

# **A Selection of Readings suitable for Civil Ceremonies**

## **Hampshire Registration Service**

## A Selection of Readings suitable for Civil Ceremonies

### An Excerpt from an American Indian Wedding Ceremony

May the sun bring you new strength by day,  
May the moon softly restore you by night,  
May the rain wash away your fears,  
And the breeze invigorate your being,  
May you, all the days of your life together,  
Walk gently through the world and know it's beauty.

Treat yourselves and each other with respect,  
and remind yourselves often of what brought you together.  
Give the highest priority to the tenderness,  
gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves.  
When frustration, difficulties and fear assail your relationship,  
as they threaten all relationships at one time or another,  
remember to focus on what is right between you,  
not only the part which seems wrong.  
In this way, you can ride out the storms,  
when clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives,  
remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment,  
the sun is still there.  
And if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together,  
it will be marked by abundance and delight.

Now you will feel no rain,  
For each of you will be shelter for the other,  
Now you will feel no cold,  
For each of you will be warmth to the other,  
Now there is no more loneliness,  
For each of you will be company for the other,  
Now you are two persons,  
But there is only one life before you.  
Go to your dwelling,  
Enter into the days of your life together  
And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

## Celtic Blessing

May peace guard  
The door of your house  
The door of your heart  
May the road rise to meet you,  
And the sun stand at your shoulder  
May the wind be always at your back  
And the rains fall softly upon your fields  
May life itself befriend you  
Each day, each night  
Each step of your journey.

May peace be with you  
And with your children,  
From the day that we have here today  
To the day of the end of our lives,  
Until the day of the end of your lives.

## I will be here (Steven Curtis Chapman)

If in the morning when you wake,  
If the sun does not appear  
I will be here  
If in the dark we lose sight of love  
Hold my hand and have no fear,  
I will be here.

I will be here when you feel like being quiet,  
When you need to speak your mind I will listen.  
Through the winning, losing, and trying we'll be together,  
And I will be here.

If in the morning when you wake,  
If the future is unclear,  
I will be here.  
As sure as seasons were made for change,  
Our lifetimes were made for years,  
I will be here.

I will be here  
And you can cry on my shoulder, when the mirror tells us we're older.  
I will hold you, to watch you grow in beauty,

And tell you all the things you are to me.  
We'll be together and I will be here.

I will be true to the promises I've made,  
To you and to the one who gave you to me.  
I will be here.

## I love you because

I love you because you're my future,  
My present and part of my past  
My world has been turning so quickly  
And time just keeps moving so fast.

I love you because you have something  
no ordinary person can give  
A warmth that I'll cling to forever -  
hold on to so long as I live

I love you because your devotion  
is tender and wonderfully rare  
Could anyone ever imagine  
The magic moments we share?

I love you because you are truthful,  
Your eyes hold the key to my heart  
Tell me you share my commitment,  
And say we shall not be apart.

I love you because you are wonderful,  
You give me all that I need  
A hug when I seek reassurance,  
A smile if we have disagreed.

I love you because..... I just love you,  
For too many reasons to say  
And I'll always be right here beside you,  
A breath and a heartbeat away.

## Where there is Love (Helen Steiner Rice)

Where there is love the heart is light.  
Where there is love the day is bright.  
Where there is love there is a song  
To help when things are going wrong.  
Where there is love there is a smile  
To make all things seem more worthwhile.  
Where there is love there's quiet peace,  
A tranquil place where turmoils cease –  
Love changes darkness into light  
And makes the heart take "wingless flight".

## Love is The Reason

Love is the reason why this day was chosen by you both to begin your lives together.  
And love is the reason why you both will give with all hearts for the good of each other.  
Love is the reason that together you will become one; one in hope;  
One in believing in life; one in sharing the coming years.

## A Wedding Message (Amanda Bradley)

To love is to share life together.  
To build special plans just for two.  
To work side by side,  
And then smile with pride  
As, one by one, dreams all come true.

To love is to help and encourage  
With smiles and sincere words of praise.  
To take time to share.  
To listen and care  
In tender, affectionate ways.

To love is to have someone special  
On whom you can always depend  
To be there through the years,  
Sharing laughter and tears  
As a partner, a lover, a friend.

To love is to make special memories  
Of moments you love to recall.  
Of all the good things

That married life brings,  
Love is the greatest of all.

## Love

Love puts the music in laughter  
The beauty in song  
The warmth in a shoulder  
The gentle in strong

Love puts the magic in memories  
The sunshine in skies  
The goodness in giving  
The starlight in eyes

Love puts the fun in together  
The sad in apart  
The hope in tomorrow  
The joy in the heart.

## Ancient Sanskrit Poem

Look well to this day, for it is life  
The very best of life  
In its brief course lie all the realities and truths of existence  
The joy of growth,  
The splendour of action,  
The glory of power.

For yesterday is but a memory  
And tomorrow is only a vision  
But today if well-lived,  
Makes every yesterday a memory of happiness  
And every tomorrow a vision of hope  
Look well therefore to this day.

## Always

This isn't sometimes  
This is always  
This isn't maybe  
This is always  
The real beginning of forever  
This isn't just midsummer madness  
A passing glow, a moment's gladness

This is love.

I knew it on the night we met  
You tied a string around my heart  
So how could I forget you?  
With every kiss I know that  
This is always

## Yes, I'll Marry You (Pam Ayres)

Yes, I'll marry, 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 to 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 neighbour 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 work the drill and put up curtain track,  
And when I've got PMT it's you who gets the flak,  
I do see great advantages, but none of them for you,  
And so before you see the light, I do, I do, I do !

## A Marriage (Mark Twain)

A marriage makes of two fractional lives a whole  
It gives to two purposeless lives a work  
And doubles the strength of each to perform it.

It gives to two questioning natures  
A reason for living, and something to live for.  
It will give new gladness to the sunshine  
A new fragrance to the flowers  
A new beauty to the earth  
And a new mystery to life.

## Valentine (Wendy Cope)

My heart has made my mind up  
And I'm afraid it's you  
Whatever you've got lined up  
My heart has made its mind up  
And if you can't be signed up  
This year, next year will do.  
My heart has made its mind up  
And I'm afraid it's you.

## What is Love? (Author Unknown)

Sooner or later we begin to understand that is love is more than verses on valentines and romance in the movies.

We begin to know that love is here and now, real and true, the most important think in our lives.

For love is the creator of our favourite memories and the foundation of our fondest dream.

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.

## I belong in your arms (Deborah Brideau)

Finally I have found a place

Into which I fit perfectly, safely and securely

With no doubts, no fears, no sadness, no tears.

This place is filled with happiness and laughter,

Yet it is spacious enough to allow me the freedom to move around,

To live my life and be myself.

This wonderful place, which I never believed really existed,

I have found, finally,

Inside your arms, Inside your heart, Inside your love

## The Bargain (Sir Philip Sidney)

My true love hath my heart, and I have his,  
By just exchange one for another given,  
I hold him dear, and mine he cannot miss.  
There never was a better bargain driven,  
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one.  
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides,  
He loves my heart, for once it was his own.  
I will cherish his because it in me bides,  
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

## 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 days,  
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.

## Art of Marriage

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 common 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.

## 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.

## On your wedding day.

Today is a day you will always remember  
The greatest in anyone's life  
You'll start 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 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 together 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 moments 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.

## Marriage is....

Learning to give not always to take,  
Learning to forgive each little mistake,  
Learning to love whatever the cost,  
Always remember alone you'd be lost.

Trying so hard your partner to please,  
Trying to save whilst paying the fees,  
Trying to smile when things turn out wrong,  
Always remember to curb your tongue.

Never to think of only yourself,  
Never to say you wish you had wealth.  
Never to let your temper get hot,  
Always be thankful for what you have got.

If you remember all of these things,  
You will discover the joys that it brings,

Then you'll have what so many folk miss,  
Always you'll have a marriage of bliss.

## Sonnet 116 (William Shakespeare)

Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments.  
Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
O, no, it is an ever-fixed mark,  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

## Excerpt from the novel "Captain Corelli's Mandolin" (Louis de Bernieres)

Love is a temporary madness, it erupts like volcanoes 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 that is what love is.  
Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement,  
It is not the proclamation 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.....  
To have roots that grow towards each other underground,  
So that when all the pretty blossom has fallen from your branches  
You find that you are one tree and not two.

## The Meaning (Kellie Spehn)

To love is to share life together  
To build special plans just for two  
To work side by side  
And then smile with pride  
As one by one, dreams all come true.

To love is to help and encourage  
With smiles and sincere words of praise

To take time to share  
To listen and care  
In tender, affectionate ways.

To love is to have someone special  
One who you can always depend  
To be there through the years  
Sharing laughter and tears  
As a partner, a lover, a friend.

To love is to make special memories  
Of moments you love to recall  
Of all the good things  
That sharing life brings  
Love is the greatest of all.

I've learned the full meaning  
Of sharing and caring  
And having my dreams all come true;  
I've learned the full meaning  
Of being in love  
By being and loving with you.

## He Never Leaves The Seat Up....

He never leaves the seat up  
Or wet towels upon the floor  
The toothpaste has the lid on  
And he always shuts the door!

She's very clean and tidy  
Though she may sometimes delude.  
Leave your things out at your peril  
In a second they'll have moved!

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 her 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  
Whereas she won't even budge!

All that said and done, they love  
The time they spend together  
And I hope as I am sure you do  
That their happiness will last forever

He'll be more than just her husband  
He'll also be her friend  
And she'll be more than just his wife  
She'll be his soul mate 'til the end

(anon)

If you can always be as close and as 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 other of you have planned.  
Then a happy marriage shall indeed be yours.

## **EXTRA VOWS**

**I promise to love you, comfort and encourage you, be open and honest with you and stay faithful to you as for the rest of our lives together.**

**I call upon these persons here present / to witness that I ...../ do take thee ..... / to be my lawful wedded wife. Now and forever, in sunshine and in shadow. When you fall, I will catch you, when you cry, I will comfort you, when you smile I will smile with you. I promise to share my life with you and be there for you always, for you are my partner, my best friend and my soulmate**

**In the good times and in the bad times, through illness and well being, I will be faithful to you for the rest of our lives together.**

**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.**

**I promise to give you the best of myself and to ask of you no more than you can give.**

**I promise to share with you my time and my attention and to bring joy and strength to our life together.**

**I promise to love you in the good times and the bad, with all I have to give, completely and forever.**

**I give my love to you, and will be open to your love in return. I would like to share in your dreams and for you to share in mine, to give help when you need it, and to ask for help when in need, to support you in all your endeavours, to share in your joys and sorrows. In the presence of our family and friends I ask you..... to be a friend, companion and lover throughout my life.**

I give you this ring as a symbol of our true love, friendship and commitment we are making to each other. I will always, love honour, respect and cherish you, throughout our life together. I am willing to face changes in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting. I vow to be faithful only to you for the rest of my life. This I promise to you in front of our families and friends from the depths of my heart.

I promise to give you the best of myself and to ask of you no more than you can give. I promise to share with you my time, and my attention and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship. 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 I have to give, and all I feel inside, in the only way I know how. Completely and forever.

## **Guests' Vows**

Friends and Family of ..... and ..... you have been invited here today to witness the joining of these two people in marriage. Will you continue to support them and their families, laughing with them in times of happiness and comforting them in times of difficulty and disappointment.

### **We will**

Will you be there for them when they need advice or help, giving them encouragement, love and support and helping them, in turn, to form their own secure and loving family circle.

### **We will**