

Gay Celebrations Readings

A Celtic Blessing for weddings - from Sacred Ceremony

"May your souls always bathe in the truth of light and understanding
May your love always lift your head to the heavens
While your feet remain deeply rooted in the earth
May your love be not only of your minds but of your hearts, and
May your hearts always be open to one another.
May your love be a sanctuary for one another and all you hold sacred
May your love always honour the One who first loved you
And inspired you to love one another -
The One who brought you together - Creator of us all."

Wedding Blessing Blessing for a Marriage by James Dillet Freeman

May your marriage bring you all the exquisite
excitement marriage should bring,
and may life grant you also patience,
tolerance, and understanding.

May you always need one another -
not so much to fill your emptiness
as to help you to know your fullness.
A mountain needs a valley to be complete;
the valley does not make
the mountain less, but more;
and the valley is more a valley because
it has a mountain towering over it.

May you need one another, but not out of weakness.
May you want one another, but not out of lack.
May you entice one another, but not compel one another.
May you embrace one another, but not out encircle one another.
May you succeed in all important ways with one another,
and not fail in the little graces.
May you look for things to praise, often say, "I love you!"
and take no notice of small faults.

If you have quarrels that push you apart,
may both of you hope to have
good sense enough to take the first step back.

May you enter into the mystery which is
the awareness of one another's
presence - no more physical than spiritual,
warm and near when you are
side by side, and warm and near when
you are in separate rooms
or even distant cities.
May you have happiness,
and may you find it making one another happy.
May you have love, and may you find it loving one another.

Friendship in a Marriage

(author unknown)

It is often said that it is love that makes the world go round.
However without doubt, it is friendship
That keeps our spinning existence on an even keel.
True friendship provides so many of the essentials for a happy life -
It is the strong foundation on which to build an enduring relationship,
It is the mortar which bonds us together in harmony, and
It is the calm, warm protection we sometimes need
When the world outside seems cold and chaotic.
True friendship holds a mirror to our qualities or failings
Without destroying our sense of worthiness.
True friendship nurtures our hopes,
Supports us in our disappointments,
And encourages us to grow to our best potential.
Name and Name have come together as friends.
Today, they pledge to each other -
Their love, their strength, their warmth and, most importantly,
The fun of true friendship

Readings using water/sea metaphors:

"Love is like a river, never ending as it flows, but gets greater with time!"

Ann Morrow Lindbergh

When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility. It is even a lie to pretend to. And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity - in freedom, in the sense that the dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern.

And what of marriage? Kahlil Gibran

To the question: 'And what of marriage?'

He says: 'You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore.

You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.

Aye, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.

But let there be spaces in your togetherness,

And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.

Love one another but make not a bond of love:

Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.

Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.

Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.

Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone.

Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.

Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping

For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.

And stand together, yet not too near together:

For the pillars of the temple stand apart,

And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.'

One David Rueben

A marriage is like a long trip in a tiny row boat:

If one passenger starts to rock the boat,

the other has to steady it;

otherwise, they will go to the bottom together.

Anon

*Pure is the water
The water that replenishes nature
Giving it new life, a new beginning.
As these two lives become one,
One new life, one new beginning.*

Love's Philosophy by Percy Shelley

The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean;
The winds of heaven mix forever,
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle:-
Why not I with thine?
See! the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
Now sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:-
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

Anon

As we stand beside the ocean tide,
may our love always be as
constant and unchanging as these
never-ending waves that pour
beneath our feet, flowing endlessly
from the depths of the sea;
your love
came softly upon my heart,
just as the foam comes
softly upon the sand, and just as
there will never be a morning
without the ocean's flow,
so there will never be a day
without my love for you.
I pledge myself to you this day.
Our love will be as unchanging
and dependable as the tide;
as these waters nourish the earth
and sustain life, may my constant

devotion nourish and sustain you
until the end of time.

Anon

We are each one drop in an Ocean of Infinity - we can continue to believe we are the drop or come to know that we are the Ocean.

Sea Fever - by John Masefield

*I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to guide her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sails shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face, and a gray dawn breaking.*

*I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds calling,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the seagulls crying.*

*I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trip's over.*

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And inspired you to love one another -
The One who brought you together - Creator of us all."

The Demands of Love, by Rainer Maria Rilke (from *Letters to a Young Poet*)

For one human being to love another; that perhaps is the most difficult of all tasks, the ultimate task, the final test and proof, the work for which all other work is but preparation. Love is at first not anything that means merging, surrendering, and uniting with another (for what purpose would a union of something unclarified serve?), rather it is a high inducement to the individual to ripen, to become something in ourselves, to become a world in ourselves for the sake of the other person. Love is a great demanding claim on us, something that chooses us and calls us to vast distances.

A Reading (“Hands” - Anonymous)

These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that 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 fills your mind. 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 tenderly hold your children.

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

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

And lastly, 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.

**Freedom Within Marriage, by Madelaine L'Engle
(from the *The Crosswick Diaries*)**

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.... When love is not possession, but participation, then it is part of that co-creation which is our human calling.... If our love for each other really is participatory, then all other human relationships nourish it; it is inclusive, never exclusive.

Love and Time, by William Shakespeare, Sonnet 116

*Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
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 hour and weeks,
But hears it out ev'n to the edge of doom: -
 If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved*

**I do not love you as if you were salt-rose, or topaz,
by Pablo Neruda**

*I do not love you as if you were salt-rose, or topaz,
or the arrow of carnations the fire shoots off.
I love you as certain dark things are to be loved,
in secret, between the shadow and the soul.*

*I love you as the plant that never blooms
but carries in itself the light of hidden flowers;
thanks to your love a certain solid fragrance,
risen from the earth, lives darkly in my body.*

*I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where.
I love you straightforwardly, without complexities or pride;
so I love you because I know no other way*

*than this: where I does not exist, nor you,
so close that your hand on my chest is my hand,
so close that your eyes close as I fall asleep.*

i carry your heart with me, by E. E. Cummings

*i carry your heart with me (i carry it in
my heart) i am never without it (anywhere
i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done
by only me is your doing, my darling)
i fear
no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) i want
no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you*

*here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart*

i carry your heart (i carry it in my heart)

**From "Corelli's Mandolin"
by Louise De Bernieres**

"Love is a temporary madness, it erupts like volcanoes and 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 this is what love is.

Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation 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."

Apache Blessing

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, difficulty 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.

Buddhist Marriage Homily

Nothing happens without a cause. The union of this man and woman has not come about accidentally but is the for-ordained result of many past lives. This tie can therefore not be broken or dissolved.

In the future, happy occasions will come surely as the morning. Difficult times will come as surely as the night. When things go joyously, meditate according to the Buddhist tradition. When things go badly, meditate. Meditation in the manner of the Compassionate Buddha will guide your life.

To say the words "love and compassion" is easy. But to accept that love and compassion are built on patience and perseverance is not easy. Your marriage will be firm and lasting if you remember this.

Hindu Marriage Ritual of Seven Steps

We have taken the seven steps. You have become mine forever. Yes, we have become partners. I have become yours. Hereafter, I can not live without you. Do not live without me. Let us share the joys. We are word and meaning, united. You are thought and I am sound. May the nights be honey-sweet for us; may the cows yield us honey-sweet milk! As the heavens are stable, as the earth is stable, as the mountains are stable, as the whole universe is stable, so may our union be permanently settled.

Vincent Van Gogh to his brother Leo

I want to paint men and women with that something of the eternal which halo used to symbolise.....to express the love of two lovers by a wedding of two complementary colours, their mingling and opposition, the mysterious vibration of kindred tones. To express the thought of a brow by the radiance of a light tone against a somber background.

To express hope by some star, the eagerness of a soul by sunset radiance.

Bertrand Russell

The essence of a good marriage is respect for each other's personality combined with that deep intimacy, physical, mental and spiritual, which makes a serious love between two individuals the most enriching of all human experiences.

TRADITIONAL IRISH BLESSING

May the road rise to meet you,

May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

May God be with you and bless you;
May you see your children's children.
May you be poor in misfortune,
Rich in blessings,
May you know nothing but happiness
From this day forward.

May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home
And may the hand of a friend always be near.

May green be the grass you walk on,
May blue be the skies above you,
May pure be the joys that surround you,
May true be the hearts that love you.

Earth Vows (Kaldera and Schwartzsein 2004)

By seeds of all beginning, I make this vow.
By the roots of all depth, I swear to love with all my might.
By stem and trunk that reach the sky, I swear to respect your soaring spirit.

By buds that grow, I swear to never crush your dreams.
By leaf that kisses the sun and rain, I swear to share my joys and sorrows with you.

By flowers that opens to the dawn, I swear that I do trust you.
By fruit that gives forth sweetness, I swear to nourish and support you.
By seeds within the fruit that grows the tree anew, I swear to begin anew with you, again
and again,
As many times as the gods decree
By life and death, by Lord and Lady, by hand and eye, by heart and spirit,
This I do swear to you before the fates
And mark my soul forever with your touch.
As all green things grow, so shall our love,
As its memory be carried forever beneath the feet
Of a thousand generations to come.

Blessing

*May the earth welcome your footsteps,
May the wind sing your tale,
May fire dance from your fingertips,
May the ocean speed your tail.
May your courage never fail you,
May your words be blessed with grace;
May the spirit of inspiration light your way.*

May you be a friend to your destiny

*May you always know your name.
May you learn to dance with lightning
When life brings storm and rain.
May you never be far from family
Whether kin by blood or heart;
May you never feel completely set apart.*

*May you walk through life like a balance beam
And never stumble and fall.
May you walk through a hundred angry glares
And may it not matter at all.
May you never cease to teach
And never cease to learn;
May the spark of hope inside you always burn.*

*Listen to the wind....for it talks.
Listen to the silence....for it speaks.
Listen with your heart.....
And you will learn and understand.*

Today

Today I marry my friend,
The one I laugh and cry with,
The one I have learned from and shared with.

This one I have chosen to support,
Encourage and give myself to,
Through all the days given to us to share.
Today I marry the one love.

The Art of Marriage

*A good marriage must be created.
In the art of marriage, the little things are the good 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 set of values and common objectives
It is standing together 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 finding room for things of the spirit
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful
It is not only marrying the right partner – it is being the right partner.*

Reading 2 – A Marriage is a Promise

A marriage is a promise
That two hearts gladly make.
A promise to be tender,
To help, to give and take.
A marriage is a promise
To be kind and understanding
To be thoughtful and considerate,
Fair and undemanding.
A marriage is a promise
To share one life together.....
A love-filled promise meant to be
Kept lovingly forever.

Hopes for the Marriage

May
live lives of love and peace together
and always remember their joy on this day.

May they be honest in their relationship,
Sharing the truth in kindness and trust,
So that their love may grow in maturity and depth.

May they be there for each other

In times of grief or struggle,
Holding each other close in comfort,
Drawing strength and courage from each other
And from those around them.

May their lives be full of laughter,
Lifting up the delights in life
And humour in the hard times.

May their home be filled with joy,
As it is joined with the life of others,
And as they grow closer to each other,
In the shared journey of life.

And may each of us here this day
Be given new hope in the commitment to love
And be affirmed in our own love for others.
Gary and Sarah, receive this blessing
Which is yours from all who are here.
Carry our love with you as you go
And call upon us when you will.
Go into your new life together,
In grace and peace.

Apache Blessing #1

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, difficulty and fear assail your relationship – as they threaten all relationships at one time or another – remember 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.

The Apache Wedding Prayer

**Now you will feel no rain,
For each of you will be the shelter for the other.
Now you will feel no cold,
For each of you will be the warmth for the other.
Now you will feel no loneliness,
For each of you will be the companion for the other.
Now you are two persons,
But there are three lives before you:
His life, her life and your life together.**

**May beauty surround you both
On the journey ahead and through all the years.
May happiness be your companion
To the place where the river meets the sun.
Go now to your dwelling
To enter the days of your life together.
May your days be good
And long upon the earth.**

A Marriage Prayer - by Bud Henry Bowen (adapted)

Bless their marriage, O God, as they begin their journey down the road of life together.
We don't know what lies ahead for the road turns and bends. But help them to make the best of whatever comes their way.
Help them to continue to enjoy each other as they did when they first met.
Help them to realize that nothing nor no one is perfect and to look for the good in all things and all people including themselves.
Help them to respect each other's likes and dislikes, opinions and beliefs, hopes and dreams and fears even though they may not always understand them.
Help them to learn from each other and to help each other to grow mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.
Help them to realize that no matter what happens to them they will hold on to each other and know that things have a way of working out for the good.
Help them to create for their children a peaceful, stable home of love as a foundation on which they can build their lives.
But most of all, dear God, help them to keep lit the torch of love' that they now share so that by their loving example they may pass on the light of love to their children and to their children's children forever.
Amen

Love

by *John Lennon*

Love is real, real is love
Love is feeling, feeling love
Love is wanting to be loved

Love is touch, touch is love
Love is reaching, reaching love
Love is asking to be loved

Love is you
You and me
Love is knowing
We can be

Love is free, free is love
Love is living, living love
Love is needing to be loved

O, My Luve is Like a Red Red Rose. by **Robert Burns**

O, my luve is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.
O, my luve is like a melodie,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I,
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi the sun!

And I will luv thee still, my dear,
While the sands o life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luv!
And fare thee weel, a while!
And I will come again, my luv,
Tho it were ten thousand mile!

- [Robert Burns](#)

From an American Indian Marriage Ceremony

Helen

May the sun bring you new energy by day:
May the moon softly restore you by night:
May the rain wash away your worries,
And the breeze blow new strength into your being,
And all the days of your life may you walk gently
through the world and know its beauty:
Now you will feel no rain, for each will shelter the other
Now you will feel no cold, for each will warm the other.
Now there is no loneliness.
Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you
Go now to your dwelling to enter into the days of your life together
And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

'Thoughts of Nanushka' by Jan Witcombe.

You are my mystery - you are the moon behind a cloud, an
unfinished
dream of love
The color of a bud before it flowers
You are the whispers in the tree tops, an elusive rainbow's end,
the

untold secrets of the sea, and the words which flow unbidden
from a
poet's pen
You are the music of the heart, the morning star
And if I love you all my life, I will never solve the mystery of all
the
things you are.

Laura Hendricks - 'On Love'

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

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 seeing 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 of works
Of my every 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.

Dr Seuss

Oh, the Places You'll Go! (1990)

- You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself
any direction you choose.
You're on your own.
And you know what you know.
And YOU are the one who'll decide where to go.
- You won't lag behind, because you'll have the speed.
You'll pass the whole gang and you'll soon take the lead.
Wherever you fly, you'll be the best of the best.
Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.
- I'm sorry to say so
But, sadly it's true
That bang-ups and hang-ups
Can happen to you.
- Will you succeed?
Yes you will indeed!
(98 and 3/4 percent guarantee

Oriah Mountain Dreaming

The Invitation

**It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.
I want to know what you ache for
and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.**

**It doesn't interest me how old you are.
I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool
for love
for your dream
for the adventure of being alive.**

**It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon...
I want to know if you have touched the centre of your own
sorrow
if you have been opened by life's betrayals
or have become shrivelled and closed**

from fear of further pain.

**I want to know if you can sit with pain
mine or your own
without moving to hide it
or fade it
or fix it.**

**I want to know if you can be with joy
mine or your own
if you can dance with wildness
and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes
without cautioning us
to be careful
to be realistic
to remember the limitations of being human.**

**It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me
is true.**

**I want to know if you can
disappoint another
to be true to yourself.
If you can bear the accusation of betrayal
and not betray your own soul.
If you can be faithless
and therefore trustworthy.**

**I want to know if you can see Beauty
even when it is not pretty
every day.
And if you can source your own life
from its presence.**

**I want to know if you can live with failure
yours and mine
and still stand at the edge of the lake
and shout to the silver of the full moon,
"Yes."**

**It doesn't interest me
to know where you live or how much money you have.
I want to know if you can get up
after the night of grief and despair
weary and bruised to the bone
and do what needs to be done
to feed the children.**

**It doesn't interest me who you know
or how you came to be here.
I want to know if you will stand
in the centre of the fire
with me
and not shrink back.**

**It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom
you have studied.
I want to know what sustains you
from the inside
when all else falls away.**

**I want to know if you can be alone
with yourself
and if you truly like the company you keep
in the empty moments.**

Notes on Love and Courage – Hugh Prather

The quiet thoughts of two people
A long time in love touch lightly
Like bird's nesting in each other's warmth.
You will know them by their laughter
But to each they speak
Mostly through their solitude
If they find themselves apart

They may dream of sitting undisturbed
In each other's presence, of wrapping themselves
warmly in each other's ease.