

**Excerpt from The Bridge Across Forever by Richard Bach**

A soulmate is someone who has locks that fit 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.

**Touched by an Angel by Maya Angelou**

*We, unaccustomed to courage  
exiles from delight  
live coiled in shells of loneliness  
until love leaves its high holy temple  
and comes into our sight  
to liberate us into life.*

*Love arrives  
and in its train come ecstasies  
old memories of pleasure  
ancient histories of pain.  
Yet if we are bold,  
love strikes away the chains of fear  
from our souls.*

*We are weaned from our timidity  
In the flush of love's light  
we dare be brave  
And suddenly we see  
that love costs all we are  
and will ever be.  
Yet it is only love  
which sets us free.*

**From the Irrational Season by Madeline L'Engle**

...ultimately there comes a moment when a decision must be made. Ultimately two people who love each other must ask themselves how much they hope for as their love grows and deepens,

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and how much risk they are willing to take. It is indeed a fearful gamble. Because it is the nature of love to create, a marriage itself is something which has to be created, so that, together we become a new creature.

To marry is the biggest risk in human relations that a person can take...if we commit ourselves to one person for life this is not, as many people think, a rejection of freedom; rather it demands the courage to move into all the risks of freedom, and the risk of love which is permanent; into that love which is not possession, but participation. It takes a lifetime to learn another person. When love is not possession, but participation, then it is part of that co-creation which is our human calling, and which implies such risk that it is often rejected.

### **Love is an Adventure by Pierre Tielhart de Chardin**

Love is an adventure and a conquest. It survives and develops like the universe itself only by perpetual discovery. The only right love is that between couples whose passion leads them both, one through the other, to a higher possession of their being. Put your faith in the spirit which dwells between the two of you. You have each offered yourself to the other as a boundless field of understanding, of enrichment, of mutually increased sensibility. You will meet above all by entering into and constantly sharing one another's thoughts, affections, and dreams. There alone, as you know, in spirit, which is arrived through flesh, you will find no disappointments, no limits. There alone the skies are ever open for your love; there alone lies the great road ahead.

### **Mark Twain, to his bride-to-be:**

*A marriage makes of two fractional lives a whole;  
It gives 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.*

### **To Love is Not to Possess by James Kavanaugh**

To love is not to possess,  
To own or imprison,  
Nor to lose one's self in another.  
Love is to join and separate  
To walk alone and together,  
To find a laughing freedom  
That lonely isolation does not permit.

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It is finally to be able to be who really are  
No longer clinging in childish dependency  
Nor docilely living separate lives in silence,  
It is to be perfectly one's self  
And perfectly joined in permanent commitment  
To another- and to one's inner self.  
Love only endures when it moves like waves,  
Receding and returning gently or passionately  
Or moving lovingly like the tide  
In the moon's own predictable harmony  
Because finally, despite a child's scars  
Or an adults' deepens wounds  
They are openly free to be who they really are- and always secretly were,  
In the very core of their being  
Where true and lasting love can alone abide.

### **Excerpt from The Amber Spyglass by Philip Pullman**

I will love you forever; whatever happens. Till I die and after I die, and when I find my way out of the land of the dead, I'll drift about forever, all my atoms, till I find you again...I'll be looking for you, every moment, every single moment. And when we do find each other again, we'll cling together so tight that nothing and no one'll ever tear us apart. Every atom of me and every atom of you...We'll live in birds and flowers and dragonflies and pine trees and in clouds and in those little specks of light you see floating in sunbeams...And when they use our atoms to make new lives, they won't just be able to take one, they'll have to take two, one of you and one of me.

### **Tony Kushner's "An Epithalamion"**

If you'd like something a little more contemporary, try this Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright's modern take on the epithalamion, a type of ancient Greek poem recited to the newlywed couple on their wedding night.

*Conjunction, assemblage, congress, union:  
Life isn't meant to be lived alone.  
A life apart is a desperate fiction.*

*Life is an intermediate business:  
a field of light bordered by love  
a sea of desire stretched between shores.  
Marriage is the strength of union.  
Marriage is the harmonic blend.  
Marriage is the elegance of counterpoint.  
Marriage is the faultless, fragile logic of ecology:*

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*A reasonable process of give and take  
unfolding through cyclical and linear time.*

*A wedding is the conjoining of systems in which  
Neither loses its single splendor and both are completely  
transformed. As, for example,  
The dawn is the wedding of the Night and the Day,  
and is neither, and both,  
and is, in itself, the most beautiful time,  
abundant artless beauty,  
free and careless magnificence.*

### **From Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables***

*The future belongs to hearts even more than it does to minds. Love, that is the only thing that can occupy and fill eternity. In the infinite, the inexhaustible is requisite. Love participates of the soul itself. It is of the same nature. Like it, it is the divine spark; like it, it is incorruptible, indivisible, imperishable. It is a point of fire that exists within us, which is immortal and infinite, which nothing can confine, and which nothing can extinguish. We feel it burning even to the very marrow of our bones, and we see it beaming in the very depths of heaven ... What a grand thing it is to be loved! What a far grander thing it is to love! The heart becomes heroic, by dint of passion. It is no longer composed of anything but what is pure; it no longer rests on anything that is not elevated and great. An unworthy thought can no more germinate in it, than a nettle on a glacier.*

### **The Beauty of Love (Anonymous)**

The question is asked: "Is there anything more beautiful in life than a young couple clasping hands and 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."

GENERAL READINGS – can be incorporated into various points of the ceremony

### **Reading 1**

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Your marriage is the coming together of your two souls for the purpose of manifesting your hearts' desires and the truth of your being with one another.

Marriage will bring to you all of the unlimited possibilities of consciously choosing to become all that you desire, giving you the opportunity to become your highest vision of your Self.

This path is not only incredibly challenging but very rewarding as well; it brings to each of you the choices that you want to have for your own growth as well as the wonderful moments of divine blessing that you yearn for in your lives.

Marriage is a path of divine humanness.

It takes great courage and commitment to continue a conscious and loving union with one other.

Through your commitment, the breath of human experience will be born, from the highest of highs to the lowest of lows.

This level of commitment to yourself and each other will open the door to receiving all that you desire, from the conscious to the unconscious.

The very act of joining with each other will increase your potential for self knowledge, joy, fulfillment, peace, and growth.

Marriage is the union of your souls, a divine process that your essence longs to experience. It is your nature, and the truth of who you are.

By committing to each other, you commit to life more intimately.

You no longer have the luxury of leaving when the going gets tough and the ugliness comes to the surface. Your lifelong commitment brings to you an opportunity for joy that would be unparalleled for each of you alone.

The joys are that much stronger and the happiness that much richer. The wisdom is deeper and more developed, and the journey itself fuller and more beautiful.

The path of true marriage is not for the meek.

It requires courage and strength, as well as an open mind and a heart filled with hope and joy.

Through the mirror of each other, marriage teaches you compassion, understanding, trust, commitment, love, gentleness, and patience.

Your marriage is the coming together of friends into union. It requires you to soften, enjoying the special qualities of each moment.

It can bring you comfort in times of need, solace when you despair, and safety when you are afraid.

A lifelong, loving marriage brings to you more peace than a life filled with quietude and solitary meditation.

It gives you the opportunity to take the peace of your connection with the divine into your relationship and into all that you say, think, and do.

### **Reading 2**

To make a relationship work takes more than love.

It takes trust, to know in your hearts that you want only the best for each other.

It takes dedication, to stay open to one another, to learn and grow, even when it is difficult to do so.

And it takes faith, to go forward together without knowing what the future holds for you both.

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While love is our natural state of being, these other qualities are not as easy to come by. They are not a destination, but a journey.

The true art of married life is an inner spiritual journey.

It is a mutual enrichment, a give and take between two personalities, a mingling of two endowments, which diminishes neither, but enhances both.

More resources online:

Wedding Poetry: <https://apracticalwedding.com/best-love-poems-for-wedding/>

Non-religious readings: <http://www.youandyourwedding.co.uk/planning/readings-speeches/readings-and-poems-for-civil-ceremonies/154.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/apr/23/wedding-carol-ann-duffy-poetry>

<https://www.panmacmillan.com/blogs/fiction/wedding-readings-short-funny-unique-romantic>

<https://www.weddingideasmag.com/7-non-cheesy-wedding-readings-for-long-term-couples/>

[https://www.buzzfeed.com/tomvellner/impossibly-romantic-wedding-readings?utm\\_term=.wq7ax703A#.eeAO4YRBD](https://www.buzzfeed.com/tomvellner/impossibly-romantic-wedding-readings?utm_term=.wq7ax703A#.eeAO4YRBD)