

Readings

Introductions

The Officiant can introduce the reader.

A.

The Bride and Groom have asked their friend (name) to read (name of reading) by (Author – if known).

B.

Grm and Bde have asked their friend, (name), to share a reading expressing their special understanding of each other:

C.

At this time, Bde and Grm have asked (name), the (relationship) of the Bride/Groom to share a passage.

D.

Bde and Grm believe that you, their friends and family, have shaped who they are as individuals. A ceremony that joins the two of them together would not be complete without the words and voices of those who love them. Bde and Grm have asked family members and friends to prepare a few words to share with us now.

E.

I now welcome (name – relationship) to read (name of reading).

Readings

Each of these readings comes from a wedding. Some have been read at many ceremonies. The Internet has many sites with readings for marriage ceremonies and poetry.

Alchemy

Because of the light of the moon,
Silver is found on the moor;
And because of the light of the sun,

There is gold on the walls of the poor.

Because of the light of the stars,
Planets are found in the stream;
And because of the light of your eyes
There is love in the depths of my dream.

Francis Carlin (1881–1945)

All That Is

Who can tell when in love you'll finally fall?
Some live in vain and never love at all
but as lightning strikes
or as a small insistent voice
if we are blessed
we will hear and heed the call

Give your love and never count the cost
Lose your heart and never call it lost
May your love be your shelter
to the ending of your days
love is all that is, all that ever was

May your love grow strong and always kind
May your hearts grow forever more entwined
In the brightest day or the stillness of the night
May it be each others hand you seek and find

Never more to be alone
Ever closer you have grown
Forever now may no distance come between
And in each other's loving hearts you find a home.

Garnet Rogers (1955 –)

Always Have a Dream in Your Heart

May you know, in your heart that others are always thinking of you.
May you always have rainbows that follow the rain.
May you celebrate the wonderful things about you.
And when tomorrow comes, may you do it all over again.
May you remember how full of smiles the days can be.
May you believe that what you search for, you will see.
May you find time to smell the flowers, and find time to share the beauty of you.
May you envision today as a gift and tomorrow as another.
May you add a meaningful page to the diary of each new day, and may you make "living happily ever after . . ." something that will really come true.
And may you always keep planting the seeds of your dreams.
Because if you keep believing in them, they'll keep trying their best . . . to blossom for you

Unknown

The Art of a Good Marriage

The little things are the big things.
It is never being too old to hold hands.
It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day.
It is never going to sleep angry.
It is never taking the other for granted; the courtship should not end with the honeymoon, it should continue through all the years.
It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.
It is standing together facing the world.
It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.
It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.
It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.
It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have wings of an angel.
It is not looking for perfection in each other.
It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor.

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It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.
It is finding room for the things of the spirit.
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.
It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.
It is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.

Wilferd Arlan Peterson

As You Marry

On this your wedding day – May angels smile upon you.
For a single heart now beats – Where once there had been two.
The Lord has brought you to this day – Through all of life's confusions.
To come full circle all the way – To bless your wedded union.
May your days be filled with laughter – And your nights be filled with peace.
As you grow old together – Sharing happiness and ease.
For a man shall be a woman's heart – And a woman be a man's.
Til the oceans cease to flow – And the deserts lose their sands.

Mavis Gooden

Best of Buddies from Snoopy Come Home

Me and you, a two man crew.
Side by side we're unified
And we will never be divided
Win or lose, we go in two's
We're the best of buddies, me and you.
Harmony is where it's at.
And where it's at for you is where it's at for me.
Share and share alike, is what it's all about.
And what it's all about is unanimity.
Me and you, a two man crew.
Even if the going's gruesome,
We can make it as a twosome.
Lose or win, sink or swim,

We're the best of buddies, me and you.

Charles Schulz (1922–2000)

Blessed Marriage

May these vows and this marriage be blessed.

May it be sweet milk,

this marriage, like honey and halawa.

May this marriage offer fruit and shade
like the date palm.

May this marriage be full of laughter,
our every day a day in paradise.

May this marriage be a sign of compassion,
a seal of happiness here and hereafter.

May this marriage have a fair face and a good name,
an omen as welcome

as the moon in a clear blue sky.

I am out of words to describe
how spirit mingles in this marriage.

Jalaluddin Rumi (1207–1273)

Blessing for a Marriage

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 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!

Thank You, God,
for Your presence here with us
and Your blessing on this marriage.
Amen.

James Dillet Freeman (1912–2003)

A Bow to the Mystery of Love

A relationship – two people coming together to live, to work, to play, to laugh, to grieve, to rejoice, to make love – is the form that human beings give to love, but love itself, that ineffable essence that draws us together into communion with one another, is beyond definition, beyond analysis. Love has its own way, love just is.

Love is a mystery, the essence of which is angelic. In its very nature it goes beyond what we can understand by any of the systems through which we usually comprehend reality. It exists simultaneously outside us and within us. It both binds and frees us. It opens our hearts and breaks our hearts. It cannot be seen, except in the eyes of the beloved, nor felt except in the heart of the one who is cherished. Invisible, its absence leaves us gray-hearted, wounded in spirit, while its presence transforms our hearts, our psyches, and our lives.

We seek love, without knowing what it is, knowing we will know when we find it. This is the true mystery of love – that no matter how much we are unable to describe it, we always recognize it when we experience it.

Love infuses itself into relationships by means that are beyond our invention or imagining. Sometimes love come to stay, nourished and coddled by the feelings and efforts of those who have invited it in. But if it is not honored and nurtured, love will go off and seek its true home.

In bowing to the mystery of love we acknowledge that love is beyond our comprehension, that we will never fully understand it. The love we seek seeks us, embraces us without our knowing and binds our spirits into the body of itself. There is a point at which in the presence of love there is nothing more to say or prove, nothing left to ask for or regret, nothing left except the miracle of love.

Daphne Rose Kingma

Excerpt from The Bridge Across Forever

A soulmate is someone who has locks that fit our keys, and keys to fit our locks. When we feel safe enough to open the locks, our truest selves step out and we can be completely and honestly who we are; we can be loved for who we are and not for who we're pretending to be. Each unveils the best part of the other.

No matter what else goes wrong around us, with that one person we're safe in our own paradise. Our soulmate is someone who shares our deepest longings, our sense of direction. When we're two balloons, and together our direction is up, chances are we've found the right person. Our soulmate is the one who makes life come to life.

Richard Bach (1936-)

Corelli's Mandolin

Love is a temporary madness,
it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides.
And when it subsides you have to make a decision.
You have to work out whether your roots have 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 eternal passion.
That is just being "in love" which any fool can do.
Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away,
and this is both an art and a fortunate accident.
Those that truly love, have roots that grow towards each other underground,
and when all the pretty blossom have fallen from their branches,
they find that they are one tree and not two.

Louis de Bernières (1954-)

The Country of Marriage

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Our life reminds me
Of a forest in which there is a graceful clearing
And in that opening a house,
An orchard and garden,
Comfortable shades, and flowers ...
The forest is mostly dark, its ways
To be made anew day after day, the dark
Richer than the light and more blessed,
Provided we stay brave
Enough to keep going in ...

Wendell Berry (1934 -)

**A Poem to a Daughter-in-Law
Read by her Father-in-Law**

This poem was read at a wedding and - with a change of description -
like eye color, etc. it might work for your ceremony.

Daughter-in-Love

You came to us
not after nine months of waiting ... like Grm
No, we had to wait (age of Groom at meeting) years
before you came into our lives, to take him away.
And then, there you were...
fresh-faced, hair swinging,
that marvelous smile enhanced
by the altogether lovely spirit
shining in your sparkling blue eyes.
He proudly presented you to us
and we knew you were THE ONE.
we'd often wondered how we would feel
when the first of our sons "got serious"
about a girl.
It's not that we thought she wouldn't be "worthy" -
we worried that she wouldn't
love him enough

or believe in his dreams
or laugh at his jokes.
Would she support his decisions
yet stand up for her own?
Would she be strong through the bad times
and cherish the good times?
Would she like us?
Would we like HER?
And then we met you, and we knew...
Here was not a person we could call
"Daughter-in-Law,"
because that sounds like a contract
and doesn't begin to describe our relationship.
Law has nothing to do with it... but LOVE does.
And so you are our Daughter-in-Love,
who grew not under our hearts,
but certainly in them.

The Day Before You

I had all but given up
On finding the one that I could fall into
On the day before you

I was ready to settle for
Less than love and not much more
There was no such thing
As a dream come true
But that was on
The day before you

Now you're here
And everything's changing
Suddenly life means so much
I can't wait to wake up tomorrow
And find out this promise is true

I will never have to go back to
The day before you

In your eyes, I see forever
It makes me wish
That my life never knew
The day before you

But heaven knows those years without you
Were shaping my heart
For the day that I found you
You're the reason for all that I've been through
Then I'm thankful for
The day before you

Now you're here
And everything's changing
Suddenly life means so much
I can't wait to wake up tomorrow
And find out this promise is true

I will never have to go back to
The day before you

Unknown

The Day of Your Wedding

You share today the joy of a deep commitment
And a sacred trust, and you have given each other
The most precious gift of love

Treasure it, nurture it and encourage it
With all the honesty you used in creating it

You are sharing something rare and beautiful

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Always speak the truth and listen attentively
So that you may understand each others thoughts and intentions

Inspire each other by sharing your accomplishments
Say I love you often to retain the warmth between you

Laugh a lot too, even when you are angry
Remember you are each other's best friend

Stand together and for each other always
May each day be a blessing
And the fulfillment of your dreams

Anonymous

The Divine Comedy

The love of God, unutterable and perfect, flows into a pure soul the way light rushes into a transparent object. The more love we receive, the more love we shine forth; so that, as we grow clear and open, the more complete the joy of loving is. And the more souls who resonate together, the greater the intensity of their love, for, mirror-like, each souls reflects the other.

Dante (1265-1321)

Dove Poem

Two doves meeting in the sky
Two loves hand and hand, eye to eye
Two parts of a loving whole
Two hearts and a single soul

Two stars shining big and bright
Two fires bringing warmth and light
Two songs played in perfect tune
Two flowers growing into bloom

Two doves gliding in the air

Two loves free without care
Two parts of a loving whole
Two hearts and a single soul

Unknown

Readings from George Eliot

What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life – to strengthen each other in all labor, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories at the moment of last parting.

Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away.

George Eliot (pseudonym Mary Ann Evans 1819–1880)

Erasmus – On Marriage

What could be more sweet than to live with one to whom you are united in body and mind, who talks with you in secret affection, and to whom you have committed all your faith and your fortune? What in all nature is lovelier? You are bound to friends in affection. How much more are you bound to a husband or wife in the highest love, with union of the body, the bond of mutual vows and the sharing of your property! ... Nothing is more safe, tranquil, pleasant and loving than marriage.

Erasmus (1466–1536)

An Excerpt from A Farewell to Arms

At night, there was the feeling that we had come home, feeling no longer alone, waking in the night to find the other one there, and not gone away; all other things were unreal. We slept when we were

tired and if we woke the other one woke too so one was not alone. Often a man wishes to be alone and a woman wishes to be alone too and if they love each other they are jealous of that in each other, but I can truly say we never felt that. We could feel alone when we were together, alone against the others. We were never lonely and never afraid when we were together.

Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961)

The Forever Feeling

All he wanted was to love her for the rest of his life....
to wake up every morning with her by his side,
knowing that no matter what happened,
he'd be able to come home to her loving arms.

All she wanted was to share everything with him....
to talk to him about her ideas,
her dreams, the little everyday things
that made her laugh, and the not-so-little things
that she couldn't help worrying about.

All he wanted was to give her his love....
as a place she could always come to for acceptance,
or the simple comfort that silence brings,
when things left unspoken
can still be understood.

All she wanted was to grow old with him....
to watch their life unfold,
their dreams, one by one, come true.

All they wanted was to love each other forever.

Unknown

Forever Young

May God bless and keep you always,
May your wishes all come true,
May you always do for others,
and let others do for you.
May you climb a ladder to the stars,
and climb on every rung,
May you stay forever young.

May you grow up to be righteous,
May you grow up to be true,
May you always know the truth,
and see the lights surrounding you,
May you always be courageous,
stand upright and be strong,
May you stay forever young.

May your hands always be busy,
May your feet always be swift,
May you have a strong foundation,
when the winds of changes shift.
May your heart always be joyful,
May your song always be sung,
May you stay forever young.

Bob Dylan (1941-)

Foundations of Marriage

Love, trust, and forgiveness are the foundations of marriage. In marriage, many days will bring happiness, while other days may be sad. But together, two hearts can overcome everything.

In marriage, all of the moments won't be exciting or romantic, and sometimes worries and anxiety will be overwhelming. But together, two hearts that accept will find comfort together. Recollections of past joys, pains, and

shared feelings will be the glue that holds everything together during even the worst and most insecure moments.

Reaching out to each other as a friend, and becoming the confidant and companion that the other one needs, is the true magic and beauty of any two people together. It's inspiring in each other a dream or a feeling, and having faith in each other and not giving up – even when all the odds say to quit. It's allowing each other to be vulnerable, to be himself or herself, even when the opinions or thoughts aren't in total agreement or exactly what you'd like them to be.

It's getting involved and showing interest in each other, really listening and being available, the way any best friend should be. Exactly three things need to be remembered in a marriage if it is to be a mutual bond of sharing, caring, and loving throughout life: love, trust, and forgiveness.

Regina Hill

The Four Cardinal Virtues

From the Hua Hu Ching, attributed to Lao Tzu

The first is reverence for all life;
this manifests as unconditional love and respect
for oneself and all other beings.

The second is natural sincerity;
this manifests as honesty, simplicity, and faithfulness.

The third is gentleness;
this manifests as kindness, consideration for others,
and sensitivity to spiritual truth.

The fourth is supportiveness;
this manifests as service to others
without expectation of a reward.

When practiced, the four virtues gives birth

to wisdom and evoke the five blessings:
health, wealth, happiness, longevity and peace.

Lao Tzu Fifth Century BC

Benjamin Franklin

**RULES and MAXIMS
for
Promoting Matrimonial Happiness**

The happy State of Matrimony is, undoubtedly, the surest and most lasting Foundation of Comfort and Love; the Source of all that endearing Tenderness and Affection which arises from Relation and Affinity; the grand Point of Property; the Cause of all good Order in the World, and what alone preserves it from the utmost Confusion; and, to sum up all, the Appointment of infinite Wisdom for these great and good Purposes.

I am now about to lay down such rules and maxims as I think most practicable and conducive towards the end and happiness of matrimony.

And these I address to all Females that [would] be married, or are already so; not that I suppose their Sex more faulty than the other, and most to want Advice, for I assure them, upon my Honour, I believe the quite contrary; but the Reason is, because I esteem them better disposed to receive and practice it, and therefore am willing to begin, where I may promise myself the best Success. Besides, if there is any Truth in Proverbs, Good Wives usually make Good Husbands.

...The likeliest Way, either to obtain a good [spouse], or to keep one so, is to be Good yourself.

...Consider beforehand, that the Person you are going to spend your Days with, is a Man, and not an Angel; and if, when you come together, you discover any Thing in his Humour or Behavior that is not altogether so agreeable as you

expected, pass it over as a humane Frailty: smooth your Brow; compose your Temper; and try to amend it by Cheerfulness and Good-nature.

Remember always, that whatever misfortunes may happen to either, they are not to be charged to the account of matrimony, but to the accidents and infirmities of humane life, a burthen which each has engaged to assist the other in supporting, and to which both parties are equally exposed. Therefore, instead of murmurs, reflections, and disagreement, whereby the weight is rendered abundantly more grievous, readily put your shoulders to the yoke and make it easier for both.

I am fully persuaded, that a strict adherence to the foregoing rules would equally advance the honor of matrimony...: and since the greatest part of them, with a very little alteration, are as proper for husbands as for wives to practice, I recommend them accordingly to their consideration, and hope, in short time, to receive acknowledgements from married persons of [BOTH] sexes for the benefit they receive thereby.

[And finally:]

...Marriage is... the most natural State of Man, and therefore the State in which you are most likely to find solid Happiness... It is the Man and Woman united that make the complete human Being. Separate, she wants his Force of Body and Strength of Reason; he, her Softness, Sensibility and acute Discernment. Together they are more likely to succeed in the World. A single Man has not nearly the Value he would have in that State of Union. He is an incomplete Animal... I advise you to marry directly;
being sincerely Your affectionate Friend.

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)

Friendship

It is often said that it is love that makes the world go round. However, without doubt, it is friendship which keeps our spinning existence on an even keel. True friendship provides so many of the essentials for a happy life – it is the foundation on which to build an enduring relationship, it is the mortar which bonds us together in harmony, and it is the calm, warm protection we

sometimes need when the world outside seems cold and chaotic. True friendship holds a mirror to our foibles and failings, without destroying our sense of worthiness. True friendship nurtures our hopes, supports us in our disappointments, and encourages us to grow to our best potential. Grm and Bde came together as friends. Today, they pledge to each other not only their love, but also the strength, warmth and, most importantly, the fun of true friendship.

Judy Bielicki

A Gift From the Sea

One recognizes the truth of Saint Exupery's line: Love does not consist in gazing at each other. But in looking outward together in the same direction. For in fact, man and woman are not only looking outward in the same direction, they are working outward. Here one forms ties, roots, a firm base.... Here one makes oneself part of the community of men, of human society. Here the bonds of marriage are formed. For marriage, which is always spoken of as a bond, becomes actually, in this stage, many bonds, many strands, of different texture and strength, making up a web that is taut and firm. The web is fashioned of love. Yes, but many kinds of love: romantic love first, then a slow-growing devotion and, playing through these, a constantly rippling companionship. It is made of loyalties, and interdependencies, and shared experiences. It is woven of memories of meetings and conflicts; of triumphs and disappointments. It is a web of communication, a common language, and the acceptance of lack of language too, a knowledge of likes and dislikes, of habits and reactions, both physical and mental. It is a web of instincts and intuitions, and known and unknown exchanges. The web of marriage is made by propinquity, in the day-to-day living side by side, looking outward and working outward in the same direction. It is woven in space and in time of the substance of life itself.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh (1906–2001)

The Great Hunt

I cannot tell you now;
When the wind's drive and whirl

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Blow me along no longer,
And the wind's a whisper at last –
Maybe I'll tell you then –
some other time.

When the rose's flash to the sunset
Reels to the rack and the twist,
And the rose is a red bygone,
When the face I love is going
And the gate to the end shall clang,
And it's no use to beckon or say, "So long" –
Maybe I'll tell you then –
some other time.

I never knew any more beautiful than you:
I have hunted you under my thoughts,
I have broken down under the wind
And into the roses looking for you.
I shall never find any
greater than you.

Carl Sandburg (1878–1967)

Grow Old Along With Me

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made. . .

Robert Browning (1812–1889)

Grow Old Along With Me

Grow old along with me
The best is yet to be
When our time has come
We will be as one
God bless our love

Tom@tgarmstrong.com

God bless our love
Grow old along with me
Two branches of one tree
Face the setting sun
When the day is done
God bless our love
God bless our love
Spending our lives together
Man and wife together
World without end
World without end
Grow old along with me
Whatever fate decrees
We will see it through
For our love is true
God bless our love
God bless our love.

John Lennon (1940–1980)

Hands

A good marriage is a lifetime of hands.

It's a shaking hand sliding a shiny gold band on to the finger of another shaking hand.

It's an anxious hand tugging on a suddenly shy hand.

It's hands touching in sudden tenderness, or swinging together down a crowded street, or fingers interlocking in the darkness of a theater.

It's expressive hands: the playful pat on the fanny, the beckoning wave, the rumpled hair, the "Help me please" gesture....

It's two ecstatic hands being grasped by tiny brand new hands.

It's hurrying hands setting dinner for hungry hands.

It's an optimistic hand patting a discouraged hand.

It's a panicky hand clutching a calm hand.

It's a proud hand introducing an embarrassed hand.

It's joyous hands grabbing happy hands -- and sharing sadness with a touch.

It's healthy hands holding sick hands.

It's hands joining in prayer.

And finally, It's a shaking hand sliding a dull gold band off the finger of a very still hand.

Unknown

Hawaiian Prayer

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 the black night is scattered
And the eastern sky grows bright.
At last the great day has come!

Unknown

Excerpt From The House At Pooh Corner

"Pooh, promise you won't forget about me, ever. Not even when I'm a hundred."

Pooh thought for a little.

"How old shall I be then?"

"Ninety-nine." Pooh nodded.

"I promise," he said.

Still with his eyes on the world, Christopher Robin put out a hand and felt for Pooh's paw.

"Pooh," said Christopher Robin earnestly, "if I – if I'm not quite" he stopped and tried again "Pooh, whatever happens, you will understand, won't you?"

"Understand what?"

"Oh, nothing." He laughed and jumped to his feet. "Come on!"

"Where?" said Pooh.

"Anywhere," said Christopher Robin.

A.A. Milne (1882–1956)

How Do I Love Thee?

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 every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the 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.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861)
Sonnet XLIII – Forty-three
Sonnets from the Portuguese

In the Words of Victor Hugo:

You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving. The great acts of love are done by those who are habitually performing small acts of kindness. We pardon to the extent that we love. Love is knowing that even when you are alone, you will never be lonely again. And the great happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved. Loved for ourselves. And even loved in spite of ourselves.

Victor Hugo (1802–1885)

Hug o' War

I will not play at tug o' war
I'd rather play at hug o' war

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Where everyone giggles
And rolls on the rug,
Where everyone kisses ,
And everyone grins,
And everyone cuddles
And everyone wins.

Shel Silverstein (1930–1999)

I Am Love

Some say I can fly on the wind, yet I haven't any wings.
Some have found me floating on the open sea, yet I cannot swim.
Some have felt my warmth on cold nights, yet I have no flame. And though you cannot see me, I lay between two lovers at the hearth of fireplaces.
I am the twinkle in your child's eyes.
I am hidden in the lines of your mother's face.
I am your father's shield as he guards your home.
And yet ... Some say I am stronger than steel, yet I am as fragile as a tear.
Some have never searched for me, yet I am around them always.
Some say I die with loss, yet I am endless.
And though you cannot hear me, I dance on the laughter of children.
I am woven into the whispers of passion.
I am in the blessings of Grandmothers.
I embrace the cries of newborn babies.
And yet ... Some say I am a flower, yet I am also the seed.
Some have little faith in me, yet I will always believe in them.
Some say I cannot cure the ill, yet I nourish the soul.
And though you cannot touch me, I am the gentle hand of the kind.
I am the fingertips that caress your cheek at night.
I am the hug of a child.
I am love.

Author Unknown

i carry your heart with me

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in

Tom@tgarmstrong.com

my heart) i am never without it(anywhere
i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done
by only me is your doing, my darling)
i fear
no fate(for you are my fate, my sweet) i want
no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows
higher than the soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)

ee cummings (1894–1962)

Ideals to Live by in Marriage

To fall in love over and over again . . . with the same person.

To be the best of friends.

To share the journey of life in the happiest way you can.

To be a woman; to be a man;

To bring the best each has to offer to the special union you two share.

To care enough to communicate openly and honestly.

To help one another along the way.

To say “I love you” – and have it convey the happiest single emotion any two people can ever say.

To be together today and to make the most beautiful memories you can to take with you into all of your tomorrows.

Carey Martin

If Thou Must Love Me

If thou must love me, let it be for naught

Tom@tgarmstrong.com

Except for love's sake only. Do not say,
'I love her for her smile – her look – her way
Of speaking gently, for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day' –
For these things in themselves, beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee – and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry:
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861)

I Like You

This is the full text. You can select what you would like. Most couples don't have the entire poem read, but you can if you like.

I like you and I know why.
I like you because you are a good person to like.
I like you because when I tell you something special, you know it's special
And you remember it a long, long time.
You say, Remember when you told me something special
And both of us remember

When I think something is important
you think it's important too
We have good ideas
When I say something funny, you laugh
I think I'm funny and you think I'm funny too
Hah-hah!
I like you because you know where I'm ticklish
And you don't tickle me there except just a little tiny bit sometimes
But if you do, then I know where to tickle you too

You know how to be silly
That's why I like you
Boy are you ever silly
I never met anybody sillier than me till I met you
I like you because you know when it's time to stop being silly
Maybe day after tomorrow
Maybe never
Too late, it's a quarter past silly
Sometimes we don't say a word
We snurkle under fences
We spy secret places
If I am a goofus on the roofus hollering my head off
You are one too
If I pretend I am drowning, you pretend you are saving me
If I am getting ready to pop a paper bag,
then you are getting ready to jump
HOORAY

That's because you really like me
You really like me, don't you
And I really like you back
And you like me back and I like you back
And that's the way we keep on going every day

If you go away, then I go away too
or if I stay home, you send me a postcard
You don't just say Well see you around sometime, bye
I like you a lot because of that
If I go away, I send you a postcard too
And I like you because if we go away together
And if we are in Grand Central Station
And if I get lost
Then you are the one that is yelling for me

And I like you because when I am feeling sad
You don't always cheer me up right away

Sometimes it is better to be sad
You can't stand the others being so googly and gaggly every single minute
You want to think about things
It takes time

I like you because if I am mad at you
Then you are mad at me too
It's awful when the other person isn't
They are so nice and hoo-hoo you could just about punch them in the nose

I like you because if I think I am going to throw up
then you are really sorry
You don't just pretend you are busy looking at the birdies and all that
You say, maybe it was something you ate
You say, the same thing happened to me one time
And the same thing did

If you find two four-leaf clovers, you give me one
If I find four, I give you two
If we only find three, we keep on looking
Sometimes we have good luck, and sometimes we don't

If I break my arm, and if you break your arm too
Then it's fun to have a broken arm
I tell you about mine, you tell me about yours
We are both sorry
We write our names and draw pictures
We show everybody and they wish they had a broken arm too

I like you because I don't know why but
Everything that happens is nicer with you
I can't remember when I didn't like you
It must have been lonesome then

I like you because because because
I forget why I like you but I do

So many reasons
On the 4th of July I like you because it's the 4th of July
On the fifth of July, I like you too
If you and I had some drums and some horns and some horses
If we had some hats and some flags and some fire engines
We could be a HOLIDAY
We could be a CELEBRATION
We could be a WHOLE PARADE
See what I mean?

Even if it was the 999th of July
Even if it was August
Even if it was way down at the bottom of November
Even if it was no place particular in January
I would go on choosing you
And you would go on choosing me
Over and over again
That's how it would happen every time
I don't know why
I guess I don't know why I really like you
Why do I like you
I guess I just like you
I guess I just like you because I like you.

Sandol Stoddard Warburg

I Love Thee

I love thee, as I love the calm
 Of sweet, star-lighted hours!
I love thee, as I love the balm
 Of early jasmine flow'rs.
I love thee, as I love the last
 Rich smile of fading day,
Which lingereth, like the look we cast,
 On rapture pass'd away.
I love thee as I love the tone

Of some soft-breathing flute
Whose soul is wak'd for me alone,
When all beside is mute.

I love thee as I love the first
Young violet of the spring;
Or the pale lily, April-nurs'd,
To scented blossoming.
I love thee, as I love the full,
Clear gushings of the song,
Which lonely--sad--and beautiful--
At night--fall floats along,
Pour'd by the bulbul forth to greet
The hours of rest and dew;
When melody and moonlight meet
To blend their charm, and hue.
I love thee, as the glad bird loves
The freedom of its wing,
On which delightedly it moves
In wildest wandering.

I love thee as I love the swell,
And hush, of some low strain,
Which bringeth, by its gentle spell,
The past to life again.
Such is the feeling which from thee
Naught earthly can allure:
'Tis ever link'd to all I see
Of gifted--high--and pure!

Eliza Acton (1799-1859)

In An Instant

Our soulmates exist
In this well charted life
When we find them we know

In an instant it's right
And although to some
It seems far too fast
Who are we to judge
When their hearts meet at last
For they have known all along
To whom they belong
Their souls come together
Like a well rehearsed song
Let us support and nurture
The love these two know
So that through their lives together
This love shall continue to glow.

Melissa L Straub

In My Life

There are places I remember
All my life – though some have changed
Some forever – not for better
Some have gone and some remain
All these places had their moments
With lovers and friends I still can recall
Some are dead and some are living
In my life I've loved them all

But of all these friends and lovers
There is no one compares with you
And these memories lose their meaning
When I think of love as something new
Though I know I'll never lose affection
For people and things that went before
I know I'll often stop and think about them
In my life I love you more

John Lennon (1940–1980)

Intoxicated by the Wine of Love.

Intoxicated by the Wine of Love.
From each a mystic silence Love demands.
What do all seek so earnestly? 'Tis Love.
What do they whisper to each other? Love.
Love is the subject of their inmost thoughts.

In Love no longer 'thou' and 'I' exist,
For Self has passed away in the Beloved.
Now will I draw aside the veil from Love?
And in the temple of mine inmost soul,
Behold the Friend; Incomparable Love.
He who would know the secret of both worlds,
Will find the secret of them both, is Love.

Farid ud Din Attar (App. 1119–1220)
From The Jawhar Al-Dhat

I Promise

I promise to give you the best of myself and ask of you no more than I 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 attention and to bring you 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 the only way I know how.
Completely and forever.

Dorothy R. Colgan

From The Irrational Season – Madeleine L'Engle

Ultimately there comes a time when a decision must be made. Ultimately two people who love each other must ask themselves how much they hope for as their love grows and deepens, and how much risk they are willing to take. It is indeed a fearful gamble. Because it is the nature of love to create, a marriage itself is something which has to be created. 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.

Madeleine L'Engle (1918–2007)

I Wanna Be Yours

I wanna be your vacuum cleaner
Breathing in your dust,
I wanna be your Ford Cortina
I will never rust,
If you like your coffee hot
Let me be your coffee pot,
You call the shots,
I wanna be yours.

I wanna be your raincoat
For those frequent rainy days,
I wanna be your dreamboat
When you want to sail away,
Let me be your teddy bear
Take me with you anywhere,
I don't care,
I wanna be yours.

I wanna be your electric meter

I will not run out,
I wanna be the electric heater
You'll get cold without,
I wanna be your setting lotion
Hold your hair in deep devotion,
Deep as the deep Atlantic ocean
That's how deep is my devotion.

John Cooper Clark (1949-)

I Will Be Here

If in the morning when you wake,
if the sun does not appear,
I will be here.

If in the dark we lose sight of love,
hold my hand and have no fear,
I will be here.

I will be here,
when you feel like being quiet,
when you need to speak your mind I will listen.
Through the winning, losing, and trying
we'll be together, and I will be here.
If in the morning when you wake,
if the future is unclear,
I will be here.

As sure as seasons were made for change,
our lifetimes were made for years,
I will be here.

I will be here, and you can cry on my shoulder,
when the mirror tells us we're older.
I will hold you,
to watch you grow in beauty,
and tell you all the things you are to me.
We'll be together and I will be here.

I will be true to the promises I've made,
To you and to the One who gave you to me.
I will be here.

Steven Curtis Chapman (1962-)

Journey

“Journey” is about as good an image as marriage evokes, and each partner is a companion along the way. There are times when you walk hand-in-hand, and times when you are barely within sight of one another ... There are moments of glory on the crest of mountains when life is light, and as clear as the air; there are valleys so dark and deep you are certain no escape is possible. Mostly, however, there are long hikes during which nothing particularly interesting happens, but the chores must be done and these must be their own reward. Good marriages ... exist in all occasions, but what makes them worthy are those times when you see something on the journey which is so wonderful that you call out “Look, Look!” And then, with your companion by your side, you recognize more beauty together than you could have possibly seen alone.

John A. Taylor

The Key to Love

From a 1st Century Chinese Poem

The key to love is understanding. The ability to comprehend not only the spoken word, but those unspoken gestures, the little things that say so much by themselves.

The key to love is forgiveness. To accept each others faults and pardon mistakes, without forgetting, but with remembering what you learn from them.

The key to love is sharing. Facing your good fortunes as well as the bad, together; both conquering problems, forever searching for ways to intensify your happiness.

The key to love is giving. Without thought of return, but with the hope of just a simple smile, and by giving in but never giving up.

The key to love is respect. Realizing that you two are separate people, with different ideas; that you don't belong to each other, that you belong with each other, and share a mutual bond.

The key to love is inside us all. It takes time and patience to unlock all the ingredients that will take you to its threshold; it is the continual learning process that demands a lot of work, but the rewards are more than worth the effort.

And that is the key to love.

1st Century China

Letter on the Road

Farewell, but you will be
with me, you will go within
a drop of blood circulating in my veins
or outside, a kiss that burns my face
or a belt of fire at my waist.
My sweet, accept
the great love that came out of my life
and that in you found no territory
like the explorer lost
in the isles of bread and honey.
I found you after
the storm,
the rain washed the air
and in the water
your sweet feet gleamed like fishes.
Adored one, I am off to my flighting.
I shall scratch the earth to make you a cave
and there your Captain
will wait for you with flowers in the bed.
Think no more, my sweet,
about the anguish
that went on between us

like a bolt of phosphorus
leaving us perhaps its burning.
Peace arrives too because I return
to my land to fight,
and as I have a whole heart
with the share of blood that you gave me
forever,
and as
I have
my hands filled with your naked being,
look at me,
look at me,
look at me across the sea, for I go radiant,
look at me across the night through which I sail,
and sea and night are those eyes of yours.
I have not left you when I go away.
Now I am going to tell you:
my land will be yours,
I am going to conquer it,
not just to give it to you,
but for everyone,
for all my people.
The thief will come out of his tower some day.
And the invader will be expelled.
All the fruits of life
will grow in my hands
accustomed once to powder.
And I shall know how to touch the new flowers gently
because you taught me tenderness.
My sweet, adored one,
you will come with me to fight face to face
because your kisses live in my heart
like red banners,
and if I fall, not only
will earth cover me
but also this great love that you brought me
and that lived circulating in my blood.
You will come with me,
at that hour I wait for you,
at that hour and at every hour,
at every hour I wait for you.
And when the sadness that I hate comes
to knock at your door,

tell her that I am waiting for you
and when loneliness wants you to change
the ring in which my name is written,
tell loneliness to talk with me,
that I had to go away
because I am a soldier,
and that there where I am,
under rain or under
fire,
my love I wait for you.
I wait for you in the harshest desert
and next to the flowering lemon tree,
in every place where there is life,
where spring is being born,
my love I wait for you.
When they tell you: "That man
does not love you" remember
that my feet are alone in that night, and they seek
the sweet and tiny feet that I adore.
Love, when they tell you
that I have forgotten you, and even when
it is I who say it,
when I say it to you,
do not believe me,
who could and how could anyone
cut you from my heart
and who would receive my blood
when I went bleeding toward you?
But still I cannot
forget my people.
I am going to fight in each street,
behind each stone.
Your love also helps me:
It is a closed flower
that constantly fills me with its aroma
and that opens suddenly
within me like a great star.
My love, it is night.
That black water, the sleeping
world surround me.
Soon dawn will come,
and meanwhile I write you
to tell you "I love you."

To tell you "I love you," care for,
clean, lift up.
defend
our love, my darling.
I leave it with you as if I left
a handful of earth with seeds.
From our love loves will be born.
In our love they will drink water.
Perhaps a day will come
when a man
and a woman, like
us,
will touch this love and it will still have the strength
to burn the hands that touch it.
Who were we? What does it matter?
They will touch this fire
and the fire, my sweet, will say your simple name
that only you knew, because you alone
upon earth know
who I am, and because nobody knew me like one,
like just one hand of yours,
because nobody
knew how or when
my heart was burning:
only
your great dark eyes knew,
your wide mouth,
your skin, your breasts,
your belly, your insides,
and your soul that I awoke
so that it would go on
singing until the end of life.
Love, I am waiting for you.
Farewell, love, I am waiting for you.
Love, love, I am waiting for you.
And this letter ends
with no sadness:
my feet are firm upon the earth,
my hand writes this letter on the road,
and in the midst of life I shall be
always
beside the friend, facing the enemy,
with your name on my mouth

and a kiss that never
broke away from yours.

Pablo Neruda (1904–1973)

A Link to Last A Lifetime

When two people fall in love,
A bond is forever formed between them.
This bond is made of love and friendship
Forming a link between two willing hearts.
Love and friendship, become intertwined,
So that one cannot exist without the other.
They bloom together like vines
On an old wrought iron fence,
Though the vines may grow in odd ways
And veer off their chosen course,
If either part of those vines is severed
Than such it is that both shall wither and die.
If love is believed to exist without friendship,
Eventually that love will crumble from within.
And a friendship without love
Would make for a shallow existence.
If one is tried and does not succeed
You cannot rid yourself of that one
Without cutting off the life to the other,
In forsaking one you sacrifice the other.
And in forfeiting love and friendship
You lose the essence of life.
But when friendship and love meet in that perfect union,
Even if only for a short time,
It makes your heart sing a song of enchantment.
And this union is an amazing sight to witness.
The bond that unites our hearts is binding,
No matter distance, nor time,
That bond shall never be broken,
Nor shall it be forgotten....

Unknown

Looking For Your Face

From the beginning of my life I have been looking for your face, but today I have seen it. Today I have seen the charm, the beauty, the profound grace of the face that I was looking for. Today I have found you, and those who laughed and scorned me yesterday are sorry that they were not looking as I did. I am bewildered by the magnificence of your beauty, and wish to see you with a hundred eyes. My heart has burned with passion and has searched forever for this wondrous beauty that I now behold. I am ashamed to call this love human, and afraid of God to call it divine. Your fragrant breath, like the morning breeze, has come to the stillness of the garden. You have breathed new life into me. I have become your sunshine, and also your shadow. My soul is screaming in ecstasy. Every fiber of my being is in love with you. Your radiance has lit a fire in my heart, and you have made radiant for me the earth and sky. My arrow of love has arrived at the target. I am in the house of mercy, and my heart is a place of prayer.

Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi (1207–1273)

Love

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 part of me,
That you bring out;

I love you

Tom@tgarmstrong.com

For putting your hand
Into my heaped-up heart
And passing over
All the foolish, weak things
That you can't help
Dimly seeing there,

And for drawing out
Into the light
All the beautiful belongings
That no one else had looked
Quite far enough to find.

I love you because you
Are helping me to make
Of the lumber of my life
Not a tavern
But a temple.

Out of the works
Of my every day
Not a reproach
But a song.

I love you
Because you have done
More than any creed
Could have done
To make me good.
And more than any fate
Could have done
To make me happy.

You have done it
Without a touch,
Without a word,

Without a sign.

You have done it
by being yourself.
Perhaps that is what
Being a friend means,
After all.

Roy Croft

Love is

Love is...

Being happy for the other person when they are happy
Being sad for the other person when they are sad
Being together in good times, and being together in bad times
Love is the source of strength.

Love is...

Being honest with yourself at all times
Being honest with the other person at all times
Talking, listening, respecting the truth
And never pretending
Love is the source of reality.

Love is...

An understanding that is so complete that
You feel you are a part of the other person
Accepting the other person
Just the way they are, and not trying to change them
To be someone else
Love is the source of unity.

Love is...

Freedom to pursue your own desires
While sharing your experiences with the other person
The growth of your own individual alongside of

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And together with the growth of another individual
Love is the source of success.

Love is...
The fury of the storm
The color in the rainbow
Love is the source of passion.

Love is...
Knowing that the other person
Will always be with you
Regardless of what happens
Missing the other person when they are away
But remaining near in heart at all times
Love is the source of security.
Love is the source of life!

Shawn Gorski

Love is a Friendship That Has Caught Fire.

Love is a friendship that has caught fire. It is a quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. It is loyalty through good times and bad. It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for weaknesses.

Love is content with the present, it hopes for the future, and it doesn't brood over the past. It's the day-in, day-out chronicles of compromises, small disappointments, big victories and common goals. If you have love in your life, it can make up for a great many things you lack. If you don't have it, no matter what else there is, it is not enough.

Love is a special way of feeling . . . It is the safe way we feel when we sit on our mother's lap with her arms around us tight and close. It is the good way we feel when we talk to someone and they want to listen.

Love is found in unexpected places . . .

It is there in the quiet moment when we first discover a beautiful thing . . . when we watch a bird soar high against a pale blue sky . . .

When we see a lovely flower that no one else has noticed.

When we find a place that shelters us.

Love starts in little ways . . . It may begin the day we first share our thoughts with someone else . . .

Or help someone who needs us . . .

Or, sometimes, it begins because, even without words, we understand how someone feels.

Love comes quietly . . . but you know when it is there, because, suddenly . . . you are not alone anymore . . . and there is no sadness inside you.

Love is a happy feeling that stays inside your heart for the rest of your life.

Unknown

Love is a Special Way of Feeling

Love is a special way of feeling . . .

It is the safe way we feel when we sit on our mother's lap with her arms around us tight and close.

It is the good way we feel when we talk to someone and they want to listen and don't tell us to go away and be quiet.

It is the happy way we feel when we save a bird that has been hurt . . .

Or feed a lost cat . . .

Or calm a frightened colt.

Love is found in unexpected places . . . It is there in the quiet moment when we first discover a beautiful thing . . . when we watch a bird soar high against a pale blue sky . . .

When we see a lovely flower that no one else has noticed . . .

When we find a place that shelters us and is all our very own.

Love starts in little ways . . . It may begin the day we first share our thoughts with someone else . . .

Or help someone who needs us . . .

Or, sometimes, it begins because, even without words, we understand how someone feels.

Love comes quietly . . . but you know when it is there, because, suddenly . . . you are not alone any more . . . and there is no sadness inside you.

Love is a happy feeling that stays inside your heart for the rest of your life.

Joan Walsh Anglund (1926 –)

A Love Letter

Written by Robert Browning to Elizabeth Barrett

On their wedding day, September 12, 1846

You will only expect a few words. What will those be? When the heart is full it may run over; but the real fullness stays within. Words can never tell you ... how perfectly dear you are to me – perfectly dear to my heart and soul. I look back and in every one point, every word and gesture, every letter, every silence – you have been entirely perfect to me – I would not change one word, one look. My hope and aim are to preserve this love, not to fall from it – for which I trust to God. who procured it for me. and doubtless can preserve it.

Tom@tgarmstrong.com

Enough now, my dearest! You have given me the highest, completest proof of love that ever one human being gave another. I am all gratitude – and all pride ... that my life has been so crowned by you.

Robert Browning (1812–1889)

The Marriage At Cana

How welcome was the call,
And sweet the festal lay,
When Jesus deigned in Cana's hall
to bless the marriage day!

And happy was the bride,
And glad the bridegroom's heart,
For he who tarried at their side
Bade grief and ill depart.

His gracious power divine
The water–vessels knew;
And plenteous was the mystic wine
The wondering servants drew.

O Lord of life and love,
Come thou again today;
And bring a blessing from above
That ne'er shall pass away.
O bless, as erst of old,
The bridegroom and the bride;
Bless with the holier stream that flowed
Forth from thy pierced side.

Before thine altar throne
This mercy we implore;
As thou dost knit them, Lord, in one,
So bless them evermore.

Marriage is a Serious Business

Marriage is a serious business and hard work. It's not just becoming roommates, it's becoming soul mates; it's not just signing a license, it's sharing a life. The words in the marriage ceremony "from this day forward" are scary. At the moment a couple exchanges these vows, they can never know what they really mean, what hills and valleys stretch out in front of them in the years ahead. But if you take the words seriously, there's no going back. There's only the future, unlimited and unknowable, and the promise to make the journey together.

Steve and Cokie Roberts

Marriage is Like the Spring

Marriage is like the spring
It represents flowers, beauty, romance and love.
It is the time of youth and passion and strength.
It brings a new life overflowing with sweet elixirs
Of happiness.

But summer follows spring
And summer will bring new responsibilities.
Your life together will be tested by many trials.
You will not escape the summer heat of misunderstanding,
Discouragement, frustration and failure.
And you will suffer the searing heat of pain and sorrow.
But you will have greater strength to bear them all...
Because you walk together.

And then in the autumn season
When you have toiled upward together to reach at last
The summit of your life, then the strength of youth
Will begin to fail, passions will begin to cool, and
Flowers will begin to fade.

But autumn also brings contentment, peace and calm.

And finally when winter comes
Your physical strength will be gone, but the spiritual
Strength of your undying love will still remain.
Your flower will be taken away, but the seeds from that
Flower will fall into the ground and bring forth new flowers
Of rare beauty and rich fragrance.
And you will say to each other that life indeed was good. . .
Because you walked together.

But now, for you, it is spring!
Rejoice in the flowers; rejoice in the beauty;
Rejoice in the romance and love!

Unknown

Marriage Joins Two People in the Circle of its Love

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 or 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, 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.

Edmund O'Neill

Married Love

You and I
Have so much love
That it
Burns like a fire,
In which we bake a lump of clay
Molded into a figure of you
And a figure of me.
Then we take both of them,
And break them into pieces,
And mix the pieces with water,
And mold again a figure of you,
And a figure of me.
I am in your clay.
You are in my clay.
In life we share a single quilt.
In death we will share one bed.

The Master Speed

No speed of wind or water rushing by
But you have speed far greater. You can climb
Back up a stream of radiance to the sky,
And back through history up the stream of time
And you were given this swiftness, not for haste,
Nor chiefly that you may go where you will.
But in the rush of everything to waste,
That you may have the power of standing still –
Off any still or moving thing you say.
Two such as you with master speed
Cannot be parted nor be swept away
From one another once you are agreed
That life is only life forevermore
Together wing to wing and oar to oar.

Robert Frost (1874–1963)

The Meaning

To love is to share life together
to build special plans just for two
To work side by side
and then smile with pride
As one by one, dreams all come true.

To love is to help and encourage
with smiles and sincere words of praise
To take time to share
to listen and care
In tender, affectionate ways.

To love is to have someone special
one who you can always depend

To be there through the years
sharing laughter and tears
As a partner, a lover, a friend.

To love is to make special memories
of moments you love to recall
Of all the good things
that sharing life brings
Love is the greatest of all.

I've learned the full meaning
of sharing and caring
and having my dreams all come true;
I've learned the full meaning
of being in love
by being and loving with you.

Kellie Spehn

My True Love Hath My Heart

My true love hath my heart, and I have hers
By just exchange, one for the other given.
I hold hers dear, and mine she cannot miss,
There never was a better bargain driven.
Her heart in me keeps me and her in one,
My heart in hers her thoughts and senses guides;
She loves my heart, for once it was her own,
I cherish hers, because in me it bides.
Her heart her wound received from my sight,
My heart was wounded with her wounded heart;
For as from me on hers her hurt did light,
So still me thought in me her hurt did smart.
Both equal hurt, in this change sought our bliss;
My true love hath my heart and I have hers.

Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586)

Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You're off to Great Places!
You're off and away!
You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself
any direction you choose.
You're on your own. And you know what you know.
And YOU are the couple who'll decide where to go.
You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care.
About some you will say, "We don't choose to go there."
With your heads full of brains and your shoes full of feet,
you're too smart to go down, any not-so-good street.
And you may not find any
you'll want to go down.
In that case, of course,
you'll head straight out of town.
It's opener there
in the wide open air,
Out there things can happen
and frequently do
to people as brainy
and footsy as you.
And when things start to happen,
don't worry. Don't stew.
Just go right along.
You'll start happening too.
OH! THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!
You'll be on your way up!
You'll be seeing great sights!
You'll join the high fliers
who soar to great heights!
You won't lag behind, because you'll have all the speed.

You'll pass the whole gang, and you'll soon take the lead.
Wherever you fly you'll be best of the best.
Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.
Except when you don't.
Because sometimes, you won't.
You'll get mixed up of course,
as you already know.
You'll get mixed up
with so many strange birds as you go.
So be sure when you step.
Step with great care and great tact
and remember that Life's a Great Balancing Act.
Just never forget to be dexterous and deft.
And never mix up your right foot with your left.
And will you succeed?
Yes! You will indeed!
(98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed.)
YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS!
So, be your name Madison, Jordan, Kim or Gabe
or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea,
you're off to great places!
Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting.
So ... get on your way!

Dr. Seuss – Theodor Seuss Geisel (1904–1991)

On Love

Love is a mighty power, a great and complete good.
Love alone lightens every burden, and makes rough places smooth.
It bears every hardship as though it were nothing, and renders all bitterness
sweet and acceptable.

Nothing is sweeter than love,
Nothing stronger,
Nothing higher,

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Nothing wider,
Nothing more pleasant,
Nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth; for love is born of God.

Love flies, runs and leaps for joy.
It is free and unrestrained.
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.
It is strange and effective,
while those who lack love faint and fail.

Love is not fickle and sentimental,
nor is it intent on vanities.
Like a living flame and a burning torch,
it surges upward and surely surmounts every obstacle.

Excerpt from The Imitation of Christ
Thomas à Kempis (1379–1471)

Another Version

On Love

Love is a great thing, a good above all others, which alone makes every heavy burden light, and equalizes every inequality. For it bears the burden and makes it no burden, it makes every bitter thing to be sweet. Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing loftier, nothing broader, nothing pleasanter, nothing fuller or better in heaven nor on earth.

He who loves flies, runs, and is glad; he is free and not hindered. Love knows no measure, but breaks out above all measure; love feels no burden, reckons not labours, strives after more than it is able to do, pleads not impossibility, because it judges all things to be possible. It is strong therefore

for all things, and it fulfills many things, and is successful where he who loves not fails and lies down.

Love is watchful, and whilst sleeping still keeps watch; though fatigued it is not weary, though pressed it is not forced, though alarmed it is not terrified, but like the living flame and the burning torch, it breaks forth on high and securely triumphs.

Excerpt from The Imitation of Christ
Thomas à Kempis (1379–1471)

Yet Another version

On Love

Love is a great thing, a great good in every way. It alone lightens what is heavy and leads smoothly over all roughness. For it carries a burden without being burdened, and makes every bitter thing sweet and tasty. Love wants to be lifted up, not held back by anything low. Love wants to be free and far from all worldly desires, so that its inner vision may not be dimmed, and good fortune bind it or misfortune cast it down. Nothing is sweeter than love; nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider; nothing happier, nothing fuller, nothing better in heaven and earth. For love is born of God ...

Love keeps watch and is never unaware, even when it sleeps. Tired, it is never exhausted; hindered, it is never defeated; alarmed, it is never afraid. But like a living flame and a burning torch, it bursts upward and blazes forth ...

Love is quick, sincere, dutiful, joyous and pleasant; brave, patient, faithful, prudent, serene and vigorous; and it never seeks itself. For whenever we seek ourselves, we fall away from love. Love is watchful, humble, and upright. Not weak, or frivolous or directed toward vain things. Temperate, pure, steady, calm and alert in all the senses. Love is devoted and thankful to God, always trusting and hoping in Him, even when it doesn't taste His sweetness.

Excerpt from The Imitation of Christ
Thomas à Kempis (1379–1471)

Only We

Dream no more that grief and pain
Could such hearts as ours enchain,
Safe from loss and safe from gain,
Free, as love makes free.

When false friends pass coldly by,
Sigh, in earnest pity, sigh,
Turning thine unclouded eye
Up from them to me.

Hear not danger's trampling feet,
Feel not sorrow's wintry sleet,
Trust that life is just and meet,
With mine arm round thee.

Lip on lip and eye to eye,
Love to love, we live, we die;
No more thou, and no more I,
We and only we!

Richard Monckton Milnes (1809–1885)

On Marriage

You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore.
You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.
Ay, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.
But 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 other's 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,
Even as the strings of a lute are 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.

Kahlil Gibran (1883–1931)
From The Prophet

On Your Wedding Day

Today is a day you will always remember
The greatest in anyone's life
You'll start off the day just two people in love
And end it as Husband and Wife

It's a brand new beginning the start of a journey
With moments to cherish and treasure
And although there'll be times when you both disagree
These will surely be outweighed by pleasure

You'll have heard many words of advice in the past
When the secrets of marriage were spoken
But you know that the answers lie hidden inside
Where the bond of true love lies unbroken

So live happy forever as lovers and friends
It's the dawn of a new life for you
As you stand there together with love in your eyes
From the moment you whisper 'I do'

And with luck, all your hopes, and your dreams can be real
May success find it's way to your hearts
Tomorrow can bring you the greatest of joys
But today is the day it all starts.

Author Unknown

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

Come live with me and be my Love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dale and field,
And all the craggy mountains yield.

There will we sit upon the rocks
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull,
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw and ivy buds
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my Love.

Thy silver dishes for thy meat
As precious as the gods do eat,
Shall on an ivory table be
Prepared each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May-morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my Love.

Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593)

Permanently

One day the Nouns were clustered in the street.
An Adjective walked by, with her dark beauty.
The Nouns were struck, moved, changed.
The next day a Verb drove up, and created the Sentence.

Each Sentence says one thing -- for example, "Although it was a dark rainy day when the Adjective walked by, I shall remember the pure and sweet expression on her face until the day I perish from the green, effective earth."

Or, "Will you please close the window, Andrew?"

Or, for example, "Thank you, the pink pot of flowers on the window sill has changed color recently to a light yellow, due to the heat from the boiler factory which exists nearby."

In the springtime the Sentences and the Nouns lay silently on the grass.
A lonely Conjunction here and there would call, "And! But!"
But the Adjective did not emerge.

As the Adjective is lost in the sentence,
So I am lost in your eyes, ears, nose, and throat –
You have enchanted me with a single kiss
Which can never be undone
Until the destruction of language.

Kenneth Koch (1950–1982)
(pronounced Coke)

The Promise

Within this blessed union of souls, where two hearts intertwine to become one, there lies a promise. Perfectly born, divinely created, 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 were you've both only dreamed. Where you'll dwell for a lifetime of happiness, sheltered in the warmth of each other's arms.

Heather Berry

A Red, Red Rose

1

O, my love's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.
O, my love's like the melodie,
That's sweetly play'd in tune

2

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I,
And I will love thee still, my Dear,
Till all the seas gang dry.

3

Till all the seas gang dry, my Dear,
And the rocks melt with the sun!
O, I will Love thee still, my Dear
While the sands o' life shall run.

4

And fare thee well, my only Love,
And fare thee well a while!
And I will come again, my Love
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

Robert Burns (1759–1796)

Recipe of Love

As many of you present today are food-connoisseurs and great cooks, Grm and Bde have asked me to share their most prized recipe of all – the Recipe of Love:

The recipe of love must always include:

Tom@tgarmstrong.com

A cup of friendship
A can of laughter
A pound of patience
A quart of trust
A tablespoon of forgiveness
A clove of faith
A teaspoon of loyalty
A sprig of honesty
A dash of lust
Herbs and spices for strength
Mix all these ingredients well
Add Grm and Bde to bring out the best of these flavors
Then sauté the whole in two cups of respect

Unknown

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost (1874–1963)

Silver and Gold

Working hard, every day,
Never notice how the time slips away.
People come, seasons go,
But we have something that'll never grow old.
I don't care if the sun won't shine,
And the rains pour down on me and mine.
Cause our kind of love never seems to get old,
It's better than silver and gold.

Neil Young

Somewhere

Somewhere there waiteth in this world of ours
for one lone soul, another lonely soul –
Each chasing each other through all the weary hours,
And meeting strangely at one sudden goal;
Then blend they – like green leaves with golden flowers,
Into one long beautiful and perfect whole –
And life's long night is ended, and the way
Lies open onward to eternal day.

Sir Edwin Arnold (1832–1904)

somewhere i have never travelled

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

Tom@tgarmstrong.com

your slightest look easily will unclothe me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens
(touching skilfully,mysteriously) her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and

my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals
the power of your intense fragility: whose texture

compels me with the color of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)

nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands

e. e. cummings (1904–1962)

So Much Happiness

It is difficult to know what to do with so much happiness.
With sadness there is something to rub against,
A wound to tend with lotion and cloth.
When the world falls in around you, you have pieces to pick up,
Something to hold in your hands, like ticket stubs or change.

But happiness floats.
It doesn't need you to hold it down.

It doesn't need anything.
Happiness lands on the roof of the next house, singing,
And disappears when it wants to.
You are happy either way.
Even the fact that you once lived in a peaceful tree house
And now live over a quarry of noise and dust
Cannot make you unhappy.
Everything has a life of its own,
It too could wake up filled with possibilities
Of coffee cake and ripe peaches,
And love even the floor which needs to be swept,
The soiled linens and scratched records....

Since there is no place large enough
To contain so much happiness,
You shrug, you raise your hands, and it flows out of you
Into everything you touch. You are not responsible.
You take no credit, as the night sky takes no credit
For the moon, but continues to hold it, and share it,
And in that way, be known.

Unknown

Song of the Open Road

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.
Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
strong and content I travel the open road.
I inhale great draughts of space,
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the south are mine.
I am larger, better than I thought,
I did not know I held so much goodness.
Comrade, I give you my hand!
I give you my love more precious than money,

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I give you myself before preaching or law;
Will you give me yourself? Will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

Walt Whitman (1819–1892)

Sonnet XVII (17)

I don't love you as if you were the salt-rose, topaz
or arrow of carnations that propagate fire:
I love you as certain dark things are loved,
secretly, between the shadow and the soul.
I love you as the plant that doesn't bloom and carries
hidden within itself the light of those flowers,
and thanks to your love, darkly in my body
lives the dense fragrance that rises from the earth.
I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where,
I love you simply, without problems or pride:
I love you in this way because I don't know any other way of loving
but this, in which there is no I or you,
so intimate that your hand upon my chest is my hand,
so intimate that when I fall asleep it is your eyes that close.

Pablo Neruda (1904–1973)

Sonnet LXVI (66)

No te quiero sino porque te quiero
Y de quererte a no quererte llego
Y de esperarte cuando no teo espero
Pasa mi Corazon del frio al fuego.

Te quiero solo porque a ti te quiero
Te odio sin fin, y odiandote te ruego,
Y la medida de mi amor viajero
Es no verte y amarte como un ciego

Tal vez consumira la luz de enero,
Su rayo cruel, mi corazon entero,
Robandome la llave del sosiego.

En esta historia solo yo me muero
Y morire de amor porque te quiero,
Porque te quiero, amor, a sangre y fuego.

I do not love you – except because I love you;
I go from loving to not loving you,
from waiting to not waiting for you
my heart moves from the cold into the fire.

I love you only because it's you I love;
I hate you no end, and hating you bend to you,
and the measure of my changing love for you
is that I do not see you but love you blindly.

Maybe the January light will consume
my heart with its cruel
ray, stealing my key to true calm.

In this part of the story I am the one who dies,
the only one, and I will die of love because I love you,
because I love you, Love, in fire and in blood.

Pablo Neruda (1904–1973)

Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
Oh No! It is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with its brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

Sudden Light

I have been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell:
I know the grass beyond the door,
The sweet keen smell,
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before, –
How long ago I may not know:
But just when at that swallow's soar
Your neck turned so,
Some veil did fall, – I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before?
And shall not thus time's eddying flight
Still with our lives our love restore
In death's despite,
And day and night yield one delight once more?

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882)

These I Can Promise

I cannot promise you a life of sunshine;
I cannot promise riches, wealth, or gold;
I cannot promise you an easy pathway
That leads away from change or growing old.

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But I can promise all my heart's devotion;
A smile to chase away your tears of sorrow;
A love that's ever true and ever growing;
A hand to hold in yours through each tomorrow.

Unknown

'Til Death Do Us Part

I hope it is decades before death parts us
But I don't know what God has in mind
I pray that he'll let us be happy always
But I can't comprehend plans divine.

It may be that turmoil will dot our landscape
With it's gray skies and swirling intrusion
It may be that joy will fill both our hearts
And we'll think pain is just an illusion.

But I think it's likely we'll see some of each
As we walk on this pathway together
I promise you now: I will give all I have
From my mouth you'll not hear the word "Never."

With so much uncertainty, crime, and abuse
That exists, everywhere, all around us
More than ever we need to hold fast to the truth
Of our marriage – Life will not confound us.

Time together is fleeting; it is too scarce to waste
My goal is to make my life-mission
A beautiful tapestry highlighting "us"
Sewn with threads from our human condition.

I want to explore the full spectrum of life
Before we're too close to its leaving

I want to embrace vast explosions of joy
That make both our hearts strong and heaving.

I know I will love you for all of my life
No matter the time we are given.
I'm your till death parts us – left all alone –
Until God reunites us in heaven.

Carol D. Bos

Till Death Us Do Part

Many lovers vow to be together forever, in life and in death, but I don't believe I've heard of anyone whose loyalty and devotion matched that of Mrs. Isidor Straus.

The year was 1912. Mrs. Straus and her husband were passengers on the Titanic during its fateful voyage. Not many women went down with the ship, but Mrs. Straus was one of the few women who did not survive for one simple reason: She could not bear to leave her husband.

This is how Mabel Bird, Mrs. Straus's maid, who survived the disaster, told the story after she was rescued:

"When the Titanic began to sink, panicked women and children were the first ones loaded into lifeboats. Mr. and Mrs. Straus were calm and comforting to the passengers, and helped many of them into the boats.

"If it had not been for them," Mabel stated, "I would have drowned. I was in the fourth or fifth lifeboat. Mrs. Straus made me get into the boat, and put some heavy wraps on me."

Then Mr. Straus begged his wife to get into the lifeboat with her maid and the others. Mrs. Straus started to get in. She had one foot on the gunwale, but then suddenly, she changed her mind, turned away and stepped back onto the sinking ship.

"Please, dear, get into the boat!" her husband pleaded.

Mrs. Straus looked deep into the eyes of the man with whom she'd spent most of her life, the man who had been her best friend, her heart's true companion and always a comfort to her soul. She grabbed his arm and drew his trembling body close to hers.

"No," Mrs. Straus is said to have replied defiantly. "I will not get into the boat. We have been together through a great many years. We are old now. I will not leave you. Where you go, I will go."

And that is where they were last seen, standing arm in arm on the deck, this devoted wife clinging courageously to her husband, this loving husband clinging protectively to his wife, as the ship sank. Together forever...

Barbara De Angelis

Note:

Their earthly remains are not together. Isidor's body was found at sea and buried in New York City. Mrs. Straus's body was never recovered from the North Atlantic. He was one of the founders of Macy's Department Store.

To Be One With Each Other

What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined together to strengthen each other in all labor, to minister to each other in all sorrow, to share with each other in all gladness, to be one with each other in the silent unspoken memories?

George Eliot (pseudonym Mary Ann Evans 1819–1880)

Today

Today...

I look into the eyes of my best friend

The one with whom I can share anything with

My deepest hopes and heart-filled dreams

Inner fears and sheltered insecurities

My most warming joys and overwhelming triumphs

All future journeys that I have left to encounter

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This and more I know I can share with you.

Today...

I take pride in my best friend
With admiration I look upon you and smile
For all that you are and all that you do that makes me so proud
Every part of you that I have come to adore
And for all those parts I have not yet learned
I will live each day from now on cherishing you with honor.

Today...

I share my soul to my best friend
My most prized possession which no other has been given
I give it with great confidence and trust
Because with you I am at peace and I know with you it is safe
You give to me a warmth that I keep with me always
And what else can I give to someone who has given me so much
For you have opened my eyes to see a love, which before you I was blind to.

Today...

I am marrying my best friend
For I know now God put you here to be my partner
Knowing even before I, that you were the one I would live to love Guiding me to
this aisle,
He knew your hand would be waiting here for me to hold
Graciously leading me here to you and allowing us to share this moment
together
So I could begin the rest of my journeys through life, happily ever after with you
Unknown

To Love

To love is to enter a whole new world, a world of togetherness, a world of sharing All that is dearest and deepest within your hearts.

To love is to remember and keep alive forever all those unique qualities that drew you to one another in the beginning Those first halting phrases ... That

wonderful feeling of oneness when your eyes first met.

To love is to constantly search for new ways to bring each other happiness, to make the most of every moment you share together, and marvel at how your feelings for one another keep rising to new dimensions.

To love is to create an oasis of tranquility for one another and a quiet place, apart from others, where you need not pretend ... where you can be yourselves And know within your hearts, you will be accepted by one another.

To love is to greet each day with anticipation ... Always eager for another opportunity to share new adventures ... And gather up new memories together.

To love is to follow the rainbow through the rain, to be able to laugh at yourselves and be willing to say "I was wrong, I'm sorry" ... To forgive, and more importantly, to forget, and to always believe and trust in one another.

To love is to watch with wonder all the miracles of creation, to find beauty in all the simple things of life, and to find, within yourselves, a deeper appreciation and a new awareness of how wonderful it is to be alive ... To be happy ... To be together.

To love is coming together from the pathways of your past and then moving forward ... Hand in hand, along the uncharted roads of your future, ready to risk, to dream, and to dare Always believing that all things are possible with faith and love.

Unknown

Touch Each Other Often

Touch each other often

As a symbol of your love and presence.

Say, "I love you" without hesitation –

To assume the other knows is to play the part of a fool.

Be open and truthful in all your communications –

It will enhance your trust for one another.

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Be willing to forgive or ask for forgiveness
 When you feel hurt or have been hurtful.
Remember that only those who respect others
 Will be given respect in return.
Love each other with the same intensity
 That you would like to be loved yourself.
Hold each other often during seasons of joy
 And the strength will be there during seasons of sorrow.
Enjoy and value similar pleasures together
 But allow for individual differences apart from each other.
Be creative in the ways you show that you care
 Lest boredom creep into your relationship.
Nurture your marriage as if you were stranded on a deserted island
 With only each other for love, joy and sustenance.
Remember that love does not just die –
 We kill it with indifference and lack of commitment.
Take the risk of sharing your vulnerabilities –
 Be gentle with each other in accepting them.
Take time to exchange gifts of love
 Whether it be a single rose or a listening ear.
If tragedy comes, don't close your heart to the other
 For sorrow shared is sorrow diminished.
The bonds of marriage are only as strong
 As your commitment to nourish and grow together in love.
Forgive all those for the injuries they cause you
 And forgive yourself for not being perfect.
Remember that life is like a beautiful rose –
 To enjoy the beauty you risk some thorns.
With love as the motivation for your words and deeds
 You will share harmony in your relationship.
Enjoy your new life together
 In peace, joy and serenity.

Elaine Fealy

Touched by an Angel

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We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight
live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives
and in its train come ecstasies
old memories of pleasure
ancient histories of pain.
Yet if we are bold,
love strikes away the chains of fear
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity
In the flush of love's light
we dare be brave
And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and will ever be.
Yet it is only love
which sets us free.

Maya Angelou (1928 -)

True Love

True love is a sacred flame
That burns eternally,
And none can dim its special glow
Or change its destiny.
True love speaks in tender tones
And hears with gentle ear,
True love gives with open heart
And true love conquers fear.
True love makes no harsh demands

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It neither rules nor binds,
And true love holds with gentle hands
The hearts that it entwines.

Unknown

True Love's the Gift Which God Has Given

True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes soon as granted fly;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die;
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart and mind to mind
In body and in soul can bind.

Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832)

True Love, When it Comes is always Worth the Wait

True love, when it comes is always worth the wait
Sometimes I wish that we had met sooner,
That the detours along the way could have been fewer.
But then something tells me we found each other
At just the right place in our lives.
Now here we are—right on time
And so right together.
And I want you to know
I would've waited forever
For this, for you,
For the love of my life.

Unknown

Mark Twain

Mark Twain once said that "a marriage makes two fractional lives a whole. It gives to two purposeless lives a work, and doubles the strength of each to perform it. It gives to two questioning natures a reason for living. It brings a new gladness to the sunshine, and a new fragrance to the flowers, and new beauty to the earth, a new mystery to life."

Mark Twain – Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835–1910)

Mark Twain's Letter to Olivia Langdon, his future wife, written in 1869.

This ... will be the mightiest day in the history of our lives, the holiest, and the most generous toward us both – for it makes of two fractional lives a whole; it gives to two purposeless lives a work, and doubles the strength of each whereby to perform it; it gives to two questioning natures a reason for living, and something to live for; it will give a new gladness to the sunshine, a new fragrance to the flowers, a new beauty to the earth, a new mystery to life; and Livy it will give a new revelation to love, a new depth to sorrow, a new impulse to worship. In that day the scales will fall from our eyes and we shall look upon a new world. Speed it!

Mark Twain – Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835–1910)

Us Two

Wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
Whatever I do, he wants to do,
"Where are you going today?" says Pooh:
"Well, that's very odd 'cos I was too.
Let's go together," says Pooh, says he.
"Let's go together," says Pooh.

"What's twice eleven?" I said to Pooh.
("Twice what?" said Pooh to Me.)

"I think it ought to be twenty-two."
"Just what I think myself," said Pooh.
"It wasn't an easy sum to do,
But that's what it is," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what it is," said Pooh.

"Let's look for dragons," I said to Pooh.
"Yes, let's," said Pooh to Me.
We crossed the river and found a few—
"Yes, those are dragons all right," said Pooh.
"As soon as I saw their beaks I knew.
That's what they are," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what they are," said Pooh.

"Let's frighten the dragons," I said to Pooh.
"That's right," said Pooh to Me.
"I'm not afraid," I said to Pooh,
And I held his paw and I shouted "Shoo!
Silly old dragons!"— and off they flew.

"I wasn't afraid," said Pooh, said he,
"I'm never afraid with you."

So wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
"What would I do?" I said to Pooh,
"If it wasn't for you," and Pooh said: "True,
It isn't much fun for One, but Two,
Can stick together, says Pooh, says he.
"That's how it is," says Pooh.

A. A. Milne (1882–1956)

The Velveteen Rabbit – An Introduction

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To share with you how love gets to be real and how people get to be real, I will tell you a bit of the story of The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams.

The Velveteen Rabbit

There was once a velveteen rabbit, and in the beginning he was really splendid. He was fat and bunched, as a rabbit should be; his coat was spotted brown and white, he had real thread whiskers, and his ears were lined with pink sateen. On Christmas morning, when he sat wedged in the top of the Boy's stocking, with a sprig of holly between his paws, the effect was charming.

There were other things in the stocking, nuts and oranges and a toy engine, and chocolate almonds and a clockwork mouse, but the Rabbit was quite the best of all. For at least two hours the Boy loved him, and then Aunts and Uncles came to dinner, and there was a great rustling of tissue paper and unwrapping of parcels, and in the excitement of looking at all the new presents the Velveteen Rabbit was forgotten.

For a long time he lived in the toy cupboard or on the nursery floor, and no one thought very much about him. He was naturally shy, and being only made of velveteen, some of the more expensive toys quite snubbed him. The mechanical toys were very superior, and looked down upon everyone else; they were full of modern ideas, and pretended they were real. The model boat, who had lived through two seasons and lost most of his paint, caught this tone from them and never missed an opportunity of referring to his rigging in technical terms. The Rabbit could not claim to be a model of anything, for he didn't know that real rabbits existed; he thought they were all stuffed with sawdust like himself, and he understood that sawdust was quite out-of-date and should never be mentioned in modern circles. Even Timothy, the jointed wooden lion, who was made by the disabled soldiers, and should have had broader views, put on airs and pretended he was connected with the Government. Between them all the poor little Rabbit was made to feel himself very insignificant and commonplace, and the only person who was kind to him at all was the Skin Horse.

The Skin Horse had lived longer than any of the others. He was so old that his brown coat was bald in patches and showed the seams underneath, and most

of the hairs in his tail had been pulled out to string bead necklaces. He was wise, for he had seen a long succession of mechanical toys arrive to boast and swagger, and by-and-by break their mainsprings and pass away, and he knew that they were only toys, and would never turn into anything else. For nursery magic is very strange and wonderful, and only those play-things that are old and wise and experienced like the Skin Horse understand all about it.

Some couples just use this selection shown below
and not the introductory words shown above.

The Velveteen Rabbit

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but Really loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get all loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

Margery Williams (1881-1944)

Waiting

Left off the highway and
down the hill. At the
bottom, hang another left.
Keep bearing left. The road
will make a Y. Left again.
There's a creek on the left.
Keep going. Just before
the road ends, there'll be
another road. Take it
and no other. Otherwise,
your life will be ruined
forever. There's a log house
with a shake roof, on the left.
It's not that house. It's
the next house, just over
a rise. The house
where trees are laden with
fruit. Where phlox, forsythia,
and marigold grow. It's
the house where the woman
stands in the doorway
wearing the sun in her hair. The one
who's been waiting
all this time.
The woman who loves you.
The one who can say,
"What's kept you?"

Raymond Carver (1938–1988)

Waltzing the Spheres

We pulled each other closer in the turn
Around a center that we could not see--
This holding on was what I had to learn.

The sun can hold the planets, earth the moon,
But we had to create our gravity
By always pulling closer in the turn.
Each revolution caused my head to whirl
So dizzily I wanted to break free,
But holding on was what I had to learn.

I fixed my eyes on something out there firm,
And then our orbits steadied so that we
Could pull each other closer in the turn.

The joy that circles with us round the curve
Is joy that passes surely as a peace,
And holding on is what we have to learn.

And if our feet should briefly leave the earth,
No matter, earth was made for us to leave,
And arms for pulling closer in the turn--
This holding is what we have to learn.

Susan Scott Thompson (1946–2007)

Wedding Day

My Love

Today we are going to start a new beginning
The beginning of our new life together
The beginning of our new destination
The traveling for our new adventures
And we'll go on . . . side by side with joy
Following the path of our dreams
Reaching out for beautiful rainbows
Searching and discovering new horizons
Together we'll live, we'll laugh, we'll cry
Also we'll see our dreams coming true
Because we have each other
Because we trust each other

And we love each other so much
And our love is very special and strong
So for that I know . . .
We have to hold on . . . trusting in our relationship
And we have lots of possibilities to choose our goals in life
To become successful
To be happy and to live a fulfilled life
Also to finish the puzzle of our lives
Putting each piece together.

Today my love
We are going to be married
And I am so happy waiting for the moment
. . . To meet you here
To meet you now
For us to exchange our vows
For us to complete our promise of becoming one in life
To support each other in good times and in bad times
Because . . . from this day on . . . we will become one
We will become husband and wife.

Unknown

Wedding Song

I saw two clouds at morning,
Tinged with the rising sun;
And in the dawn they floated on,
And mingled into one;
I thought that morning cloud was blest,
It moved so sweetly to the west.

I saw two summer currents
Flow smoothly to their meeting,
And join their course with silent force,
In peace each other greeting;
Calm was their course through banks of green,

While dimpling eddies played between.

Such be your gentle motion
Till life's last pulse shall beat;
Like summer's beam and summer's stream
Float on, in joy, to meet
A calmer sea where storms shall cease;
A purer sky, where all is peace.

Unknown

From an 1896 wedding book

What is Love?

What is love?

Love is being stupid together.

Love is a decision to make your problems my problems.

Where love is, there is God also.

Loving is leaning on someone to hold them up.

We are born because of, and for love.

You don't love her because she is beautiful; she is beautiful because you love her.

Sometimes the heart sees what is invisible to the eye.

Love is about growing: immature love says I love you because I need you, mature love says I need you because I love you.

Until you loved you were children, now you will be a man and his wife.

A joy that isn't shared dies young

Consider this the birthday of your lives together.

Whatever your souls are made of, they are the same.

A successful marriage requires us to fall in love many times, but always with the same person.

Unknown

What is Love?

Love is . . . Being happy for the other person when they are happy. Being sad for the person when they are sad. Being together in good times, and being together in bad times.

Love is the source of strength.

Love is . . . Being honest with yourself at all times, Being honest with the other person at all times. Telling, listening, respecting the truth, And never pretending.

Love is the source of reality.

Love is . . . An understanding so complete that you feel as if you are a part of the other person. Accepting the other person just the way they are, And not trying to change them to be something else.

Love is the source of unity.

Love is . . . The freedom to pursue your own desires while sharing your experiences with the other person. The growth of one individual alongside of and together with the growth of another individual.

Love is the source of success.

Love is . . . The excitement of planning things together. The excitement of doing things together.

Love is the source of the future.

Love is . . . The fury of the storm, The calm in the rainbow.

Love is the source of passion.

Love is . . . Giving and taking in a daily situation, Being patient with each other's needs and desires.

Love is the source of sharing.

Love is . . . Knowing that the other person will always be with you regardless of what happens. Missing the other person when they are away but remaining near in heart at all times.

Love is the source of security.

Love is . . . The source of life!

Susan Polis Schutz (1944 -)

What is Love?

Love

Love is the strongest feeling known

An all-encompassing passion

An extreme strength

An overwhelming excitement

Love is trying not to hurt the other person

Trying not to change the other person

Trying not to dominate the other person

Trying not to deceive the other person

Love is, understanding each other

Listening to each other

Supporting each other

Having fun with each other

Love is not an excuse to stop growing

Not an excuse to stop making yourself better

Not an excuse to lessen one's goals

Not an excuse to take the other person for granted

Love is being completely honest with each other

Finding dreams to share

Working towards common goals

Sharing responsibilities equally

Everyone in the world wants to love

Love is not a feeling to be taken lightly

Love is a feeling to be cherished, nurtured and cared for

Love is the reason for life

Susan Polis Schutz (1944 -)

What is Love?

Sooner or later we begin to understand that love is more than verses on valentines and romance in the movies. We begin to know that love is here and now, real and true, the most important thing in our lives. For love is the creator of our favorite memories and the foundation of our fondest dreams. Love is a promise that is always kept, a fortune that can never be spent, a seed that can flourish in even the most unlikely of places. And this radiance that never fades, this mysterious and magical joy, is the greatest treasure of all – one known only by those who love.

Unknown

What it Takes

It takes the darkest night
For us to see the farthest star;
It has taken many trials of life
To make us what we are.
It took a day of illness
To make us value health;
Some days of pinching pennies
Then a little more seems wealth.
After the cold and gloomy days,
We thrill with the warmth of sun.
Stillness never seemed so sweet
Till after the storm was done.
It takes a day's hard labor
To enjoy a good night's rest.
It takes the bitter with the sweet
To make our lives the happiest.

Francis Erickson

Why Marriage?

Why Marriage?

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 with this understanding
The possibilities are limitless.

Mari Nichols

Will You Love Me When I'm Old

I would ask of you, my darling,
a question soft and low,
that gives me many a heartache
as the moments come and go.

Your love I know is truthful,
but the truest love grows cold;
it is this that I would ask you:
will you love me when I'm old?

Life's morn will soon be waning,
and its evening bells be tolled,
but my heart shall know no sadness,
if you'll love me when I'm old

Down the stream of life together
we are sailing side by side,
hoping some bright day to anchor
safe beyond the surging tide.
Today our sky is cloudless,
but the night may clouds unfold;
but, though storms may gather round us,
will you love me when I'm old?

When my hair shall shade the snowdrift,
and mine eyes shall dimmer grow,
I would lean upon some loved one,
through the valley as I go.
I would claim of you a promise,
worth to me a world of gold;
it is only this, my darling,
That you'll love me when I'm old.

Unknown

With You, I'm Me

With you I feel that I can be
Spontaneous and free.
I open up my heart to you
In simple honesty.
I share with you my inner thoughts,
Abandon all disguises.
I bare my deepest feelings,
Shunning pretense or surprises.
I stand before you as I am,
My strengths and flaws revealed.
No attitudes are hidden;
No motives are concealed.
With you I am free to be myself,
Voice my identity.
I draw from you an inner calm
That says - With you, I'm me.

Bruce B. Wilmer

When You Thought I Wasn't Looking

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I immediately wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me and I learned that the little things can be the special things in life.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I knew there is a God I could always talk to and I learned to trust in God.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to take care of each other.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you give your time and money to help people who had nothing and I learned that those who have something should give to those who don't.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it and I learned that we have to take care of what we are given.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw how you handled your responsibilities, even when you didn't feel good and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grew up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come to your eyes and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but its alright to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I learned most of life's lessons that I need to know to be a good and productive person when I grew up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked at you and wanted to say, "Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking."

Written by a former child

The Woman Who Married the Moon

A tale from the Kodiak tribe.

Long ago, in the village of Chiniak, on the island of Kodiak, lived a beautiful young woman. She was so well-liked that almost any young man would have agreed to marry her. Yet none of the young men in the village or even in the nearby mainland interested her.

When the night had come and the work of the day was done, the young woman would lie in the sand and watch for the rising of the moon above the

water. There she would sit all night admiring his beauty. No matter if it was winter or summer, she could always be found there on the beach.

With the changing of each season, her love for the moon grew. One night while waiting for the sun to set, she heard the sound of footsteps on the gravel of the beach and the voice of a young man saying, "I love you too. I have come to marry you."

The woman leaped to her feet. A tall, handsome man wearing a beautiful mask on his face stood before her. The mask shone brightly, and she knew she was looking at the moon.

For our love to grow you must promise three things, said the moon. The first is patience, close your eyes and do not open them until I tell you.

The woman closed her eyes and waited. The moon reached down and held her by her long hair, lifting her into the air. The woman felt her feet leave the ground and felt the wind whistling by her. Although she was curious, she was patient and did not open her eyes. When he told her to open her eyes at last, she found herself standing in Moon's house on the other side of the sky.

The second promise the moon said is trust. You must trust that although I may be gone for several hours, I will always faithfully return to you. The woman settled down to her new life, but it was not always easy. Sometimes her husband would spend a long time with her. Sometimes he would be gone all night and then sleep all day after he came home. She never knew when he was going or how long he would be gone, but she did know he would always faithfully return.

The third promise is support the moon said. Wife you have been patient and trustworthy, now I need your support and commitment. From now on, I will carry the pieces of moon each cycle until it is full, and then you can carry the pieces of moon until it is dark. That way, we both have time to rest and neither of us will grow bored.

So it is to this day, the man on the moon carries the pieces of light from the time of the moon's first quarter until it is full, and the woman of the moon carries them from the time it is full until the moon grows dark. Sharing the duty of carrying light across the night sky.

The Woman Who Married the Moon

You Are My Butterfly

You are the most beautiful thing I've ever seen
You shine just like sunlight rays On a winter snow
Your eyes sparkle as the stars
Like the moon they glow
Your smile could light the world on fire
Your mind is full of everything That I want to know
I just had to tell you so
I just had to let you know
You are my butterfly.