grant you also patience, tolerance, and understanding.

May you always need one another - not so much to fill your emptiness as to

help you to know your fullness. A mountain needs a valley to be complete;

the valley does not make the mountain less, but more; and the valley is more

a valley because it has a mountain towering over it. So let it be with you and

you.

May you need one another, but not out of weakness.

May you want one another, but not out of lack.

May you entice one another, but not compel one another.

May you embrace one another, but not out encircle one another.

May you succeed in all important ways with one another, and not fail in the

little graces.

May you look for things to praise, often say, "I love you!" and take no notice

of small faults.

If you have quarrels that push you apart, may both of you hope to have good sense enough to take the first step back. May you enter into the mystery, which is the awareness of one another's presence - no more physical than spiritual, warm and near when you are side-by-side, and warm and near when you are in separate rooms or even distant cities. May you have happiness, and may you find it making one another happy. May you have love, and may you find it loving one another.

Marriage Joins Two People In The Circle Of Its Love ~ Edmund O'Neill

Marriage is a commitment to life, the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other relationship can equal. It is a physical and an emotional joining that is promised for a lifetime.

Within the circle of its love, marriage encompasses all of life's most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other's best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener, and critic. And there may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing, and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child.

Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller, memories are fresher, commitment is stronger, even anger is felt more strongly, and passes away more quickly. Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing a love that is deeper than life. When two people pledge their love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique unto themselves, which binds them, closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, a potential made in the hearts of two people who love each other and takes a lifetime to fulfill.

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

#### "1 John 4:7-12, 16b-18"

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; however if we love one another, God lives in us, and God's love is perfected in us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in them. In this way, love is made complete. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out all fear. Amen.

#### 2- "Colossians 3: 12-17"

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves

with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as God has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Amen.

### 1 Corinthians - Chapter 13

Though I may be able to speak the languages of human beings and even angels, but if I have not love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. I may have the gift of inspired preaching; I may have all knowledge and understand all secrets; I may have all the faith needed to move mountains- but if I have no love, I am nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongs, but is happy in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

And now abides faith, hope and love, these three;  
but the greatest of these is love!

.....Ecclesiastes 4.9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one.

( Ruth 1: 16-18) " Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. I will go wherever you go and live wherever you live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. I will die where you die and will be buried there.

So the two of them continued on their journey."

## 1 Corinthians 13 (The Message) The Way of Love

<sup>1</sup> If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. <sup>2</sup> If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. <sup>3-7</sup> If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

Love never gives up.

Love cares more for others than for self.

Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.

Love doesn't strut.

Doesn't have a swelled head.

Doesn't force itself on others.  
Isn't always "me first."  
Doesn't fly off the handle.  
Doesn't keep score of the sins of others.  
Doesn't revel when others grovel.  
Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth.  
Puts up with anything.  
Trusts God always.  
Always looks for the best.  
Never looks back.  
But keeps going to the end.

<sup>8-10</sup> Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.

<sup>11</sup> When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good.

<sup>12</sup> We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

<sup>13</sup> But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.