

## Wedding Readings

### 1. A Walled Garden.....anon

“Your marriage”, he said, “should have within it, a secret and protected place, open to you alone.

Imagine it to be a walled garden, entered by a door to which only you hold the key.

Within this garden you will cease to be a Mother, Father, employee, home-maker, or any other of the roles which you fulfil in daily life.

Here you are yourselves, two people who love each other.

Here you can concentrate on one another’s needs.”

So take my hand and let us go back to our garden.

The time we spend together is not wasted, but invested.

Invested in our future and the nurture of our love.

### 2. Where there is love.....Helen Steiner Rice

Where there is love the heart is light,

Where there is love the day is bright,

Where there is love there is a song,

To help when things are going wrong.

Where there is love there is a smile,

To make all things seem more worthwhile,

Where there is love there’s quiet peace,

A tranquil place where turmoils cease.

Love changes darkness into light,

And makes the heart take wingless flight.

### 3. The Magic of Love.....Helen Steiner Rice

Love is like magic and will always be,

For love still remains life’s sweet mystery.

Love works in ways which are wondrous and strange,

And there’s nothing in life that love cannot change.

Love can transform the most commonplace,

Into beauty and splendour and sweetness and grace.

Love is unselfish, understanding and kind,

For it sees with it’s heart and not with it’s mind.

Love is the answer that everyone seeks,

Love is the language that every heart speaks.

Love can’t be bought, it’s priceless and free,

Love like pure magic, is a sweet mystery.

### 4. Love is giving.....anon

Love is giving, not taking, mending, not breaking, trusting, believing, never deceiving, patiently bearing, and faithfully sharing each joy, every sorrow, today and tomorrow. Love is kind and understanding, but never demanding. Love is constant, prevailing, it’s strength never failing. A promise once spoken, for all time unbroken. Loves time is forever.

5. Wedding.....Alice Oswald

From time to time our love is like a sail, and when the sail begins to alternate, from tack to tack, it's like a swallowtail, and when the swallow flies, it's like a coat; and if the coat is yours, it has a tear, like a wide mouth. And when the mouth begins to draw wind, it's like a trumpeter. And when the trumpet blows, it blows like millions....

And this, my love, when millions come and go, beyond the need of us, is like a trick. And when the trick begins, it's like a toe, tip-toeing on a tight rope, which is like luck; And when luck begins, it's like a wedding. Which is like love, which is like everything....

6. A Chance Meeting..... Paula Finn

I had no idea how easy you would be to talk to,  
And I never imagined that our early conversations would grow into such a strong  
friendship.

I never suspected that we would discover so many common interests and values, or that I  
could ever enjoy such simple pleasures as much as when they are shared by you.

I never thought that we would have so many happy times together, or that your  
compassion would help so much to ease me through the rougher times.

I did not expect to feel so soon as though I had known you forever, or to trust you so easily  
with my secrets and deepest feelings.

I never thought your support could make such a difference, that your encouragement  
would bring my dreams closer, make my successes sweeter, and my losses easier to  
accept.

I never imagined I would grow to want, to need and to love you so much.

When you first came into my life, I never dreamed you would soon become someone  
whom I could not live without.....

7. When you slip on the coat.....anon

When you slip on the coat, that gives warmth and protection,  
When winter chills the air,  
Or you search and sort through piles of shoes for the one,  
That matches the pair.

When you collapse in the chair, that moulds to your shape,  
At the end of a busy day,

Or that precious moment when you switch on the radio,  
And your favourite tune starts to play.

These are the days, that melt into hours, that make up  
The days of our life.

And you are my comfort, my pleasure, my warmth,  
The husband that matches the wife.

8. "I will be here" by Steven Curtis Chapman

If in the morning sun 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, 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 have made to you,  
And to those who gave you to me, I will be here.

9. Changes.....Mary-Anne Tracey

Would you marry? Then you must give everything you have.  
Would you marry? Then everything you have will be what you gain.  
Would you marry? Then you must walk unafraid in a strange land.  
Would you marry? Then be sure you recognise all you see.  
Would you marry? Then you will become a tale to be told.  
Would you marry? Then you must sing a different song.  
Would you marry? Then two voices will sing as one!

10. True Love ..... author unknown

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, it neither rules nor binds,  
And true love holds with gentle hands, the heart that it entwines.

11. Our Family.....author unknown

Our family is a circle of love and strength,  
With every birth and every union, the circle grows,  
Every joy shared adds more love.  
Every obstacle faced together makes the circle stronger.

12. For the Bride and Groom ..... Dena Di Jaconi

Love is the most incredible of all experiences that touch our lives.  
It creates for us the world that we want to live in.  
From the beginning of our lives, we know that love is the power that comforts  
and protects us,

It s the one feeling that we can depend on to help us through life's ups and downs,  
Love is the understanding and security that never changes.  
It allows us to be ourselves and feel self confident.

Today as the two of you join together and commit your love to each other,  
Remember the lessons of love that you have always known.  
Let your love comfort, support and encourage you,  
Let your love be the best part of your lives.  
Always know that it will make everything better,  
And it will make your world a place of happiness.

13. At my Daughter's Side ..... Linda Jo (May be read by the Bride's Mother /  
Father)

Today was such a lifetime away and now it's suddenly here.  
How did it happen so quickly? This wedding drawing near.  
How can I act so happy? How can I act so gay?  
When in such a very short time, I'll give my daughter away.  
I wish I could grasp the moment, and make the clock stand still,  
So I could just let my heart catch up, but I know I never will.  
All the worries of being a parent, all the battles won,  
No-one ever warned me, about the day the job is done.  
Yet there is another side, where my heart is not so sad,  
When I look into my daughter's eyes, I can't help feeling glad.  
For this is the day she dreamt about, for just about all of her life,  
She's going to be such a beautiful bride, and a loving, caring wife.  
I'll stand with the congregation as my daughter walks down the aisle,  
And even though there are tears in my eyes, my face will bear a smile.  
For I know that I was very blessed when Fate lent this child to me,  
To love and care for and nurture, so she would grow up to be  
This lovely bright young woman, who today will be a bride,  
And I'll always be there as always, with love, at my daughter's side.

14. In My Life.....John Lennon & Paul McCartney

There are places I'll remember all my life, though some have changed,  
Some forever, not for better, some have gone, and some remain.  
All these places have 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 think about them, in my life, I've loved you more.....

15. On Marriage.....author unknown

Marriage is declaring to the world that you love one another,  
Joining hearts and minds to face the world together.  
It is saying that the love you have for each other  
Is strong enough to carry you through all the ups and downs of life.  
It is being there for each other (and the children), giving love and support.  
Marriage is saying you have found someone you want to grow old with,  
It is a journey of two souls becoming one.  
Love is not jealous or boastful,  
It is not arrogant or rude,  
Love does not insist on it's own way,  
It is not irritable or resentful,  
It does not rejoice in the wrong, but rejoices in the right.  
Love bears all things, believes all things,  
Hopes all things, endures all things,  
Love, never ends.

16. On Love.....author unknown

Love...such a small word for such a complex emotion,  
All the money in the world cannot buy love,  
It has to be earned.  
It does not happen by wishing,  
It must come naturally.  
Love is not an instantaneous emotion,  
But something that grows slowly  
Between two people, maturing with time.  
To love someone means being comfortable with them,  
To be at ease with them, sharing confidences,  
Knowing that they will be held in trust.  
To love someone means having genuine concern for them,  
Being able to sense when something is wrong without being told.  
It is understanding the other person's problems.  
Love is always being there for each other,  
With a shoulder to cry on.  
To give love and support when confidence levels are low,  
To give advice when it is asked for,  
To know when to be silent and just listen,  
Or to give a cheerful word of encouragement.  
Love is sharing the good times and the bad,  
The hopes, the dreams, the amusing,  
And the serious times.  
Love is doing things together, yet leaving room  
For each other to grow as an individual.  
Love is not possession but participation,  
Love.....

17. Apache Wedding Poem.....Traditional

Now we will feel no rain, for each of us will be shelter to the other.  
Now we will feel no cold, for each of us will be warmth to the other.  
Now there is no more loneliness.  
We are two bodies but there is one life before us, and one home.  
When evening falls I will look up and there you'll be.  
I'll take your hand and you'll take mine and we'll turn together to look at the road we  
travelled to reach this – the hour of our happiness.  
It stretches behind us as the future lies ahead, a long and winding road whose every  
turning means discovery, old hopes, new laughter, and shared tears.  
The adventure has just begun.

18. A gift from the sea.....Anne Morrow Lindberg

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

The only real security is not owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in  
even in hoping. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was nostalgia,  
nor looking forward to what it might be, in dread and anticipation, but living in the present  
relationship and accepting it as it is now.

Relationships must be like islands, one must accept them for what they are here and now,  
within their limits. Islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited  
and abandoned by the tides.....

19. An Irish Blessing (Traditional)

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

May Love be with you and bless you,  
May you see your children's children,  
May you be poor in misfortune,  
Rich in blessings,  
May you know nothing but happiness,  
From this day forward.

May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back,

May the warm rays of the sun fall upon your home,  
May the hand of a friend be always near.  
May green be the grass you walk upon,  
May blue be the skies above you,  
May pure be the joys that surround you,  
May true be the hearts that love you.

20. This day I married my best friend.....author unknown

This day I married my best friend, the one I laugh with at life's wondrous zest,  
As we find new enjoyments and experience all that's best.  
The one I live for because the world seems brighter,  
As our happy times are better and our burdens feel much lighter,  
The one I love with every fibre of my soul.  
We used to feel vaguely incomplete, now together we are whole.

21. Wishes for a Marriage.....unknown author

May you find together serenity and tranquillity in a world not perfect.  
May the problems you have known and the conflicts experienced give you strength to walk through life facing each day with courage and optimism.

Always know that there are those whose love and understanding will always be there, even when together you feel alone.

May you discover enough goodness in others to believe in a better world.

May a kind word, a reassuring touch, a warm smile be yours every day of your lives, and may you give these gifts as well as receive them.

Remember the sunshine when a storm can seem unending. Teach love to those who know only hate, and let that love embrace you both as you go into the world together. Remember those whose lives you have touched and who have touched yours, are always a part of you.

May you both place immeasurable value on the goodness in your hearts, and find time each day to see the beauty and love that surrounds you both.

Realise that each person has limitless abilities, but each is different in our own way.

What you sometimes feel you lack in the present may become one of your strengths in the future.

May you see your life together as one filled with promise, love and possibility, view everything as a worthwhile experience.

May you both feel loved.

22. The Owl and the Pussycat.....Edward Lear

The Owl and the Pussycat went to sea in a beautiful pea-green boat,  
They took some honey and plenty of money, wrapped up in a Five Pound Note.  
The Owl looked up to the stars above, and sang to a small guitar,  
Oh Lovely Pussy, Oh Pussy My Love, What a beautiful Pussy you are,  
You are, What a beautiful Pussy you are.

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant Fowl, How charmingly sweet you sing,  
Oh let us be married, too long we have tarried, but what shall we do for a ring?"

They sailed away, for a year and a day, to the land where the bong tree grows,  
And there in a wood, a Piggy Wig stood, with a ring at the end of his nose !  
“Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for One Shilling your ring ?”, said the Piggy “I will”  
So they took it away and were married next day, by the turkey who lived on the hill.  
They dined on mince, and slices of quince, which they ate with a runcible spoon,  
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand, they danced by the light of the moon,  
The moon, the moon, they danced by the light of the moon.

23. I promise.....Dorothy R. Colgan

I promise to give you the best of myself,  
And I ask of you no more than you can give.  
I promise to respect you as your own person,  
And to realise 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 joy, strength and imagination to our marriage.  
I promise to keep myself open to you, to let you see through the window of my world,  
Into my innermost fears, and feelings and secret dreams.  
I promise to grow along with you, to be willing to face the changes in order to keep our  
relationship alive and exciting.  
I promise to love you in good times and bad, with all I have to give and all I feel inside in  
the only way I know, completely and forever.

24. Marriage Advice.....Jane Wells

Let your love be stronger than your hate or anger,  
Learn the wisdom of compromise, for it is better to bend a little than to break.  
Believe the best rather than the worst.  
People have a way of living up or down your opinion of them.  
Remember that true friendship is the basis for any lasting relationship.  
The person you choose to marry is deserving of the courtesies and kindnesses you  
bestow on your friends.  
Please hand this advice down to your children and your children’s children.

25. Blessing for a Marriage.....James Dillet Freeman

May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring, and  
may life grant you also patience, tolerance and understanding.  
May you always need one another, not so much to fill your emptiness as to help you to  
know your fullness. A mountain needs a valley to be complete, the valley does not make  
the mountain less, but more, and the valley is more a valley because it has the 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 the 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.

26. The Art of a Good Marriage.....Wilfred Arlain Paterson

A good marriage must be created,  
In 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 having a mutual sense of values and common objectives,  
It is standing together to face the world.  
It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family,  
It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways,  
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget,  
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow,  
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful,  
It is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.

27. What is Love.....author unknown

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 favourite 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 that is only known by those who love.....

28. On Marriage.....Mark Twain

A marriage makes of 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,  
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,  
And a new mystery to life.

29. On Marriage.....William Shakespeare

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 wandering lark  
Whose worth's unknown although his height be taken.  
Love's not times fool though  
Rosy lips and cheeks within his bending sickle's compass come,  
Love alters not with his 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.

30. The Art of a Good Marriage (Full Version) .....Wilfred Arlain Paterson

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens.  
A good marriage must be created.  
In 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 at no time 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 to face 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 service, but in the spirit of joy,  
It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways,  
It is not looking for perfection in each other.  
It is cultivating flexibility, patience, and understanding, and a sense of humour.  
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget,  
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow,  
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful,  
It is establishing a relationship where 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.

31. The Most Wonderful of All Things in Life.....Sir Hugh Walpole (1884-1941)

The most wonderful of all things in life is the discovery of another human being with whom  
one's relationship has a growing depth, beauty and joy as the years increase. This inner  
progressiveness of love between two human beings is a most marvellous thing. It cannot  
be found by looking for it, or by passionately wishing for it. It is the sort of divine accident,  
and the most wonderful of all things in life.

32. I Knew that I had been touched by Love .....Anon

I knew that I had been touched by love the first time I saw you,  
and felt your warmth, and I heard your laughter.  
I knew that I had been touched by love when I was hurting from  
something that happened, and you came along and made the hurt go away.  
I knew that I had been touched by love when I stopped making plans with my  
friends and started dreaming dreams with you.  
I knew that I had been touched by love when I suddenly stopped thinking in

terms of “me” and started thinking in terms of “we”.

I knew that I had been touched by love when suddenly I couldn't make decisions by myself any more, and I had the strong desire to share everything with you.

I knew that I had been touched by love, the first time we spent along together,

And I knew that I wanted to stay with you forever because I had never felt this touched by love.

### 33. How Do I Love Thee .... Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth, 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 love I seemed to lose with my lost saints,

I love thee with the smiles and tears of all my life, and if thou choose, I will love thee better after death.

### 34. Love Is.....

Love is more than passing pleasures,

Love is happiness found in the home,

And homely treasures that the years will bless...

Love is caring, Love is bearing one another's crosses,

Love is sharing everything, the profits and the losses.

Love is more than bells and laughter on a wedding day,

Love is facing what comes after, sunny skies or grey,

Love is giving, love is living just for one another,

Working through the daily problems of your lives together.

### 35. Marriage Joins Two People in the Circle of Its' Love.....Edmund O'Neill

Marriage is a commitment to life, the best that two people can find and brings 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 husband are each other's best friend, confidante, lover, teacher, listener and critic. There may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing, and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child.

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

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

When two people pledge their love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique unto themselves which binds them closer than any spoken or written words.

Marriage is a promise, a potential made in the hearts of two people who love each other, and takes a lifetime to fulfil.

36. Each of Us.....

Each of us with our secret gifts,  
Magic potions, lovely notions,  
Waiting to be shared, waiting to be owned,  
Each of us a half, a whole, a mind, a soul, a heart,  
And yet part of a richer, better, more,  
Looking for the door, the key, the you, the me,  
The we, growing day by day, looking for the way,  
To find what I'd always dreamed and never seen,  
Always tried and never been, always thought but never knew,  
Until at last I discovered the gift I always sought, was you.

37. Extract from Captain Corelli's Mandolin.....Louis de Bernieres

Love is a temporary madness, it erupts like volcanoes and then it 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 who 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.

38. Extract 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 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 that has to be created. To marry is the greatest 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 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.

39. He's not perfect, by Bob Barley

He's not perfect. You aren't either, and the two of you will never be perfect. But if he can make you laugh at least once, causes you to think twice, and if he admits to being human and making mistakes, hold onto him and give him the most you can. He isn't going to quote poetry, he's not thinking about you every moment, but he will give you a part of him that he knows you could break. Don't hurt him, don't change him, and don't expect for more than he can give. Don't analyse. Smile when he makes you happy, yell when he

makes you mad, and miss him when he's not there. Love hard when there is love to be had. Because perfect guys don't exist, but there's always one guy that is perfect for you.

40. Extract from *De Imitatio Christi* by Thomas a Kempis

Love often knows no limits but overflows all bounds. Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of troubles, attempts more than it is able, and does not plead impossibility, because it believes that it may and can do all things. For this reason, it is able to do all, performing and effecting much where he who does not love fails and falls.

Love is watchful. Sleeping, it does not slumber. Wearied, it is not tired. Pressed, it is not straitened. Alarmed, it is not confused, but like a living flame, a burning torch, it forces its way upward and passes unharmed through every obstacle.