

## Weddings are Natural

In keeping with this natural setting, let us be reminded that marriage is also very natural.

Marriage is really not an institution, but an innate progression of love between two people. Through out all history and all cultures – marriage has prevailed. In respect to all the choices open to couples today – marriage remains as popular and meaningful as always.

In Genesis we read, “God created man in God’s own image, male and female God created them.”

The man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman.

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.

And the man and woman were both naked and were not ashamed. And God blessed them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply.’”

As our creator has created us to be together – let us acknowledge and give thanks to this creator and creation when such covenants are being made. It is not the church, the state, nor any priest or minister

which makes people married. Rather, it is simply the bond between two human souls. The officiant's role is to simply assist in the symbol and celebration of the love which already exists. Our role together is to commemorate with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and hold you up in love and community.

To be married in the presence of family and friends and community is also natural and traditional. We are all individuals, but when significant passages occur we are typically surrounded by community to enhance and celebrate the experience. Then, as earliest history records, such important events conclude with a feast. There is nothing more natural than eating. But when we feast with family and friends following a wedding it becomes a very special party.

So, let us do what comes naturally and by so doing we come closer to our true selves and spiritual selves. As this moment and marriage satisfies our deepest longings and desires may it now and forever be hallowed and remembered.

What Greater Thing -

What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life - to strengthen each other in all labor, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting.

George Elliott and Adam Bede

The Art of a Good Marriage

A good marriage must be created.

In marriage the "little" things are the big things.

It is never being too old to hold hands.

It is remembering to say, "I love you" at least once a day.

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is having a mutual sense of values, and common objectives.

It is standing together and facing the world.

It is forming a circle that gathers in the whole family.

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

It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have wings of an angel.

It is cultivating flexibility, patience, and understanding and a sense of humor.

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 finding room for the things of the spirit

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 person ~ it is being the right partner.

I Love You by Roy Croft

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  
see 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 the  
works of my ever 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.

## Wedding-These Are The Hands

These are the hands of your best friend. They 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 wracks your mind.

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

May these hands always reach out with love, tenderness and respect.

May these hands continue to build a loving relationship that lasts a lifetime.

With eyes locked, and hands linked, this ritual is a beautiful symbol of the union of two hearts, two lives, and two souls.

## Vows of Marriage

### Most Traditional:

I take you to be my husband/wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance, I pledge you my faith.

### Modern version of traditional:

I take you to be my wife/husband, and I promise to stand beside you and with you always; in times of joy and in times of sadness; in times of pleasure and in times of pain; in times of health and times of illness; I will live with you and love you always.

### Another modern version of traditional:

I take you to be my wife/husband. Before God and these witnesses, I will be your loving and faithful wife; in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health: as long as we both shall live.

### Another modern version:

I take you to be my wife/husband; to have and to hold from this forward; to be your friend and lover, companion and helper; so help me God.

### Contemporary version:

I take you to be my wife/husband, and promise that in joy and sorrow, harmony and discord, I will love and cherish you, throughout all the changes of our lives. My future rests in your future, my happiness in your happiness, my dreams in your dreams, my life in your life, and my love in your heart.

### Wedding from the heart:

#### Question:

Will you take to be your wife/husband? And from this time forward, be his faithful wife/husband. Will you promise to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond? In faith and commitment will you share with him/her all that is to come and all that is to be?

Personal Vows:

From this day on, I most chose you, to be my wife/husband. To live with you and grow with you. To stand by your side and sleep in your arms. To be joy to your heart and food to your soul To laugh with you and to cry with you. To comfort you when you are sad and wipe away your tears with my hands. To share with you all success and honors and enjoy our times of play. To bring out the best in you and the best in me. I promise this, until we grow old together, and still choosing you, our lives shall come to an end.

**Fourth Reading by Robert Fulghum and read by Gregg Anderson**

(Robert Fulghum wrote “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten)

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.

### **Wedding Blessing**

May your love grow like a beautiful tree, sending roots deep and branches high, with new beauty every season of your life together.

May you dare to dream dreams not yet dreamt.

May you find constant reward and challenge as you pursue the ongoing adventure of learning who you are and where you want to go.

May you always have a special sense of your mission in life together, and may you never tire of the endless possibilities of exploring your shared existence.

- Cynthia Reed, Wedding Celebrant