Civil Marriage Ceremony Booklet

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# ORDER OF SERVICE EXAMPLE

Arrival of Bride/Partner along with Wedding Party

# ♡♡♡

# Welcome and Introduction by Authorised Registrar

# ♡♡♡

Giving of Bride / Partner Escort *(Optional)*

# ♡♡♡

# Reading *(Optional)*

# ♡♡♡

# The Law of Civil Marriage

# ♡♡♡

Reading and/or Hand Blessing *(Optional)*

# ♡♡♡

# Declaration of Marriage

# ♡♡♡

# Exchange of Rings *(Optional)*

# ♡♡♡

# Pronouncement of Marriage

# ♡♡♡

Ceremony Enhancement (Rose Ceremony, Hand-fasting, Quaich Ceremony etc)

# ♡♡♡

# Signing of Marriage Schedule

# ♡♡♡

*Format of ceremony can be adapted to suit your own requirements.*

Selection of

Civil Marriage Readings

A lovely way to make your ceremony more personal is to include readings or poems. We have compiled a selection of readings, poems and even some Disney quotes to help provide some inspiration of what you may wish to include in your ceremony.

You make ask your registrar to read something for you, a family member, children or a guest at your ceremony.

Readings can be adapted to suit same sex couples.

**1. IN MARRIAGE**

In Marriage, cherish each other in big ways and in small ways and never forget the magic of those three little words “I LOVE YOU”

In Marriage remember that it is the little things that make the difference

Don’t forget the birthdays and anniversaries

An occasional note means a lot

Share each other’s life even the small details

For too often we forget that day after day becomes

Year after year and then it is gone.

Give each other room to grow, we all need our own time alone

Keep strong your faith in each other

Time has a funny way of testing us

And it is faith that gets us through Respect one another

This world could always use more of that

Speak your mind honestly, openly, but with kindness

# 2. THE ART OF A GOOD MARRIAGE

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 facing the world,

and forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.

It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy!

It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It is not looking for perfection in each other;

it is cultivating flexibility, patience, 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 and is the common search for the good and the beautiful.

It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal,

dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.

It is not only marrying the right partner It is being the right partner

# *(Wilfred Arlan Peterson)*

# 3. THE GOLDEN CHAIN OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is a golden chain, the links are friends so dear.

And like a precious jewel, it's treasured more each year.

It's clasped together firmly with a love that's deep and true, and it's rich in happy memories and fond recollections too.

Time can't destroy its beauty for as long as memory lives.

Years can't erase the pleasure that the joy of marriage gives.

For marriage is a precious gift, that can't be bought or sold, and to have an understanding heart, is worth far more than gold.

And the golden chain of marriage is a strong and special tie.

Binding kindred hearts together as the years go passing by.

# 4. WHAT IS A MARRIAGE?

It is the most beautiful thing that can happen between two people in love.

A marriage is more than just a husband and a wife

It is a bridge which allows the love of two very special people to give meaning and worth and wonder to life.

It is a continual process of building: of shaping: of communicating: and caring.

It is the deepest and sweetest understanding. It is sharing today's and tomorrows together and making each one more treasured

and more complete than anyone could make them alone.

A marriage is a home interwoven with hopes and memories and dreams

The thankfulness and love it can bring have no comparison.

Being happily married is the most beautiful thing that can happen.....to anyone.

*(Colin McCarty)*

#  5. THE PROMISES OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is a promise of companionship

of having someone to share all of life’s experiences.

Marriage does not promise that there will not be any rough times

just the assurance that there will always be someone

who cares and will help you through to better times.

Marriage does not promise eternal romance just eternal love and commitment.

Marriage cannot prevent disappointments, disillusionment or grief,

but can offer hope, acceptance and comfort.

Marriage cannot protect you from making individual choices or shelter you from the world

but it will help to reassure you

that there is someone by your side who truly cares.

When the world hurts you and makes you feel vulnerable Marriage offers the promise that there will be

someone waiting to listen, to console, to inspire.

Marriage is a joining of two people who share the promise That only marriage can make –

To share the sunshine and the shadows,

and to experience a richer, more fulfilling life because of it.

# *(Bette Meeks)*

# 6. MARRIAGE

Marriage is about giving and taking and forgiving and forsaking.

Loving and sharing and

sometimes there’s 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

for all that the two of you have had to put in.

Some days filled with joy, and some days with sadness

Too late you'll discover that marriage is madness.

#

# 7. MARRIAGE IS A PROMISE…

A marriage is a promise That two hearts gladly make

A promise to be tender

To help, to give and take

A marriage is a promise

To be kind and understanding

To be thoughtful and considerate Fair and undemanding

A marriage is a promise

To share one’s life together…

A love-filled promise meant to be Kept lovingly for ever.

#

**8. ALWAYS LOVE EACH OTHER**

If you can always be as close

And happy as today,

Yet be secure enough to grow

And change along the way

If you 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.

(Larry S. Chengges)

# 9. MARRIAGE JOINS TWO PEOPLE IN THE CIRCLE OF ITS LOVE

Marriage is a commitment to life, the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunity 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 love, marriage encompasses all of life’s most important relationships. Two marriage partners are each other’s best friend, confidante, 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 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 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 to 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)*

# 10. THE DAY

May this be the start of a happy new life That’s full of special moments to share

May this be the first of your dreams come true and hope that will always be there...

May this be the start of a lifetime of trust and caring that’s just now begun...

May today be a day that you’ll always remember the day when your hearts become one...

# 11. TOGETHER IN MARRIAGE

Together in marriage you will bring out the best in each other

You will learn from each other and grow from your differences

You will be two individuals

Living your own lives with each other as one

Together in marriage you will be stronger, more sensitive, more aware, more knowing and more at peace than you are individually

You will be better people

Together in marriage your love will give understanding

To all that you do because you will share your ideas, goals and frustrations

And you will always have someone to support Whatever you say and do

Together in marriage you will be able to achieve

All that you want in life

*(Susan Polis Schutz)*

# 12. APACHE BLESSING

May the sun bring you new energy by day;

May the moon softly restore you by night;

May the rain wash away your worries

And the breezes blow new strength into your being.

All the days of your life may you walk gently

Through the world, and know its beauty.

Now you will feel no rain,

For each of you will be the shelter for each other

Now you will feel no cold,

For each of you will be the warmth for the other

Now there will be no loneliness

For each of you will be companion for the other

Now you are two persons, but there are three lives before you:

His life, her life, and your life together

Go now to your dwelling place

To enter into the days of your life together

May beauty surround you both

In the journey ahead and through all the years.

May happiness be your companion

To the place where the river meets the sun,

And may your days together

Be good and long upon the earth.

# 13. THE WEDDING RING

The sweetest story that’s ever been told

Lies in the slim circle of gold

Joining two people as husband and wife

To share in the joys and the sorrows of life

For richer or poorer – in sickness and health

Your marriage can yield up a wonderful wealth

Of memories to treasure and hopes to renew

All part of the promises made by you two

With faith in each other and love as your guide

As long as forever, you’ll walk side by side

And the shining reminder of how much you care

Will lie in the little gold band that you wear

*(Alice E. Chase)*

# 14. TO KEEP YOUR MARRIAGE BRIMMING

# To keep your marriage brimming,

#  With love in the loving cup,

# Whenever you're wrong admit it;

# Whenever you're right shut up.

# *(Ogden Nash)*

# 15. GIVE LAVISHLY! LIVE ABUNDANTLY!

The more you give, the more you get

The more you laugh, the less you fret

The more you do unselfishly

The more you live abundantly

The more of everything you share

The more you’ll always have to spare

The more you love, the more you’ll find

That life is good and friends are kind

For only what we give away Enriches us from day to day

*(Helen Steiner Rice)*

# 16. ON YOUR WEDDING DAY

Today is a day you will always remember

The greatest in anyone’s life

You’ll start off the day just two people in love

And end it as husband and wife

It’s a brand new beginning, the start of a journey With moments to cherish and treasure

And although there will be times when you both disagree These will surely be outweighed with pleasure

You’ll have heard many words of advice in the past When the secrets of marriage were spoken

But you know that the answers lie hidden inside Where the bond of true love lies unbroken

So live happy forever as lovers and friends It’s the dawn of a new life for you

As you stand there together with love in your eyes

From the moment you whisper “I do”

And with luck, all your hopes and dreams can be real May success find its way to your heart

Tomorrow can bring you the greatest of joys

But today is the day it all starts.

# 17. WE ARE NOT MEANT TO GO THROUGH LIFE ALONE….

We are not meant to go through life alone.

We need a partner who will forever remain by our side - someone to lean on at times, remembering, as well,

that we will be leaned on, too; someone to share our joy and hold us in our sorrow

Understand that there will be difficult times and doubt may cloud your lives

It is then that you must trust each other the most

and believe that love will sustain you.

Do not give up easily;

fight for what is most precious

your marriage.

Help it survive by nurturing it every single day.

Never hesitate to say “I love you”

or to be the first one to say “I’m sorry”.

Give a lot, overlook even more, and always expect as much in return.

Never look back or lose yourself,

but celebrate the special privilege of being a couple.

Never lose sight of what brought you together in the first place:

your special love for each other.

Cherish that always.

You have our best wishes

As you take this giant step forward.

We wish you nothing but happiness

As you enter into this wonderful new world of marriage

(Linda Hersey)

**18. THE BRIDGE ACROSS FOREVER (excerpt)**

A soulmate is someone who has locks that fir our keys,
and keys to fit our locks.
When we feel safe enough to open the locks,

 our truest selves step out

and we can be completely and honestly who we are;

We can be loved for who we are

and not for who we’re pretending to be.

 Each unveils the best part of the other.

No matter what else goes wrong around us,

 with that one person we’re safe in our own paradise.

Our soulmate is someone who shares our deepest longings,

our sense of direction.

When we’re two balloons, and together our direction is up,

chances are we’ve found the right person.

Our soulmate is the one who makes life come to life.

(Richard Bach)

### 19. ONE DAY

‘What are you going to do with your life?’
In one way or another it seemed that people had been asking them this forever; teachers, their parents, friends at three in the morning, but the question had never seemed this pressing and still they were no nearer an answer…
‘Live each day as if it’s your last’ - that was the conventional advice, but really, who had the energy for that? What if it rained or you felt a bit tired? It just wasn’t practical. Better by far to be good and courageous and bold and to make a difference. Not change the world exactly, but the bit around you. Cherish your friends, stay true to your principles, live passionately and fully and well.
Experience new things but mostly, love and be loved.

(David Nicholls)

### 20. TRUE FRIENDSHIP

It is often said that it is love that makes the world go round. However, without doubt,
it is friendship which keeps our spinning existence on an even keel.
True friendship provides so many of the essentials for a happy life — it is the
foundation on which to build an enduring relationship, it is the mortar which bonds us
together in harmony, and it is the calm, warm protection we sometimes need when
the world outside seems cold and chaotic.
True friendship holds a mirror to our foibles and failings, without destroying our sense
of worthiness. True friendship nurtures our hopes, supports us in our
disappointments, and encourages us to grow to our best potential.
Bride and Groom came together as friends. Today, they pledge to
each other not only their love, but also the strength, warmth and, most importantly,
the fun of true friendship.

(Judy Bielicki)

# 21. MAYBE

# Maybe we are supposed to meet the wrong people

#  before we meet the right one

# so when they finally arrive

# we are truly grateful for the gift we have been given.

# Maybe it’s true that we don’t know what we have lost

#  until we lose it

# but it is also true that we don’t know what we’re missing

#  until it arrives.

# Maybe the happiest of people don’t have the best of everything,

#  but make the best of everything that comes their way.

# Maybe the best kind of love is the kind where you sit on the sofa together,

# not saying a word,

# and walk away feeling like it was the best conversation

# you ever had.

# Maybe once in a lifetime you find someone who not only touches your heart

#  but also your soul,

#  someone who loves you for who you are

# and not what you could be.

# Maybe the art of true love is not about finding the perfect person,

#  but about seeing an imperfect person perfectly.

**22. GIFT OF THE SEA (excerpt)**

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 exactly 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 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 in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping, even.

 Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting its beauty as it is now.

(Anne Morrow Lindbergh)

**23. POEM FOR THE BRIDE AND GROOM**

He never leaves the seat up, or wet towels on the floor

The toothpaste has the lid on, and he always shuts the door!

He’s very clean and tidy, though he may sometimes delude

Leave your things out at your peril, in a second they’ll be moved!

She romances him and dines him, home cooked dinners and the like

She even knows his favourite food and spoils him day and night!

She’s thoughtful when he looks at her, a smile upon his face

Will he look that good in 50 years, when his dentures aren’t in place?

He says he loves her figure and her mental prowess too

But when gravity takes over, will she charm with her IQ?

She says she loves his kindness, and his patience is a must

And of course she thinks he’s handsome, which in her eyes is a plus!

They’re both not wholly perfect, but who are we to judge

He can be pig headed, where as she won’t even budge!

All that said and done, they love the time they spend together

And I hope as I’m sure you do, that this fine day will last forever.

He’ll be more that just her husband; he’ll also be her friend

And she’ll be more than just his wife; she’ll be his soul mate ‘till the end.

#

# 24. LOVE IS GIVING

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, understanding but never demanding

Love is constant, prevailing, its strength never failing.

A promise once spoken for all time unbroken,

Love’s time is for ever.

#

# 25. TO LOVE

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

To love is to remember and keep alive forever all those unique qualities that drew you to one another in the beginning…. Those first halting phrases…..That wonderful feeling of oneness when your eyes first met.

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

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

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

To love is to follow the rainbow through the rain,

to be able to laugh at yourselves and be willing to say……..”I was wrong, I’m sorry”.

To forgive, and more importantly, to forget, and to always believe and trust one another.

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

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

#  26. THE BEAUTY OF LOVE

The question is asked:

“Is there anything more beautiful in life than a young couple clasping hands who have pure hearts in the path of marriage?

 Can there be anything more beautiful than young love?”

And the answer is given: “Yes, there is a more beautiful thing.

It is the spectacle of an old man and an old woman finishing their journey together on that path.

Their hands are gnarled but still clasped; their faces are seamed but still radiant; their hearts are physically bowed and tired but still strong with love and devotion.

 Yes, there is a more beautiful thing than young love.

Old love.”

#

# 27. CAPTAIN CORELLI’S MANDOLIN (excerpt)

Love is a temporary madness,

it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides.

And when it subsides you have to make a decision.

You have to work out whether your roots have so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part.

Because this is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement,

it is not the promulgation of eternal passion.

That is just being "in love" which any fool can do.

Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident.

Those that truly love have roots that grow towards each other underground,

and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from their branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.

*(Louis de Bernieres)*

# 28. LES MISERABLES (excerpt)

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.

*(Victor Hugo 1802 – 1885)*

# 29. LOVE IS THE WHY OF LIFE

"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... some are convinced that love is the fundamental energy of the human spirit, 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."

(Gerald May)

**30. I DO**

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.

An ocean couldn’t prevent it.

A New York minute wouldn’t let it pass.

Does the universe decide for us,

Which love will fade and which will last.

He said she was what was missing

She said she instantly knew.

She was a question to be answered

And his answer was “I do”.

**31. LOVE ISN’T ALWAYS PERFECT**

Love isn't always perfect. It isn't a fairytale or a storybook. And it doesn't always come easy. Love is overcoming obstacles, facing challenges, fighting to be together, holding on and never letting go. It is a short word, easy to spell, difficult to define, and impossible to live without. Love is work, but most of all, love is realising that every hour, every minute, and every second was worth it because you did it together

**32. WHAT IS LOVE?**

Sooner or later we begin to understand

That love is more than verses on Valentine cards

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 the promise that is always kept

A fortune that can never be spent

A seed that can flourish,

even in the most unlikely of places

and this radiance that never fades

this mysterious and magical joy

is the greatest treasure of all –

known only to those who love.

**33. LET US LOVE *(excerpt)***

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!

# 34. THE SECRET OF BLENDING FAMILIES

The secret to blending families is there is no secret.

 It’s scary and awesome, ragged and perfect and it’s always forever changing.

Love and laugh hard.

Try again tomorrow, but that’s life advice too.

Family isn’t always blood.

It’s the people in your life who want you in theirs;

the ones who accept you for who you are.

The ones who would do anything to see you smile and

who love you no matter what.

It’s the people who have your back,

 it’s know that your family will be there watching out for you.

Nothing else will give you that, not work, not money, not fame.

# **35. FAMILY COMES TOGETHER**

Family comes together
For always and forever
In sickness and in health
In poverty or in wealth

Family comes together
For always and forever
Without any reason
Anytime or any season
For always and forever
In death or in life
In happiness or in strife

Family comes together
For always and forever
In anger or in kindness
Whether all seeing or in blindness
For always and forever
Whether for work or for play
They somehow find a way
For family to come together
Because families are forever

 (Glaedr the poet)

# 36. I LOVE MY FAMILY SO MUCH

To be a part of a family like mine

is so divine

where love is shown

hurt is shared

our love for each other is never impaired

we talk

we laugh

we cry

but we are a family

and we do it all together

for as a family we do it all as one

because we are family

a family full of strength

a family full of love

a family no one can touch

that's why I love my family so much

my family is my life and always will be forever

(Filoi Hemopo)

**37. TOY STORY – YOU’VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME**

You’ve got a friend in me,
You’ve got a friend in me,
When the road looks rough ahead,
And you’re miles and miles,
From your nice warm bed,
You just remember what your old pal said,
Boy, you’ve got a friend in me,
Yeah, you’ve got a friend in me,

You’ve got troubles, and I’ve got ’em too,
There isn’t anything I wouldn’t do for you,
We stick together and can see it through,
‘Cause you’ve got a friend in me,
You’ve got a friend in me…

(Randy Newman)

**38. FROZEN – FIXER UPPER**

We need each other to raise us up and round us out.

Everyone's a bit of a fixer-upper

but when push comes to shove

the only fixer-upper fixer

that can fix up a fixer-upper is

true, true, true, true, true, true, love

(Kristen Anderson‐Lopez & Robert Lopez)

**39. TANGLED – I SEE THE LIGHT**

And at last I see the light

And it's like the fog has lifted

And at last I see the light

And it's like the sky is new

And it's warm and real and bright

And the world has somehow shifted

All at once everything looks different

Now that I see you.

(Glenn Slater)

Selection of Personal Readings

*(This selection can be read by the couple to each other)*

# 40. 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 and sorrow;

A love that’s ever true and ever growing;

A hand to hold in yours through each tomorrow.

# 41. I’LL LOVE YOU FOREVER

I’ll always love you

For you’ll always be

The most wonderful thing

That has happened to me

Without you beside me

My day would not start

There’d be no air to breathe

And no beat to my heart

You’re my reason for living

My present, my past

Only you have the power

To make my dreams last

**42. TODAY**

TODAY, I look into the eyes of my best friend

The one with whom I can share anything

My deepest hopes and heart-filled dreams

Inner fears and sheltered insecurities

My most warming joys and overwhelming triumphs

All future journeys that I have left to encounter

This and more I know I can share with you

TODAY, I take pride in my best friend

With admiration I look upon you and smile

All that you are and all that you do that make me so proud

Every part of you that I have come to adore

And for all those parts I have not yet learned

TODAY, I give my heart to my best friend

My most prized possession

I give it to you with confidence and trust

Because I know with you it is safe

And this is why

Today I am marrying my best friend

# 43. I PROMISE

I promise to give you the best of myself and to 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 my attention and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship

I promise to keep myself open to you, to let you see through the window of my world into my innermost fears and feelings, secrets and dreams

I promise to grow along with you, to be willing to face changes in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting

I promise to love you in good times and in bad, with all that I have to give

and all I feel inside in the only way I know how Completely and forever

(Dorothy R. Colgan)

# 44. I CARRY YOUR HEART WITH ME

I carry your heart with me,
I carry it in my heart.
I am never without it
anywhere I go you go, my dear
and whatever is done by only me is your doing, my darling

I fear no fate,
for you are my fate, my sweet.
I want no world,
for beautiful, you are my world, my true
and you are whatever a moon has always meant

and whatever a sun will always sing, is you.

Here is the deepest secret nobody knows

here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud

and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;

which grows higher than soul can hope or mind can hide

and this is the wonder that’s keeping the stars apart

I carry your heart, I carry it in my heart.

(E. E. Cummings)

**CEREMONY ENHANCEMENTS**

Ceremony enhancements are a great way to personalise your ceremony.

They can be used in a ceremony to honour parents, children, your relationship, and/or friends. They can symbolize the joining together of two families into one.

No matter what your reasoning for adding that extra personal touch to your ceremony we can help you choose the right one for your special occasion. Below is an example of ceremony enhancements that we offer.

Your officiating Registrar will be happy to discuss your requirements with you and offer suggestions to help guide you.

There are many additional ceremonies that you can incorporate into your ceremony these include:

* Hand Blessing
* Hand-fasting
* Quaich Ceremony
	+ Sand Ceremony
	+ Rose Ceremony
* Pinning of the Tartan
* Oathing Stone Ceremony
	+ Unity Candle Ceremony
* Remembrance Candle Ceremony
	+ Ring Warming Ceremony
		- Guest Vow

**HAND BLESSING**

\_\_\_\_\_\_, please face\_\_\_\_\_\_, and hold their hands, palms up, so that you may see the gift that they are to you. These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, for a lifetime of happiness. 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 comfort you in illness, and hold you when fear or grief fill you.

These are the hands that will give you support and celebrate with you in your accomplishments.

\_\_\_\_\_\_, please hold\_\_\_\_\_\_hands, palms up, so that you may see the gift that they are to you. These are the hands that will hold you tight as you struggle through difficult times. These are the hands that will comfort you when you are sick or console you when you are grieving. These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, for a lifetime of happiness. These are the hands that will give you support as she encourages you to fulfil your dreams.

Together, as a team, everything you wish for can be realised.

**ROSE CEREMONY**

When planning your special day you may wish to include the “Rose Ceremony”. This would take place either after the “Pronouncement of Marriage” or after the signing of the Marriage Schedule.

The ceremony would be read by the officiating registrar and a poem (optional) could be read by a family member, friend or by the officiating registrar. The wording can be adapted or changed to suit your own personal preferences.

# What you will need

Two red roses

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ traditionally the rose is considered a symbol of love, and a single red rose means only one thing – the words,

**“I love you”.**

It is appropriate that your first gift as husband and wife will be a single red rose.

**Please exchange your first gift as husband and wife.**

In some ways it seems like you have done nothing at all.

A moment ago you were holding one red rose and now you are still holding one red rose.

**In some ways a marriage is like this.**

In some ways tomorrow is going to seem no different than yesterday.

But today, just now, you both have given and received one of the most valuable and precious gifts of life – one, which I hope you will always remember –

the gift of true love within the devotion of marriage.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *,*on each anniversary of this special day or during the difficult times when words fail you,

give to each other a single red rose

The giving and receiving of this rose will say

**“I still love you”.**

It will remind you of the love that has been shared here today and demonstrate a recommitment to your marriage.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_*,*if there is anything you remember of your marriage ceremony,

it is that love brought you here today,

and it is by love that your marriage will endure.

**HAND-FASTING CEREMONY**

Hand-fasting is an ancient Celtic/Medieval custom, especially common in Ireland and Scotland, in which a couple came together at the start of their marriage relationship to declare their own free will that they intended to marry.

While facing each other, the couple will join hands while a cloth is tied around their hands in a knot. This is where the term tie the knot came from. Couples often choose to use a cloth made of a particular clan tartan or a specific colour of cloth symbolising something important to them.

Hand-fasting is suitable for use in both weddings and civil partnership ceremonies.

# What you will need

A cloth or ribbon suitable for hand-fasting.

**Example wording**

There is an ancient Celtic tradition of binding a couple in marriage by hand-fasting. Literally, tying the hands together with cord or ribbon as a symbol that they are bound together not just for a lifetime, but for eternity.

\_\_\_\_\_and\_\_\_\_\_ have decided to include a hand-fasting in their wedding ceremony to emphasise their eternal bond and reinforce the feeling that they never wish to be parted from one another.

In Scotland, until the mid 1700’s, marriages were celebrated by a simple hand fasting ceremony in which the two partners joined hands. The couple would link hands to form an infinite circle, and then their hands or wrists would be bound together, symbolising the binding together of their two lives into one. It is from this practice that they expression “tying the knot” probably comes from. and have chosen this day to engage in a traditional hand fasting ceremony.

Place the tartan ribbons and tie round wrists.

With this cord I bind \_\_\_\_\_and\_\_\_\_\_ to the vows they make to each other.

The knots of the binding are not formed by this cord, but by your vows. You hold in your hands and hearts the making and breaking of this union.

Just as your hands are now bound together, so too are your lives. May you be forever one, sharing in all things, in love and loyalty for all time to come.

May your marriage be blessed with patience and dedication, forgiveness and respect, love and understanding.

**THE QUAICH CEREMONY**

The Quaich was a two-handled loving cup for the wedding feast. They also used the Quaich at the reception for their first toast together.

Symbolic of the sharing between the couple, it’s an ancient vessel used by two families or clans, to celebrate the bond, with each leader partaking of the offered drink.

The groom drinks from the Quaich and then offers it to his bride. The order in which it is then passed is purely a matter of choice although historically it would have been the leaders of each family or clan who would have passed the Quaich around.

# What you will need

A Quaich (sometimes the couple have this engraved with their names and date of marriage)

Preferred drink to fill the Quaich

# Example wording

The years of your life together are like a cup of \_\_\_\_\_\_ poured out for you to drink. This loving cup contains within it a\_\_\_\_\_\_ that is sweet symbolic of happiness, joy, hope, peace, love and delight. This same\_\_\_\_\_\_ also has some bitter properties that are symbolic of life’s trials and tribulations. Together the sweet and bitter represent “Love’s Journey” and all of the experiences that are a natural part of it. As you share the preferred drink from this Loving Cup, so will you share all things in your life.

Registrar then pours drink into the Quaich and holds it up

This cup of\_\_\_\_\_\_ is symbolic of the cup of life. As you all share from the loving cup, you undertake to share all that the future may bring. All the sweetness life may hold for each of you will be the sweeter because you drink it together. Whatever challenges it may contain will be less difficult because you share them. Drink now from this cup and acknowledge to one another that your lives have now become one.

Now drink to the love you’ve shared in the past

Drink to your love in the present, on this your wedding day.

And drink to your love in the future and forever more!

As you have shared from this loving cup, so may you share your lives, may you explore life’s mysteries together and find life’s joys heightened, its bitterness sweetened and all of life enriched by the love of family and friends.

(The Quaich may be passed around family and friends if desired)

**THE SAND CEREMONY**

This ceremony requires the couple to provide three containers of coloured sand – one colour for the groom or first partner, one for the bride or second partner and one for the celebrant.

The three containers of sand are then poured into a fourth larger container at different points in the ceremony, each symbolising a different aspect of the couple, their relationship and their families. The sand then forms a pattern in the container, which is kept by the couple as a keepsake of their day.

**What you will need:**

* Three containers of sand, a different colour in each.
* One large container capable of holding the sand from all three smaller containers.

**Example Wording:**

Today, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_have sealed the marriage into which they have entered by the exchange of vows and the giving and receiving of the wedding rings. They have committed to share the rest of their lives with each other.

This relationship is now going to be symbolised with a Unity Sand Ceremony, which may be new to many of you. Their relationship is symbolised through the pouring of these individual vases of sand into one. To symbolise the importance of the individuals within the marriage, and the joining of two lives into one entity, three colours of sand will be layered into this beautiful large vase.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, as you each hold your sand, these separate vases of sand represent your lives until today, individual and unique. As you then combine the sand together, so your lives also join together as one.

Love is the eternal force of life and allows us to face fear and uncertainty with courage. Although you are sharing one life, never forget that you are two separate people. Cherish and affirm your differences. Love each other. Together you will laugh and cry, be sick and well, be happy and angry. Grow - sometimes together, sometimes separately.

I will begin with a layer of neutral sand - which symbolises that their marriage is grounded (Registrar to pour all the neutral sand into the vase)

Now we will layer the individual colours. This symbolises that the marriage is based on the strength of\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

(Partner 1 pours some in, then same amount by Partner 2)

Finally, we combine the sands to symbolise two lives joined as one together, forever (both pour remaining sand into large vase together so that they mix)

Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the individual containers, so will your marriage be, united as one for all your days.

**OATHING STONE CEREMONY**

The Oathing Stone is an old Scottish tradition where the couple place their hands upon a stone while saying their wedding vows. Taken from the ancient Celtic custom of "setting an oath in stone", inclusion of the oathing stone ceremony in the vows can be deeply moving.

During the declaration of wedding vows or civil partnership promises, the couple hold the Oathing Stone, together in their hands. It is believed that holding the stone during the vows in turn casts or sets them in stone

Any stone can be used for this purpose. One collected by the couple from a favourite place i.e. beach, local beauty spot etc would be appropriate. The stone should then be washed and scrubbed and treated with almond oil then wiped dry in order to give it a satin sheen (if desired).

The stone can also be engraved with a Celtic knot etching, the date of the ceremony and your initials if you wish, although it isn't necessary.

**What you will need to do:**

* Collect a stone suitable for use as an oathing stone.
	+ Prepare the stone and have it engraved if desired.

**Example Wording:**

Family and friends, and , will now make their vows using the Scottish tradition of the oathing stone.

Can I please ask to come forward with the stone.

For those of you not familiar with this Scottish tradition it is when the couple either hold or put their hands together on a stone as they repeat their wedding vows, as an oath given near a stone or water was considered to be more binding.

Some believe that it is where the phrase 'set in stone' comes from.

**EXCHANGE OF RINGS**

At the exchange of rings you may choose any of the following options.

The wording may also be altered to your own personal preference or you may wish to compose your own promises to one another to be used at this point in the ceremony.

**(1)**

I promise to Love, Honour and Respect you (Forename)

For Better for Worse, For Richer for Poorer,

In Sickness and in Health

And upon this Promise, I will base our Marriage

**(2)**

I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage

All that I am, I give to you

All that I have, I share with you

For the whole of our life together

**(3)**

Before these witnesses, this is my promise

To treasure and take care of the special love we have together

To grow with you and respect your ideas and expressions

To always talk with you and share our happy times

And our sad times

**(4)**

I promise loyalty and friendship

And to love you

With all that I am and all that I can

This I promise you from the depths of my heart and mind

For all our life together.

**(5)**

I give you this ring as a symbol of the marriage we have entered into

and as a token of the vows we have made to each other today.

**(6)**

I offer my vow to you in the form of this ring, so that my word and my love,

will always be with you, close to your heart.

**(7)**

Take this ring as a symbol of my vow to you.

I’ll be your faithful partner/husband/wife forevermore