



# THE words THAT BIND US

Exchanging vows is a central element in wedding ceremonies. Webster defines a vow as, “a solemn promise or assertion; specifically: one by which a person is bound to an act, service, or condition.” In marriage, our vows express our intention to be together always. Making this promise out loud, before friends and family, and projecting these words into the world around us is the ultimate love letter, one that reaches into your future together.

There are classic vows with which we are all familiar: ‘to have and to hold,’ ‘from this day forward,’ or ‘for better or for worse.’ These, and ones like them, are excellent choices. Couples can also write their own vows, expressing themselves through emotion, humor, and poignant details that create intimacy during the ceremony.

‘I will continually strive to make you as happy as you make me. I understand that things might not always be easy and I promise to put in the work required when it’s necessary. I will learn from and grow with you every day. I vow to celebrate life with you and enjoy all it has to offer us. Today I give you my hand, my heart and these promises. I am ready to live every moment of my life with you. I love you.’

Time seems to slow down in this emotionally charged moment. One page of single-spaced, heart-felt writing can feel like a soul-baring eternity when you actually read it, but follow your heart:

‘I vow to be a reliable partner and teammate as we journey through life. I promise to support you, encourage you, and motivate you as we work together to make our individual aspirations and our shared dreams become a reality. I vow to communicate my thoughts, emotions, ideas, fears, problems and my hopes with you so that you never have to question how I am feeling.

I vow to remain adventurous. I promise to see the world with you, keeping in mind our pact to travel and to learn.’

What exactly are you promising? To love each other forever, of course, but also to respect and care for each other. Once written, remember two things: delivery and variety. I advocate two ways to ‘take’ your vows. The ‘repeat after me’ method works, or simply read them to each other. Also, each partner does not necessarily have to say the same vow. Sometimes couples wish to keep their vows secret from one another, an exciting but nerve-wracking experience. In these cases, I request the vows be sent to me to check out, assuring that length, content, and tone is similar.

This vow, bride to groom, is authentic, loving, and funny. It’s also the perfect length:

‘You are my best friend and twin soul. I love you to infinity and beyond. I love the way you love me completely and unconditionally. I cannot imagine my life without you. When you cry, I will cry with you. When you’re scared, I will hold your hand. When you laugh, I will laugh with you. When you use HBO words because you’re frustrated, or a home improvement project isn’t going as planned, I will laugh at you. When you’re hurt, I will take that pain and make it mine. I promise to respect that we are different, but your interests are no less important than my own. Your heart is my home, as mine is yours.’

Your vows, your verbal love letter, start your marriage. Be true, be honest, be you.

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