



ceremonies and celebrations

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## Wedding Readings

### **An excerpt from "The Prophet" by Khalil Gibran**

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 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.

### **Another excerpt from "The Prophet" by Kahil Gibran**

Love has no other desire but to fulfill itself.  
But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires:  
To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night.  
To know the pain of too much tenderness.  
To be wounded by your own understanding of love;  
And to bleed willingly and joyfully.  
To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving;  
To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy;  
To return home at eventide with gratitude;  
And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise on your lips.

### **"Wedding Prayer" by Robert Lewis Stevenson**

Lord, behold our family here assembled.  
We thank you for this place in which we dwell,  
for the love that unites us,  
for the peace accorded us this day,  
for the hope with which we expect the morrow,  
for the health, the work, the food,  
and the bright skies that make our lives delightful;  
for our friends in all parts of the earth.  
Amen

### **An Irish Wedding Blessing**

You are the star of each night,  
You are the brightness of every morning,  
You are the story of each guest,  
You are the report of every land.  
No evil shall befall you, on hill nor bank,  
In field or valley, on mountain or in glen.  
Neither above, nor below, neither in sea,  
Nor on shore, in skies above,  
Nor in the depths.  
You are the kernel of my heart,  
You are the face of my sun,  
You are the harp of my music,  
You are the crown of my company

### **"To Be One With Each Other" by George Eliot**

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?

### **I Corinthians 13:1-13**

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

### **I John 4:7-19**

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

We love, because He first loved us.

### **"Roads Go Ever Ever On" By J.R.R Tolkien**

Roads go ever ever on,  
Over rock and under tree,  
By caves where never sun has shone,  
By streams that never find the sea;  
Over snow by winter sown,  
And through the merry flowers of June,  
Over grass and over stone,  
And under mountains in the moon.  
Roads go ever ever on  
Under cloud and under star,  
Yet feet that wandering have gone  
Turn at last to home afar.  
Eyes that fire and sword have seen  
And horror in the halls of stone  
Look at last on meadows green  
And trees and hills they long have known.

## **"Marriage Joins Two People In The Circle Of Its Love" by Edmund O'Neill**

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

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

## **"Blessing of the Hands"**

These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow, and forever.

These are the hands that will work alongside yours, as together you build your future.

These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch, will comfort you like no other.

These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief fills your mind.

These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes; tears of sorrow, and tears of joy.

These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children.

These are the hands that will help you to hold your family as one.

These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it.

And lastly, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged, will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch.

**From 'Better Together', written and performed by Jack Johnson**

There's no combination of words I could put on the back of a postcard  
No song that I could sing but I can try for your heart  
Our dreams and they are made out of real things  
Like a shoebox of photographs with sepia-toned lovin'  
Love is the answer at least for most of the questions in my heart, like  
"Why are we here?" and, "Where do we go?"  
And, "How come it's so hard?"  
It's not always easy and sometimes life can be deceiving  
I'll tell you one thing it's always better when we're together

**"I Love You" by Carl Sandberg**

I love you for what you are, but I love you yet more for what you are going to be.  
I love you not so much for your realities as for your ideals. I pray for your desires that they  
may be great, rather than for your satisfactions, which may be so hazardously little.  
A satisfied flower is one whose petals are about to fall. The most beautiful rose is one hardly  
more than a bud wherein the pangs and ecstasies of desire are working for a larger and finer  
growth.  
Not always shall you be what you are now. You are going forward toward something great. I  
am on the way with you and therefore I love you.

**"I Love You" by Roy Croft**

I love you  
Not only for who 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 for putting your hand into my heart  
And passing over all the foolish, weak things that you can't help.  
Dimly seeing there and drawing out, into the light all the beautiful belongings  
That no one else had looked quite far enough to find.  
You have done it without a touch, without a word, without a sign.

**Excerpt from "Captain Corelli's Mandolin"  
by Louis de Bernieres**

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 root was so  
entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love  
is.

Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of promises of  
eternal passion. That is just being in love, which any 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 blossoms have fallen from their branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.

## **How Falling in Love is like Owning a Dog**

First of all, it's a big responsibility,  
especially in a city like New York.  
So think long and hard before deciding on love.  
On the other hand, love gives you a sense of security:  
when you're walking down the street late at night  
and you have a leash on love  
ain't no one going to mess with you.  
Because crooks and muggers think love is unpredictable.  
Who knows what love could do in its own defense?  
On cold winter nights, love is warm.  
It lies between you and lives and breathes  
and makes funny noises.  
Love wakes you up all hours of the night with its needs.  
It needs to be fed so it will grow and stay healthy.  
Love doesn't like being left alone for long.  
But come home and love is always happy to see you.  
It may break a few things accidentally in its passion for life,  
but you can never be mad at love for long.  
Is love good all the time? No! No!  
Love can be bad. Bad, love, bad! Very bad love.

## **"What I Learned in Kindergarden"**

All of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in Kindergarden. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school. These are the things I have learned:  
Share everything.  
Play Fair.  
Don't hit people.  
Put things back where you found them.  
Clean up your own mess.  
Don't take thing that aren't yours.  
Say sorry when you hurt somebody.  
Wash your hand before you eat.  
Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you; give them to someone who feels sad.  
Live a balanced life.  
Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work everyday.  
Take a nap every afternoon.  
Be aware of wonder.  
Remember the little seed in the plastic cup? The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.  
Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

## **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

## **I Carry Your Heart**

**BY E. E. CUMMINGS**

I carry your heart with me (I carry it in 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)

### **I'll be there for you by Louise Cuddon**

I'll be there my darling, through thick and through thin  
When your mind's in a mess and your head's in a spin  
When your plane's been delayed, and you've missed the last train.

When life is just threatening to drive you insane  
When your thrilling whodunit has lost its last page  
When somebody tells you, you're looking your age  
When your coffee's too cool, and your wine is too warm  
When the forecast said "Fine", but you're out in a storm  
When your quick break hotel, turns into a slum  
And your holiday photos show only your thumb  
When you park for five minutes in a resident's bay

And return to discover you've been towed away  
When the jeans that you bought in hope or in haste  
Just stick on your hips and don't reach round your waist  
When the food you most like brings you out in red rashes  
When as soon as you boot up the bloody thing crashes

So my darling, my sweetheart, my dear...  
When you break a rule, when you act the fool  
When you've got the flu, when you're in a stew  
When you're last in the queue, don't feel blue 'cause  
I'm telling you, I'll be there.

### **"Union" by Robert Fulghum**

You have known each other from the first glance of acquaintance to this point of commitment. At some point, you decided to marry. From that moment of yes to this moment of yes, indeed, you have been making promises and agreements in an informal way. All those conversations that were held riding in a car or over a meal or during long walks — all those sentences that began with "When we're married" and continued with "I will" and "you will" and "we will" — those late night talks that included "someday" and "somehow" and "maybe" — and all those promises that are unspoken matters of the heart. All these common things, and more, are the real process of a wedding.

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

Look at one another and remember this moment in time. Before this moment you have been many things to one another — acquaintance, friend, companion, lover, dancing partner, and even teacher, for you have learned much from one another in these last few years. Now you shall say a few words that take you across a threshold of life, and things will never quite be the same between you. For after these vows, you shall say to the world, this is my husband, this is my wife.



### **"NEVER MARRY BUT FOR LOVE" by William Penn**

Never marry but for love;  
but see that thou lovest what is lovely.  
If love be not the chiefest motive,  
thou wilt soon grow weary of a married state and stray from thy promise,  
to search out thy pleasures in forbidden places...  
Between a man and his wife nothing ought to rule but love ...  
As love ought to bring them together,  
so it is the best way to keep them well together.  
A husband and wife that love and value one another show their children...  
that they should do so too.  
Others visibly lose authority in their families by their contempt of one another,  
and teach their children to be unnatural by their own examples.  
Let not enjoyment lessen,  
but augment, affection;  
it being the basest of passions to like when we have not,  
what we slight when we possess.  
Here it is we ought to search out our pleasure,  
where the field is large and full of variety,  
and of an enduring nature;  
sickness,  
poverty or disgrace being not able to shake it because it is not under the moving influences of  
worldly contingencies.  
Nothing can be more entire and without reserve;  
nothing more zealous,  
affectionate and sincere;  
nothing more contented than such a couple,  
nor greater temporal felicity than to be one of them.

### **Grateful**

Let us be grateful for the capacity to see, feel, hear, and understand.  
Let us be grateful for this incredible gift of life.  
Let us be especially grateful for the ties of love which bind us together,  
giving dignity, meaning, worth and joy to all our days.  
This is indeed a day which the Lord has made.  
Let us rejoice in it and be glad, and let us count our many blessings.

### **Wedding Prayer**

Lord, behold our family here assembled.  
We thank you for this place in which we dwell,  
for the love that unites us,  
for the peace accorded us this day,  
for the hope with which we expect the morrow,  
for the health, the work, the food,  
and the bright skies that make our lives delightful;  
for our friends in all parts of the earth.  
Amen

### **Blessing For A Marriage by James Dillet Freeman**

May your marriage bring you all the  
exquisite excitements a marriage should bring,  
and may life grant you also patience, tolerance,  
and understanding.

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

### **Apache Wedding Prayer**

Now you will feel no rain,  
for each of you will be shelter for the other.  
Now you will feel no cold,  
for each of you will be warmth to the other.  
Now there will be no loneliness,  
for each of you will be companion to the other.  
Now you are two persons, but there are three lives before you: his life, her life and your life  
together.  
Go now to your dwelling place to enter into your days together.  
And may all your days be good and long upon the Earth.

### **A Prayer as a Reading**

Bless this marriage, O God, as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ begin their journey down the road of life together.

We don't know what lies ahead for the road turns and bends. But help them to make the best of whatever comes their way.

Help them to hug each other often...laugh a lot, talk more, and argue less.

Help them to continue to enjoy each other as they did when they first met.

Help them to realize that nothing nor no one is perfect and to look for the good in all things and all people including themselves.

Help them to respect each other's likes and dislikes, opinion and beliefs, hopes and dreams and fears even though they may not always understand them.

Help them to learn from each other and to help each other to grow mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Help them to realize that there is design and purpose in their lives as in the world and no matter what happens to them they will hold on to each other and know that things have a way of working out for the good.

Help them to create for their children a peaceful, stable home of love as a foundation on which they can build their lives.

But most of all, dear God, help them to keep lit the torch of love' that they now share in their hearts so that by their loving example they may pass on the light of love to their children and to their children's children forever.

Amen

### **An extract from The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams (1881 – 1944)**

'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 someone 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 loose in your 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.'

'I suppose you are real?' said the Rabbit. And then he wished he had not said it, for he thought the Skin Horse only smiled.

'Someone made me Real,' he said. 'That was a great many years ago; but once you are Real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always.'

## **A Lovely Love Story – Edward Monkton**

The fierce Dinosaur was trapped inside his cage of ice. Although it was cold he was happy in there. It was, after all, his cage.

Then along came the Lovely Other Dinosaur.

The Lovely Other Dinosaur melted the Dinosaur's cage with kind words and loving thoughts.

I like this Dinosaur thought the Lovely Other Dinosaur.

Although he is fierce he is also tender and he is funny.

He is also quite clever though I will not tell him this for now.

I like this Lovely Other Dinosaur, thought the Dinosaur. She is beautiful and she is different and she smells so nice.

She is also a free spirit which is a quality I much admire in a dinosaur.

But he can be so distant and so peculiar at times, thought the Lovely Other Dinosaur.

He is also overly fond of things.

Are all Dinosaurs so overly fond of things?

But her mind skips from here to there so quickly thought the Dinosaur. She is also uncommonly keen on shopping.

Are all Lovely Other Dinosaurs so uncommonly keen on shopping?

I will forgive his peculiarity and his concern for things, thought the Lovely Other Dinosaur. For they are part of what makes him a richly charactered individual.

I will forgive her skipping mind and her fondness for shopping, thought the Dinosaur. For she fills our life with beautiful thoughts and wonderful surprises. Besides, I am not unkeen on shopping either.

Now the Dinosaur and the Lovely Other Dinosaur are old.

Look at them.

Together they stand on the hill telling each other stories and feeling the warmth of the sun on their backs.

And that, my friends, is how it is with love.

Let us all be Dinosaurs and Lovely Other Dinosaurs together.

For the sun is warm. And the world is a beautiful place.