

# Reading Options

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\*The couple may also provide the officiant with a reading of their choice.

## Reading 1

### **I Will Be Here**

By: 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."

## Reading 2

### **I Corinthians 13:4-7, New International Version of the Bible**

Love is patient, love is kind.  
It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.  
It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking,  
it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.  
Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.  
It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

## Reading 3

### **True Love**

By: Author Unknown

True love is a sacred flame  
That burns eternally,  
And none can dim its special glow  
Or change its destiny.  
True love speaks in tender tones  
And hears with gentle ear,  
True love gives with open heart  
And true love conquers fear.  
True love makes no harsh demands  
It neither rules nor binds,  
And true love holds with gentle hands  
The hearts that it entwines.

## Reading 4

### **Time Travelers**

By: Terah Cox

May you take on the world together  
with all your hopes and dreams  
May you be each other's anchor  
in smooth or rocky seas  
May you bend to the world's winds  
and brave stalls and storms  
May you find common ground  
in all its changing forms  
May you cross stubborn boundaries  
and turn many a stone  
May you find haven for your souls  
May you have heart and home  
And if some days are gray  
and some nights are long and cold  
May you be each other's sun and moon  
as your destinies unfold  
And should you lose sight of each other  
and start to drift apart  
May you circle back by following  
the compass of your heart.

## Reading 5

### **Blessing of the Hands**

By: Author Unknown

These are the hands of your partner, young and strong and full of love, holding your hands 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 hold you and comfort you in grief and uncertainty.

These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes, tears of sorrow and joy.

These are the hands that will hold your family as one.

These are the hands that will give you strength.

And 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.

## Reading 6

### **Love Is Friendship Caught Fire**

By: 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."

## Reading 7

### **Excerpt from "The Art of a Good Marriage",**

By: Wilferd Arlan Peterson

"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 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."

## Reading 8

### **The Key to Love**

By: Anon, 1st century China

"The key to love is understanding ...  
The ability to comprehend not only the spoken word,  
but those unspoken gestures,  
the little things that say so much by themselves.

The key to love is forgiveness ....  
to accept each other's faults and pardon mistakes,  
without forgetting, but with remembering  
what you learn from them.

The key to love is sharing ...  
Facing your good fortunes as well as the bad, together;  
both conquering problems, forever searching for ways  
to intensify your happiness.

The key to love is giving ...  
without thought of return,  
but with the hope of just a simple smile,  
and by giving in but never giving up.

The key to love is respect ...  
realizing that you are two separate people, with different ideas;  
that you don't belong to each other,  
that you belong with each other, and share a mutual bond.

The key to love is inside us all ...  
It takes time and patience to unlock all the ingredients  
that will take you to its threshold;  
it is the continual learning process that demands a lot of work ...  
but the rewards are more than worth the effort ...  
and that is the key to love."

## Reading 9

### **The Promises of Marriage**

By: Author Unknown

"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 it can offer hope, acceptance,  
And comfort.

Marriage can't 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 the 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."

## Reading 10

### **Let's grow old together**

By: Author Unknown

Let's grow old together... beginning with today.

Let's work slowly with each other and build a relationship that we can both enjoy being a part of.

Let's share love and understand that neither of us is perfect; we are both subject to human frailties.

Let's hold each other close and whisper through the night-- pledging our love, honouring our commitment.

Let's encourage each other to pursue our dreams, even when we're weary from trying.

Let's expect the best that we both have to give and still love when we fall short of our expectations.

Let's be friends and respect each other's individual personality and give one another room to grow.

Let's be candid with each other and point out strengths and weaknesses.

Let's understand each other's personal philosophy, even if we don't agree.

Let's lie awake long into the night sharing our innermost secrets.

Let's be friends as well as lovers.

Let's laugh at time and plan with each other and wonder how we ever got along without this love we've found.

Let's never take for granted these moments that we've shared, but always be reminded of how intensely we have learned to live, how completely we have learned to love.

Let's grow old together... and look back on life and smile.

## Reading 11

### **Handfasting Reading (to be followed by Handfasting Vows)**

Officiant: "Now our maid of honour and the best man (or two other readers) will do the 'Hands of the bride and groom prayer'."

Maid of Honour to Bride:

bride , please face groom and hold his hands, palms up, so you 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.

Best Man to Groom:

groom , please hold bride's hands, palms up, where 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. They 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 fulfill your dreams. Together, as a team, everything you wish for can be realized.

(Optional)

Officiant: "Bless these hands that we join in marriage today. May they always be held by one another. May you have strength to hold on during the storms of stress and the dark of disillusionment. Keep them tender and gentle as you nurture each other in their wondrous love. May these hands be used to continue building a relationship founded in love and rich in caring. May Groom and Bride see their four hands as healer, protector, shelter and guide."

## **Reading 12: Union**

(Read before Vows)

by Robert Fulghum

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.