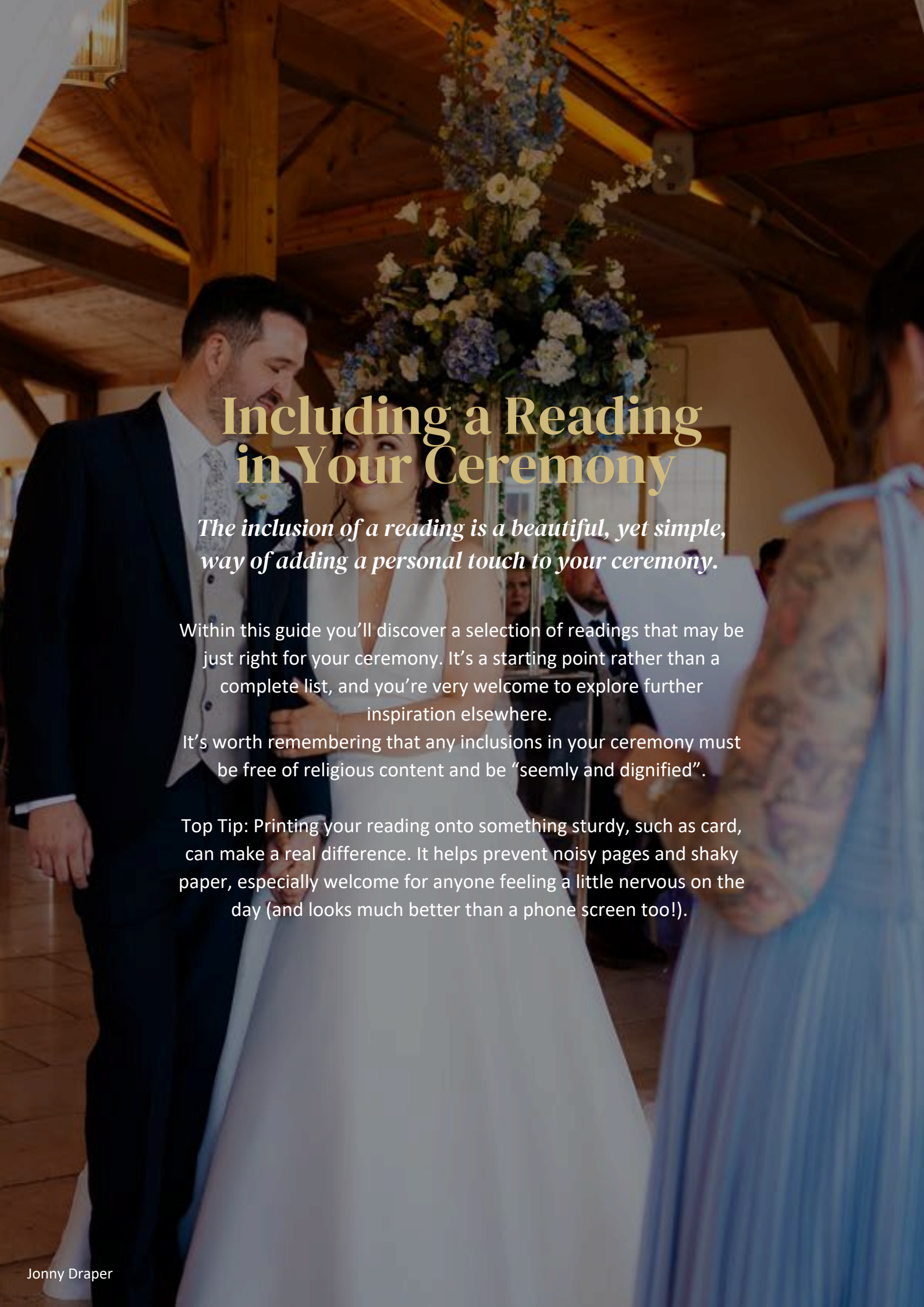


Your Ceremony

Readings Guide



Including a Reading in Your Ceremony

The inclusion of a reading is a beautiful, yet simple, way of adding a personal touch to your ceremony.

Within this guide you'll discover a selection of readings that may be just right for your ceremony. It's a starting point rather than a complete list, and you're very welcome to explore further inspiration elsewhere.
It's worth remembering that any inclusions in your ceremony must be free of religious content and be "seemly and dignified".

Top Tip: Printing your reading onto something sturdy, such as card, can make a real difference. It helps prevent noisy pages and shaky paper, especially welcome for anyone feeling a little nervous on the day (and looks much better than a phone screen too!).

Jonny Draper

The Art of *Marriage* –
Wilfred A Peterson

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 person 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.

Always –
Pablo Neruda

You were you
and I was I;
we were two
before our time

I was yours,
before I knew
and you have always
been mine too.

A *Vow* –
Wendy Cope

I cannot promise never to be angry;
I cannot promise always to be kind.
You know what you're taking on, my darling
It's only at the start that love is blind.
And yet I'm still the one you want to be with
And you're the one for me – of that, I'm sure.
You're my closest friend, my favourite person,
The lover and the home I've waited for.
I cannot promise that I will deserve you
From this day on. I hope to pass that test.
I love you, and I want to make you happy.
I promise I will do my very best.

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.

Marriage–

Anon

Marriage is about giving and taking
And forging and forsaking
Kissing and loving and pushing and shoving
Caring and sharing and screaming and swearing
About being together whatever the weather
About being driven to the end of your tether
About sweetness and kindness
And wisdom and blindness
It's about being strong when you're feeling quite weak
It's about saying nothing when you're dying to speak
It's about being wrong when you know you are right
It's about giving in before there's a fight
It's about you two living as cheaply as one
(you can give us a call if you know how that's done!)
Never heeding advice that was always well meant
Never counting the cost until it's all spent
And for you two today it's about to begin
And for all that the two of you had to put in
Some days filled with joy, and some days with sadness
Too late you'll discover that marriage is madness.

Extract from Captain Corelli's Mandolin –
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.

The Bridge Across Forever – *Richard Bach*

A soul mate 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 soul mate 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 soul mate is the one who makes life come to life.

Walking on the Waves–
Skipinnish

An island in the sunlight

Laughter in the rain

A whisky in the darkness

It all feels just the same

Watch the sunset over Hynish

See the twilight merge to dawn

Hear the waves caress the shoreline

As the island carries on

I've been walking, walking these shores all my days

But with you by my side I am walking on the waves

I've been walking, walking these shores all my days

But with you by my side I am walking on the waves

The Promise –
Eileen Rafter

The sun danced on the snow
with a glittering smile,
As two lovers sat quietly,
alone for a while.
Then he turned and said, with
a casual air,
(Though he blushed from his
toes to the tips of his hair)
“I think I’d quite like
to get married to you.”
“Well then,” she said,
“well there’s a thought,
But what if we can’t vow
to be all that we ought?
Can you promise me, say, you
won’t grumble and shout
If I’m late yet again when
we plan to go out?
For I know I can’t say that I’ll learn
to ignore
Dirty socks and damp towels
strewn all over the floor.

So if we can’t promise to
be all that we should,
I’m not sure what to do,
though the idea’s quite good.”
But he gently smiled and tilted
his head
Till his lips met her ear,
then softly he said,
“I promise, to weave my dreams
into your own.
That wherever you breathe shall
be my heart’s home.
I promise, that whether with
rags or with gold I am blessed,
Your smile is the jewel I shall
treasure the best.
Do you think then, my love,
we should marry, do you?”
“Yes,” she said smiling
“I do.”

Relativity –
Albert Einstein

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.

Love –
Bob Marley

She’s not perfect – you aren’t either, and the two of you may never be perfect together – but if she can make you laugh, cause you to think twice, and admit to being human and making mistakes, hold on to her and give her the most you can. She may not be thinking about you every second of the day, but she will give you a part of her that she knows you can break – her heart. So don’t hurt her, don’t change her, don’t analyse and don’t expect more than she can give. Smile when she makes you happy, let her know when she makes you mad, and miss her when she’s not there.

Serendipity –

Becky Hemsley

One night a star exploded
And it split right into two
And each part became a person -
One was me and one was you
We shimmered down to earth
And lived our individual lives
But one day serendipity
Decided we'd collide
Your face felt so familiar
And every time you spoke
It sounded like a harmony,
A song I'd always known
It was like you were an ocean
That I wanted to explore
But the waves I surfed, the depths I swam
I felt I'd swum before
It felt like I knew nothing
And yet everything as well
As if me getting to know you
helped me get to know myself
I think the universe intended
And had planned it all along
To return me to your ocean,
To your face and to your song
See, it's not that you completed me
For I was never half
But it seems the stardust in our souls
Could not be kept apart

These I Can Promise

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

Carrie's Poem –
Sex and the City

His hello was the end of her endings

Her laugh was their first step down the aisle

His hand would be hers to hold forever

His forever was as simple as her smile

He said she was what was missing

She said instantly she knew

She was a question to be answered

And his answer was "I do"

From Beginning to End –
Robert Fulghum

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.

Love Sonnet 17 –

Pablo Neruda

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where
I love you simply, without problems or pride:
I love you in this way because I don’t know any other way of loving
but this, in which there is no I or you,
so intimate that your hand upon my chest is my hand,
so intimate that when I fall asleep it is your eyes that close.

Extract from The Amber Spyglass – *Philip Pullman*

I will love you forever; whatever happens. Till I die and after I die, and when I find my way out of the land of the dead, I'll drift about forever, all my atoms, till I find you again… I'll be looking for you, every moment, every single moment. And when we do find each other again, we'll cling together so tight that nothing and no one'll ever tear us apart. Every atom of me and every atom of you… we'll live in birds and flowers and dragonflies and pine trees and in clouds and in those little specks of light you see floating in sunbeams… and when they use our atoms to make new lives, they won't just be able to take one, they'll have to take two, one of you and one of me, we'll be joined so tight…

Winnie the Pooh –
A. A. Milne

If ever there is tomorrow when we're not together... there is something you must always remember. You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think. But the most important thing is, even if we're apart... I'll always be with you.

Marriage Fulfils the Dreams

Glenda Wilm

Everyone searches for one special person
They can share their lives with
The other half who makes them whole,
Like two notes blending together to make a beautiful song,
Or the colours that complement
Each other to form a rainbow. It is everyone's wish to have a lifetime of sunny days,
A rainbow after every storm;
A lifetime of loving and living and growing and giving,
Of sharing and caring; a lifetime of days together,
Learning from the bad times and cherishing the good times.
Marriage is everything your heart desires
And the strength, courage and determination to work for it.
In marriage you take care of each other's heart
And hold on to what you share.
You hold it gently so it doesn't smother
And firmly so it doesn't slip away.
Hold it so it can grow
And you can grow together
And live and laugh and love together always

Love is a Partnership –
Barbara Cage

Love is a partnership of two unique people who bring out the very best in each other, and who know that even though they are wonderful as individuals, they are even better together.

Fleabag

It turns out it's quite hard to come up with something original about love, but I've had a go. Love is awful. It's awful. It's painful. It's frightening. It makes you doubt yourself, judge yourself, distance yourself from the other people in your life. It makes you selfish. It makes you creepy, makes you obsessed with your hair, makes you cruel, makes you say and do things you never thought you would do."

"It's all any of us want, and it's hell when we get there. So no wonder it's something we don't want to do on our own. I was taught if we're born with love, then life is about choosing the right place to put it. People talk about that a lot, feeling right, when it feels right, it's easy. But I'm not sure that's true. It takes strength to know what's right. And love isn't something that weak people do. Being a romantic takes a hell of a lot of hope. I think what they mean is, when you find somebody that you love, it feels like hope.

Les Misérables –
Victor Hugo

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

I Wanna Be Yours –

John Cooper Clarke

I wanna be your vacuum cleaner
breathing in your dust
I wanna be your Ford Cortina
I will never rust
If you like your coffee hot
let me be your coffee pot
You call the shots
I wanna be yours
I wanna be your raincoat
for those frequent rainy day
I wanna be your dreamboat
when you want to sail away
Let me be your teddy bear
take me with you anywhere
I don't care
I wanna be yours
I wanna be your electric meter
I will not run out
I wanna be the electric heater
you'll get cold without
I wanna be your setting lotion
hold your hair in deep devotion
Deep as the deep Atlantic ocean
that's how deep is my devotion.

Love is Friendship Caught Fire –
Laura Hendricks

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.

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The Wedding Poem–

Whitney Hanson

They say that sometimes
love starts with a spark.
And that might be true,
but if I were to wish you a love,
I wouldn't wish fire for you.
You see, fire is powerful.
It burns bright and then it's gone.
It's beautiful and warm,
but it doesn't last long.
So instead of wishing you a love that
burns,
I wish you a love like a river twists and
turns.
It changes and it flows,
It is powerful and free.
But it consistently finds its way back
to the sea.
And so like the water,
I hope your love is ever growing, ever
changing.
I hope your love is powerful and free,
And may you always find each other,
Like a river finds the sea.

The Nightmare Before Christmas

My dearest friend, if you don't mind
I'd like to join you by your side
Where we can gaze into the stars
And sit together, now and forever
For it is plain as anyone can see
We're simply meant to be

Marriage is Not Beautiful–

Anonymous

Marriage is ugly, you see the absolute worst in someone. You see them when they're mad, sad, being stubborn, when they're so unloveable they make you scream.

But you also get to see them when they are laughing so hard that tears run down their face and they can't help but let out those weird gargling noises. You see them at 3am when the world is asleep except for you two and you're eating a revolutionary sandwich on the kitchen floor.
You get to see a side of them that no one else does and it's not always pretty. It's snorting while laughing, it's tears when it feels like its all crashing down, it's the farting, bed head and bad breath, it's the random dances, it's the anger and the joy.

Marriage isn't a beautiful thing, but it's amazing. It's knowing that someone loves you so much and won't leave you even though you said something nasty. It's having someone have your back no matter what. It's fights over stupid things, like someone doing the dishes or not picking up after themselves. And it's those nights you fall asleep in each other's arms feeling like there will never be enough time with them.
It's the hardest most rewarding job there is. Because at the end of the day you get to crawl into bed with your best friend, the weirdest, most annoying, loving, goofy, perfect person you know.

Marriage is not beautiful but the journey is unbelievable craic.

I Love You In The Language of Everyday Things–

Whitney Hanson

I refuse to believe the words ‘I love you’ are like birthday cake. Three words reserved for special occasions only to be given out topped with candles and frosting at the perfect moment. I use the words ‘I love you’ casually and recklessly at times. But I found that birthday cake is better at midnight and ‘I love you’ is better when you don’t hesitate. When you don’t wait for an occasion to say it.

So here it is:

I love you.

And not in the special occasion kind of way. In the coffee in the morning on a Tuesday kind of way. I love you in chalk on a sidewalk and little Post-it notes and extra smiles when you come home. I love you in the language of everyday things. And seeing you at the end of each day and listening to every word you say. I love you in the language of birthday cake when it’s nobody’s birthday

Thank You, My Soul Mate–

Marlina Bee Bryant

What if there wasn't the internet?
Do you think that we would ever have met?
I keep thinking, what would I be doing?
What kind of life would I be leading?
I often think about these things
And I always come to the same perception
Without you,
I could have been a lonely person,
Living an unfulfilled life
I know that we met for a reason
And the definition was
Both you and I were meant to be soul mates.
You have given me the strength to move on
I believe that our relationship has been blessed
I am so content that things
Have turned out the way they were supposed to be...
Thank you for loving me,
You are my world, my life, my heart and my soul.

The Magic of Love–

Helen Steiner Rice

Love is like magic, and it always will be,
For love still remains life's sweet mystery.
Love works in ways that 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 its heart, and not with its mind.
Love is the answer that everyone seeks;
Love is the language that every heart speaks.
Love can't be bought, it is priceless and free.
Love, like pure magic, is life's sweet mystery.

The One–
Cheryl Barclay

When the one whose hand you're holding,
Is the one who holds your heart.
When the one whose eyes you gaze into,
Gives your hopes and dreams their start.
When the one you think of first and last
Is the one who holds you tight.
And the things you plan together
Makes the whole world seem just right
When the one whom you believe in,
Puts their faith and trust in you,
You've found the one and only love,
You'll share the whole life through

Wedding Day–
Rowena Edlin-White

Now comes the knitting, the tying, entwining into one,
Mysterious involvement of two, whole, separate people
Into something altogether strange and changing, new and lovely.
Nothing can be, we will never be, the same again:
Not merged into each other irrevocably, but rather
From now on we go the same way, in the same direction,
Agreeing not to leave each other lonely, or discouraged, or behind.
I will do my best to keep my promises to treasure you and keep you warm;
And we will make our wide bed beneath the bright
And ragged quilt of all the yesterdays that make us who we are,
The strengths and frailties we each bring to this marriage,
And we will be rich indeed.

Maybe --
Unknown

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 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.

How I Met Your Mother

Love doesn't make sense.
You can't logic your way into or out of it.
Love is totally nonsensical.
But we have to keep doing it, or else
we're lost and love is dead and humanity
should just pack it in.
Because love is the best thing we do.
I know that sounds cheesy, but it's just
true… It doesn't have to make sense, to
make sense

What is a Soulmate?-
Emily Matthews

If you have found a smile that is the sweetest one you've known.
If you have heard, within a voice, the echoes of your own.
If you have felt a touch that stirs the longing of your heart,
And still can feel that closeness in the moment you're apart.
If you are filled with wonder at the way two lives can blend,
To weave a perfect pattern that is seamless end to end.
If you believe some things in life are simply meant to be,
Then you have found your soulmate, your hearts own destiny.
If you can always be as close and happy as today,
Yet be secure enough to grow and change along the way.
If you can keep for you alone your love as man and wife,
Yet find the time to share your joy with others in your life.
If you can be as one and walk through marriage hand in hand,
Yet still support the goals and dreams that each of you have planned.
If you can dare to always go your separate ways together,
Then all the wonders of today will stay with you forever.

Forever –

Ms Moem

Will you love me when I'm ancient
Will you feel the same as today?
Will I still make you have butterflies
And feel proud in every way.
Will you still chat to me daily
And try to make me laugh?
Will you still give me a cuddle
And sneak a peek at me in the bath?
Will you still wake up each morning
And turn to me with a grin?
Will you still tell me I'm beautiful
And mean, outside and in.
Will you always want to hold me
And want me to feel blissfully safe?
Will you still know what I am thinking
Just by reading what lies on my face.
And if you still want to go ahead with this
Then here's to our life together
So answer yes to all these questions
Then there's no doubt this will last forever.

When You Marry

When you marry her, love her.

After you marry her, study her.

When she is blue, cheer her.

When she is talkative, by all means listen to her.

If she dresses well, compliment her.

When she is cross, humour her.

If she is jealous, cure her.

If she is lonely, comfort her.

When she looks pretty, tell her so.

Let her feel you understand her.

But never let her know she isn’t the boss.

When you marry him, love him.

After you marry him, study him.

If he is secretive, trust him.

If he is sad, cheer him.

When he is talkative, listen to him.

When he is quarrelsome, ignore him.

If he is jealous, cure him.

If he cares nought for pleasure, coax him.

If he favours society, accompany him.

When he deserves it, kiss him.

Let him think you understand him.

But never let him know you manage him.

Union –
Robert Fulghams

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 commitments in an informal way.

All of those conversations that were held in a car, or over a meal, or during long walks – all those conversations that began with, "When we're married", and continued with "I will" and "you will" and "we will" – all 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 that 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, even teacher, for you have learned much from one another these past few years. Shortly you shall say a few words that will take you across a threshold of life, and things between you will never quite be the same.

For after today you shall say to the world –

This is my husband. This is my wife.

The Wedding Singer

I want to make you smile whenever you're sad. Carry you around when your arthritis is bad. All I want to do is grow old with you. I'll get your medicine when your tummy aches. Build you a fire if the furnace breaks. Oh it could be so nice, growing old with you. I'll miss you, Kiss you, Give you my coat when you are cold. Need you, Feed you, Even let you hold the remote control. So let me do the dishes in our kitchen sink. Put you to bed if you've had too much to drink. I could be the man who grows old with you. I want to grow old with you.