



Casually Elegant Weddings

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Will You Tell Your Story?

What happens in the first few minutes can set the tone for the remainder of your ceremony and reception. It might be a greeting to the guests on your behalf, a prayer, a remembrance of loved ones, or a statement of why you've chosen this time and place for your marriage. It might also be a reading or poem that personalizes your wedding.

Like the expression of your vows, readings are a wonderful way to describe the indescribable – but also to include important people in your ceremony.

Weddings are magnificent with or without such customization. You, the bride and groom, will decide whether you want your story told as part of your ceremony. It may be that you want a strictly formal wedding filled with tradition. It may be that you want an informal ceremony unique to the two of you. Or you may prefer something in between. But whatever you decide, consider how readings may help reach your goal.

Why should I have someone read at my wedding?

Religious weddings often include readings from a sacred text. Readings are less common in non-religious weddings. The two good reasons for readings are:

- 1) The reading says something beautiful about the bride and groom.
- 2) The reader is someone the bride or groom wants to include.

A third reason is to prevent the officiant or some other loquacious person from “taking over the mic”. But there are better ways to keep hold of the reigns.

Your guests have been to several weddings and will nod pleasantly when readings are informative or honoring. They will likely let their thoughts wander if neither of these conditions are met.

What benefits are there to having a reader?

The obvious, of course: it provides an opportunity, within the wedding, to honor your religious convictions or someone you love.

The process of considering and choosing readings encourages you and your partner to talk about things of the heart. Talks like these are investments in your future.

It's also an opportunity to strengthen your grip on the spiritual and secular aspects of how you each view life, and how you'll harmonize your present differences. Love is



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spiritual, as well as physical, so lovers are always on a spiritual journey. Discussing and harmonizing your spirituality in moments like this is a marvelous mutual gift.

What risks are there to having a reader?

The obvious, of course, is that readers may want to use something significant to them, assuming it will be equally meaningful to you. It's best that *you* choose the readings. If you don't want to do this, at least give your readers clear boundaries. Let them know what you expect.

The second risk is that the reader and reading won't be well matched. Help your readers read aloud successfully. Fluency of languages, pronunciations and "style" should be considered. A "test reading" may help readers "put feeling into" their work, be confident of their timing and inflection. Encourage your readers to look directly at you and speak personally to you, rather than simply read aloud.

A third risk, common even with a microphone, is that your reader's voice won't be heard by your guests or picked up on your video. This is an important reason for keeping each reading short.

A final risk, though small, is that the person you're deliberately including in your wedding will be so stressed that they'll feel as though they missed out on it. To avoid this risk, schedule readings very early in the proceedings. Once readers have done their part, they can relax and focus more easily on you.

How many readings should I have?

One, two, or three – each a minute or two long. More readings or more time will likely become a distraction to your guests. You may want more people involved, or longer readings, but we advise against it. You can abbreviate published readings, selecting the most relevant portions of them. You can paraphrase or combine readings.

Remember, too, that you can print poems and short statements as part your program, and can always plan for speakers and readings as part of your reception.

If there is no way to abbreviate a reading and still preserve its meaning, consider having your officiant include it in his or her portion of the ceremony. Your officiant is likely a more practiced reader, able to avoid the risks already mentioned.



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How do I choose wedding readings?

As we've said, you want the reading to speak beautifully about you, the wedding couple. So begin by taking a leisurely look at your core values. Then consider how you want your ceremony to "feel".

Your ceremony will be like a photo capturing a moment of splendor. Selected readings, however, are more like a song drawn from memory and repeating every time your heart sings. Both the ceremony and readings should reflect the two of you. They should be complimentary perspectives of the singular harmony that you are becoming as husband and wife.

Can I mix different types of literature?

Of course you can. You can mix religious and secular readings; sentimental and humorous readings; poetry and prose; English and other language readings. Or you can have your selections be similar. It's your wedding.

Just be careful with the sequence. You'll want your readings to flow smoothly and reach a crescendo.

How personal should my readings be?

Like your wedding kiss, you'll have to decide the right balance between personal intimacy and public appearance. Certainly it's not advisable to use readings that might result in awkward memories – yours or your guests'.

Don't be afraid, though, of readings that may make you laugh or cry. Think of how you'll feel making these into art for your home, or reading them again on your silver anniversary. Choose readings that will light your path and can be a guide for lovers everywhere. Be real, be yourselves. Choose to be special, too, for your wedding day is an irreplaceable opportunity, a lifelong expression of love.

Where can I find readings for my wedding?

Many are included here; these have proven successful in weddings we've officiated. Other sources will be listed at the end of this document. Try them on, break them in, like a seemingly perfect choice of shoes. Find what's right in the long run for *you*.



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We've included Bible Readings in a separate document in our Planning Resources from Casual Elegance. Frequent religious/spiritual choices can be found on the regular pages of our website. Other, similar, spiritual readings include:

“The meaning of love is not to be confused with some sentimental outpouring. Love is something much more than emotion An overflowing love which seeks nothing in return is the love of God operating in the human heart Love is the most durable power in the world. This creative force, so beautifully exemplified in the life of our Christ, is the most potent instrument available in mankind's quest for peace and security. The great military leaders of the past have gone, and their empires have crumbled and burned to ashes. But the empire of Jesus, built solidly and majestically on the foundation of love, is still growing.

~ Martin Luther King Jr.

“Under the chuppah (*marriage canopy*) we pronounce a special blessing that renders the couple loving, kind friends, always at each other's side, always encouraging each other and, when necessary, criticizing and gently showing where the other erred. God has endowed each of us with unique gifts. When our mates become our best friends, we pool our spiritual resources and strengthen each other. In such a relationship, life's trials become less threatening, and even the most formidable challenges become manageable. “Two are better than one” is the wise teaching of King Solomon. If one falls, the other is there to pick him/her up. If one is attacked, the other is there to rescue him; if one is depressed, the other is there to buoy her spirits.

“When husband and wife are loving, kind friends, they perceive each other's feelings so totally that there is no need for explanations. Their relationship is virtually symbiotic. There is total empathy with the needs of the other.”

~ Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis

All the readings printed on the following pages this are less common and should be considered “non-religious”. They are in two sections: 1) serious, and 2) lighthearted.

Serious non-religious readings for my wedding:

“Those that truly love have roots that grow towards each other underneath it all, and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from their branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.”

“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,



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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."

"From this day forward, let us laugh together, and plan together,
let us find our favorite places, and go together....
Let us enjoy the sunshine, and the rain,
being alone together, and in crowds together.....
From this day forward, together,
let us love.

From this day forward,
You shall not walk alone.
My heart will be your shelter,
And my arms will be your home."

"Marriage is about becoming a team.
You're going to spend the rest of your life learning about each other, and every now and then, things blow up.
But the beauty of marriage is that you picked the right person and you both love each other: you'll always figure out a way to get through life."

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



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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.

"The key to love is understanding...
as it is the little things that say so much by themselves.
The key to love is forgiving....
to accept each other's faults and pardon mistakes,
The key to love is sharing ...
sharing your good fortunes as well as bad, together.
The key to love is giving ...
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 are two separate people, with different ideas
that you don't belong *to* each other – 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."

"The recipe of love must always include
Some herbs and spices for fortitude:
A tablespoon of forgiveness,
A clove of loyalty,
A cup of faith,
And a sprig of honesty,
A pinch of patience,
A teaspoon of trust,
A cup of friendship,
And a bit of lust.
Mix all these herbs and spices well;
No other recipe could ever excel;
Add a man and a woman for proper effect;
Then sauté the whole in two cups of respect."



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“In marriage, two people turn to each other in search of a greater fulfillment than either can achieve alone. Marriage is a bold step, taken together, into an unknown future. It is risking who we are for the sake of who we can be. Only giving ourselves fully, and sharing our lives with another, can this mysterious process of growth take place. Only in loyalty and devotion bestowed upon another can that which is eternal in life emerge and be known. Two among us, who have stood apart, come together now, to declare their love and to be united in marriage.

The words we say today have no magic or prophetic powers. The power of the wedding vows is merely a reflection of a reality that already exists in the hearts and minds of these two people. (*Saying Bride's name*) and (*Saying Groom's name*), nothing I can say, and nothing you can say to each other, will ensure a long and happy, satisfying and committed marriage. Only your love for one another, and your integrity to make your commitment real, can do that. I offer up the words of author William A Peterson in ‘The Art of Marriage,’ who I believe captured in words, the essence, of that commitment. I hope you will keep his words upon your heart, and refer to them again:

“A good marriage must be created
In the 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 each day,
It is never going to sleep angry.
It is having a mutual sense of values and objectives.
It is standing together and facing 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 person,
It is being the right partner.”

~ Excerpt from “The Art of Marriage” by William A. Petersen

“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 know no other way of loving
but this, in which there is no I or you,
so intimate that when I fall asleep it is your eyes;
your hand upon my chest is my hand.”

~ Pablo Neruda



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“Love is just not looking at each other and saying ‘You’re wonderful’,
there are times when we are anything but wonderful.
Love is looking out in the same direction,
it is linking our strength to pull a common load,
it is pushing together towards the far horizons, hand in hand.
Love is knowing that when our strength falters,
we can borrow the strength of someone who cares.
Love is a strange awareness that our sorrows will be shared
and made lighter by sharing;
that joys will be enriched and multiplied by the joy of another.
Love is knowing someone else cares that we are not alone in life.”

~ Walter Rinder

“Two lives, two people, so very different, yet so similar. Together we stand as one,
sharing our future as it comes. The past is that, past. Buds are yet to blossom, with
care and trust, the best is yet to be revealed. Honesty and kindness are the fruits of
love. Lord, bless this day and always to enrich us so our love will never end.”

~ Walter Rinder

And now the lonely days are done
And with each rising of the sun, love begins anew
And if you ever ask me why
I know that my love will never die
I'll say these words to you:
Of all the souls I've ever known
Mine sings to yours and yours alone and yours sings just to me
In all this world I'll never find
A heart that could beat as close to mine and this time I can see
A love like this is so hard to find
And so many never do
And loves like this, when they even exist
Are precious and few; you know they're precious and few
Down the miles, through the years
Yours is the star by which I steer, the brightest star I've known
And when I feel all hope is gone, yours is the love that leads me on
The light that guides me home
The light that guides me home
Your light will guide me home

~ Dan Fogleberg



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“I love you.
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. But the most beautiful rose is
 one, hardly more than a bud,
 wherein the pangs and ecstasies of desire are working for 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 . . . I love you.”

~ Carl Sandburg

“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.”

~ Excerpt from *The Bridge Across Forever* by Richard Bach

“If there is no love in the world, we will make a new world, and we will give it walls, and we will furnish it with soft, red interiors, from the inside out, and give it a knocker that resonates like a diamond falling to a jeweler’s felt so that we should never hear it. Love me, because love doesn’t exist, and I have tried everything that does...

It was not the feeling of completeness I so needed, but the feeling of not being empty...

I don’t think that there are any limits to how excellent we could make life seem... [because] ...You are the only one who has understood even a whisper of me, and I will tell you that I am the only person who has understood even a whisper of you.”

~ Jonathan Safran Foer



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“A marriage makes of two fractional lives a whole;
It gives 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 new gladness to the sunshine,
A new fragrance to the flowers, a new beauty to the earth
And a new mystery to life.”

~ Mark Twain

“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.
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.”

~ Mark Twain

“Let your love be stronger than your hate and 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 to 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 down to your children and your children’s children.”

~ Jane Wells

“There is a desire within each of us, in the deep center of ourselves that we call our heart. We were born with it, it is never completely satisfied, and it never dies. We are often unaware of it, but it is always awake. It is the human desire for love.

Every person in this earth yearns to love, to be loved, to know love. Our true identity, our reason for being, is to be found in this desire ...

... Love is the ‘why’ of life: why we are functioning at all, what we want to be efficient for ... I am convinced [love] is the fundamental energy of the human spirit,



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the fuel on which we run, the wellspring of our vitality. And grace, which is the flowing, creative activity of love itself, is what makes all goodness possible.

Love should come first; it should be the beginning of and the reason for everything.”

~ Excerpt from 'The Awakened Heart' by Gerald May

“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

“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.”

~ Robert Fulghum



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A clock is a symbol of marriage.

The clock is a beautiful and useful thing and works well.

It is strong and solid and has a bright and pleasant face.

It is built to last a lifetime.

The hands are joined together but they move independently.

They are equally important.

They move at different speeds and in different circles.

They come together and then pursue their own path.

But they always come back together, soon and often.

The clock is beautiful

but it is only useful when the hands work together to tell their story.

~ Gary Walls

“It doesn’t interest me what you do for a living.

I want to know what you ache for, and

if you dare to dream of meeting your heart’s longing.

It doesn’t interest me how old you are.

I want to know if you will risk looking a fool for love,
for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn’t interest me what planets are square in your moon.

I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow,
if you have been opened by life’s betrayals or
have become shriveled and closed down from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own;
without moving to hide it, fade it, or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own;
if you can dance with wildness and let ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers
and toes without cautioning us to be careful, be realistic, or to remember the
limitations of being human.

It doesn’t interest me if the story you are telling me is true.

I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true yourself;

if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul.

I want to know if you can be faithful and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see beauty even when it is not pretty every day, and if you
can source your life on the edge of the lake
and shout to the silver of the moon in God’s presence.

It doesn’t interest me to know where you live or how much money you have.

I want to know if you can get up after a night of grief and despair, weary and
bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done for the children.



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It doesn't interest me who you know, or how you came here.

I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me
and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied.

I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself,
and if you truly like the company you keep in empty moments."

~ Oriah, Mountain Dreaming

"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

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...



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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-Haining

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
telling, listening, respecting the truth
and never pretending

Love is the source of reality

Love is

an understanding that is 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



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Love is
the freedom to pursue your own desires
while sharing your experience 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 of 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

“True love gives nothing but itself, and takes nothing but from itself, for love is sufficient unto love.

Love has no other desire but to fulfill itself, to awake at dawn and give thanks for another day of loving, to rest at noon 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 upon your lips.”

~ Excerpt from 'The Prophet' by Kahil Gibran

“Love. What a small word we use for an idea so immense and powerful. It has altered the flow of history, calmed monsters, kindled works of art, cheered the forlorn, turned tough guys to mush, consoled the enslaved, driven strong women mad, glorified the humble, fuelled national scandals, bankrupted robber barons, and made mincemeat



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of kings. How can love's spaciousness be conveyed in the narrow confines of one syllable? Love is an ancient delirium, a desire older than civilization, with taproots spreading into deep and mysterious days. The heart is a living museum. In each of its galleries, no matter how narrow or dimly lit, preserved forever like wondrous diatoms, are our moments of loving, and being loved."

~ Excerpt from 'A History of Love' by Diane Ackerman

"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, 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 friendship caught fire; it is quiet, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. It is loyalty through good and bad times. It settles for less than perfection, and makes allowances for human weaknesses. Love is content with the present, hopes for the future, and does not brood over the past. It is the day-in and day-out chronicles of irritations, problems, compromises, small disappointments, big victories, and working toward common goals. If you have love in your life, it can make up for a great many things you lack. If you do not have it, no matter what else there is, it is not enough."

~ Laura Hendricks

"Matrimony is called holy, because this brave and fateful promise of a man and a woman, to love and honor and serve each other through thick and thin, looks beyond itself to more fateful promises still, and speaks mightily of what human life at its most human and most alive and most holy must always be. Every wedding is a dream, and every word that is spoken there means more than it says, and every gesture - the clasping of hands, the giving of rings - is rich with mystery. And so it [is that] we hope with every bride and groom, that the love they bear one another, and the joy they take in one another, may help them grow in love for this whole world where their final joy lies."

~ Excerpt from 'The Hungering Dark' by Frederick Buechner



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“If I could save time in a bottle, the first thing that I’d like to do, is to save every day ‘till eternity passes away, just to spend them with you. If I could make days last forever; if words could make wishes come true; I’d save every day like a treasure and then, again, I would spend them with you. If I had a box just for wishes, and dreams that had never come true; the box would be empty, except for the memory of how they were answered by you. But there never seems to be enough time to do the things you want to do, once you find them. I’ve looked around enough to know that you’re the one I want to go through time with.

~ Jim Croce

Maybe... We are supposed to meet the wrong people before meeting the Right one, so that when we finally meet the right person, we will know how to be grateful for that gift.

Maybe... it is true that we don’t know what we have got until we lose it, but it is also true that we don’t know what we have been missing until it arrives

Maybe... the happiest of people don’t necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their Way.

Maybe... the best kind of love is the kind you where you can sit on a sofa together and never say a word, and then walk away feeling like it was the best conversation you’ve ever had

Maybe... you shouldn’t go for looks; they can deceive. Don’t go for wealth; even that fades away. Go for someone who makes you smile, because it takes only a smile to make a dark day seem bright.

Maybe... you should hope for enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human, and enough hope to make you happy.

Maybe Love is not about finding the perfect person; it’s about learning to see an imperfect person perfectly. When you do what you can, love will do what you can’t.

~ attributed to Sam Keen

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 hearts that it entwines.



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Lighthearted non-religious readings for my wedding:

Ladies and gentlemen, prior to wedding take-off, all seat backs and tray tables must be in their upright and locked positions, all bags properly stowed and all electronic devices turned off and stowed. This includes cell phones and cameras. As you look towards the forward cabin and the rear, you'll notice there are no exits.

I invite you to be truly present at this special time. The photographer will capture how this moment looks. I encourage you to capture how this moment feels with your heart. Without the distraction of technology. Thank you.

Continue with humorous readings

“I will not play at **tug o’ war**. I’d rather play at **hug o’ war**, where everyone hugs instead of tugs, where everyone giggles, and rolls on the rug, where everyone kisses, and everyone grins, and everyone cuddles, and everyone wins.”

~ Shel Silverstein

“Gravitation cannot be held responsible for people falling in love. How on earth can you explain in terms of chemistry and physics so important a biological phenomenon as first love? Put your hand on a stove for a minute and it seems like an hour. Sit with that special girl for an hour and it seems like a minute. That’s relativity.”

~ Albert Einstein

“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
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?”



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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
I like you because everything that happens is nicer with you
I can't remember when I didn't like you
It must have been lonesome then
even if it was the 999th of July
even if it was August
even if it was way down at the bottom of November
I would go on choosing you
and you would go on choosing me
Over and over again
And that's how it would happen every time.
I just like you!

~ Excerpt from children's book 'I Like You' by Sandol Stoddard

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 TWO who'll decide what to do.

You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care. About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there." With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet, you're too smart to go down a 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 high heights.



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You won't lag behind, because you'll have 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.

I'm sorry to say so but, sadly, it's true
that Bang-ups and Hang-ups can happen to you.

You can get all hung up in a prickly perch.
And your gang will fly on. You'll be left in a Lurch.

You'll come down from the Lurch with an unpleasant bump.
And the chances are, then, that you'll be in a Slump.

And when you're in a Slump, you're not in for much fun.
Un-slumping yourself is not easily done.

You will come to a place where the streets are not marked.
Some windows are lighted. But mostly they're darked.
A place you could sprain both your elbow and chin!
Do you dare to stay out? Do you dare to go in?
How much can you lose? How much can you win?

And if you go in, should you turn left or right...
or right-and-three-quarters? Or, maybe, not quite?
Or go around back and sneak in from behind?
Simple it's not, I'm afraid you will find,
for a mind-maker-upper to make up his mind.

You can get so confused that you'll start in to race down long wiggled roads at a break-necking pace and grind on for miles across weirdish wild space, headed, I fear, toward a most useless place.

The Waiting Place...for people just waiting.

Waiting for a train to go or a bus to come, or a plane to go or the mail to come, or the rain to go or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow or waiting around for a Yes or No or waiting for their hair to grow. Everyone is just waiting.

Waiting for the fish to bite or waiting for wind to fly a kite or waiting around for Friday night or waiting, perhaps, for their Uncle Jake or a pot to boil, or a Better Break or a string of pearls, or a pair of pants or a wig with curls, or Another Chance. Everyone is just waiting.

No! That's not for you!
Somehow you'll escape all that waiting and staying.
You'll find the bright places where Boom Bands are playing.
With banner flip-flapping, once more you'll ride high!
Ready for anything under the sky.
Ready because of THE KNOT THAT YOU TIE!



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Oh, the places you'll go! There is fun to be done!
There are points to be scored. There are games to be won. And the magical things you can do with that ball will make you the winning-est winner of all. Fame! You'll be famous as famous can be, with the whole wide world watching you win on TV.

Except when they don't. Because, sometimes, they won't.

I'm afraid that sometimes you'll play lonely games too. Games you can't win 'cause you'll play against you.

All Alone!

Whether you like it or not,
Alone will be something you'll be quite a lot.

And when you're alone, there's a very good chance you'll meet things that scare you right out of your pants. There are some, down the road between hither and yon, that can scare you so much you won't want to go on.

But on you will go though the weather be foul. On you will go though your enemies prowl. On you will go though the Hakken-Kraks howl. Onward up many a frightening creek, though your arms may get sore and your sneakers may leak. On and on you will hike. And I know you'll hike far and face up to your problems whatever they are.

You'll get mixed up, of course, as you already know. You'll get mixed up with many strange birds as you go. So be sure when you step, step with 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 $\frac{3}{4}$ percent guaranteed.)

Kids, you'll move mountains!
So...be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray or Mordecai Ale Van Allen O'Shea,
you're off to Great Places!
Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting.
So...get on your way!

~ 'Oh the Places You'll Go', by Dr. Seuss

"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."



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“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.”

~ Excerpt from ‘The Velveteen Rabbit’ by Margery Williams

“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.

Love makes messes.

Love leaves you little surprises here and there.

Love needs lots of cleaning up after.

Sometimes you just want to get love fixed.

Sometimes you want to roll up a piece of newspaper and swat love on the nose,
not so much to cause pain,
just to let love know !Don’t you ever do that again!

Sometimes love just wants to go for a nice long walk.

Because love loves exercise.

It runs you around the block and leaves you panting.



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It pulls you in several different directions at once,
or winds around and around you until you're all wound up and can't move.

But love makes you meet people wherever you go.
People who have nothing in common but love
stop and talk to each other on the street.

Throw things away and love will bring them back,
again, and again, and again.
But most of all, love needs love, lots of it.
And in return, love loves you and never stops.

~ Taylor Mali

Yes, I'll marry you, my dear,
And here's the reason why;
So I can push you out of bed
When the baby starts to cry,
And if we hear a knocking
And it's creepy and it's late,
I hand you the torch you see,
And you investigate.

Yes I'll marry you, my dear,
You may not apprehend it,
But when the tumble-drier goes
It's you that has to mend it,
You have to face the neighbor
Should our Labrador attack him,
And if a drunkard fondles me
It's you that has to whack him.

Yes, I'll marry you,
You're virile and you're lean,
My house is like a pigsty
You can help to keep it clean.
That sexy little dinner
Which you served by candlelight,
As I do chipolatas,
You can cook it every night!

It's you who has to work the drill
and put up curtain track,
And when I've got PMT it's you who gets the flak,



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I do see great advantages,
But none of them for you,
And so before you see the light,
I do, I do, I do!

~ Pam Ayres

All of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in Kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school.

These are the things I learned...

Share everything.

Play fair.

Don't hit people.

Put things back where you found them.

Clean up your own mess.

Don't take things that aren't yours.

Say sorry when you hurt somebody.

Wash your hands before you eat.

Flush.

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 every day.

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.

~ Excerpt from 'All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten' by Robert Fulgham

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Do you want more possibilities? A good selection can be found at this [Library of Wedding Readings](#). But don't stop there. You're engaged! Let your heart soar with inspiration everywhere! You'll see and hear love anew every day, just because you are open to it. You'll find love in movies, music, while searching the Internet and refreshed views of your own home and family.