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MARRIAGE CELEBRANT

## *Wedding Vows- here's the How To...*

*Wedding Vows - two little words that are guaranteed to bring butterflies to your tummy- a sense of excitement for most, a little trepidation for some, and a stab of sheer panic mixed in for others! The two questions I get asked most are "Can we write our own Vows?" and "Do we have to write our own Vows?"*

*The short answers are Yes & No...*

*When you marry in Australia under the Marriage Act 1961, there are some legal words you must state out loud in the hearing of your witnesses and the celebrant (that's the bit that actually makes you "married") It's just one sentence and it goes like this-*

*"I ask everyone present here to witness that I, (full name) take you (full name) to be my lawful, wedded husband/ wife/ spouse." You don't have to say anything more if you really don't want to. However, most couples take the opportunity to make some personal promises to each other as well. It's your day, so you want to take the time to make it truly memorable for each other and preparing some special, well chosen, and meaningful words will create a lifetime memory for your beloved.*

*You can write your own personal vows from scratch if you want. You can make them quite individual- not the same words your partner uses. You can get a little help from the suggestions here if you need some ideas to get you started. Or you can choose from these sample words if you find something that already works for you. You can research on the Net for ideas, you can ask for help from a friend if you need back up. If you find you need a little extra guidance, I am always available to work with you to help shape your words, so they express just the sentiment you want.*

*Here are some samples of wording for marriage vows. It's quite okay to take these ideas and rework them to suit yourselves.*

1. I ask everyone present here to witness that I, ..... take you, ..... as my lawful, wedded wife/husband/spouse, to have and to hold from this day forward. For better for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, all the days of my life. You are my trusted friend and I love you the way you are. I am proud to call you my wife/husband/spouse.

2. I ask everyone present here to witness that I, .....take you, .....as my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse. To laugh with you in joy, to hold your hand in sorrow, to grow with you in love, to live with you in peace and hope, for as long as we both shall live.

3. I call upon the persons here present to witness that I, .....take you, .....as my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse. I promise to always love you, to be faithful, and understanding through all the days given us to share.

4. I ask everyone present here to witness that I, .....take you, .....as my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse. Together we will dream and live as one, respecting one another, for as long as we both shall live.

5. I ask everyone present here to witness that I, .....take you, .....as my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse. I offer everything I am, everything I have, everything I hope to be. I entrust myself completely to you today and forever. I promise you my heart, my hopes and my dreams. Most of all I promise to be your loving wife/husband/spouse and always your best friend.

6. I ask everyone present here to witness that I, .....take you, .....as my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse. I promise that from this day on, you shall not walk alone, may my heart be your shelter, and my arms be your home. May we walk together through all things, as husband and wife. You inspire confidence and have brought sunshine into my life. I cannot imagine a future without you. I will truly love you forever. You have helped me to let go of the past, and today I embrace a future with you. I thank you for making me smile, for making me believe in miracles and for trusting me with your love.

7. I ask everyone present here to witness that I, .....take you, .....as my lawful wedded wife/husband/ spouse. I offer myself to you, to be your friend, your lover and your lifelong companion; to share my life with yours; to build our dreams together, to support you through times of trouble, and rejoice with you in times of happiness; to treat you with respect, love and loyalty through all the trials and triumphs of our lives together. This commitment is made in love, kept in faith, lived in hope, and eternally made new.

8. I ask everyone present here to witness that I ....., take you ..... to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse. I give you my heart, my love, my trust. As I give you my hands to hold, I give you my life to keep. My heart will be your shelter and my arms will be your home. I give you all that I am and ever hope to be.

9. I choose you ..... to share my life with yours, loving the person you are today and trusting who you will become. I promise to love you, to laugh with you and to grow with you through all the trials and triumphs of our lives together. So today I ask everyone present here to witness that I ....., take you ..... to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse.

10. I ask everyone present here to witness that I ....., take you ..... to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse. I want to be with you always just as you are. I choose you, above all others, to share my life with me in marriage. I love you for yourself, and I want you to become all that you can be. I promise to honour this pledge, as long as I live.

The couple then read alternating verses in the poem-

Party 1: I promise to give you the best of myself,  
and to ask of you no more than you can give

Party 2: I promise to accept you the way you are.  
I fell in love with you for the qualities, abilities,  
and outlook on life that you have,  
and I won't try to reshape you in a different image.

Party 1: I promise to respect you as a person  
With your own interest, desires, and needs,  
And to realise that these are sometimes different,  
But no less important, than my own

Party 2: I promise to share with you my time,  
my close attention,  
And to bring joy and strength and imagination  
to our relationship.

Party 1: I promise to keep myself open to you  
To let you see through the window of my personal world,  
Into my innermost fears and feelings, secrets and dreams

Party 2: I promise to grow along with you,  
To be willing to face change, as we both change,  
in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting.

Party 1: and finally, I promise to love you as your husband,  
In good times and in bad with all I have to give,  
And all that I feel inside,  
In the only way I know how,  
Completely and forever.

Party 2: And finally, I promise to love you as your wife,  
In good times and in bad with all I have to give,  
And all that I feel inside,  
In the only way I know how,  
completely and forever

11. I ask everyone present here to witness that, with all my love, I ..... take you ..... to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse. I will love you through good and bad, through joy and sorrow. I will try to be understanding, and to trust in you completely. Together we will face all of life's experiences and share one another's dreams and goals. I promise I will be your equal partner in a loving, honest relationship, for as long as we both shall live.

12. I ask everyone present here to witness that I, .....take you..... to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse, my partner in life and my one true love. I will cherish our union and love you more each day than I did the day before. I will trust you and respect you, laugh with you and cry with you, loving you faithfully through good times and bad, regardless of the obstacles we may face together. I give you my hand, my heart, and my love from this day forward as long as we both shall live.

13. I ask everyone present here to witness that I, ..... take you..... to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse. From this day forward, I promise you these things. I will laugh with you in times of joy and comfort you in times of sorrow. I will share in your dreams and support you as you strive to achieve your goals. I will listen to you with compassion and understanding and speak to you with encouragement. I will remain faithful to our vows for better or for worse, in times of sickness and health. You are my best friend and I will love and respect you always.

14. Today, ....., I join my life to yours, not merely as your wife/husband/spouse, but as your friend, your lover, and your confidant. Let me be the shoulder you lean on, the rock on which you rest, the companion of your life. With you I will walk my path from this day forward. I ask everyone present here to witness that I, ..... take you ..... to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse.

15. I came to this place today as a man/ woman standing alone. I will walk from it by your side. Today I cross the threshold with you and enter in to a new and lasting lifetime commitment. .... I ask everyone present here to witness that I, ..... take you..... to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse.

16. Thank you for always making me laugh, even when I'm angry .... Especially when I'm angry. Thank you for showing me kindness when I hadn't earned it, and for kicking my butt when I deserved it - the person I am today is because of you. Thank you for finding every single silver lining in the storm cloud that is me. Thank you for being patient with me, while I learned to be strong, brave & whole. I promise to make you laugh every day. I promise to tell you loudly and often.... how proud I am of you. I promise to never go to bed angry. I promise to grow with you, learn with you, travel with you. I will be on your team for the rest of our lives- unless we're talking about actual sports.... in which case I am out. I promise not to keep score, even if I'm totally winning, and I promise our mistakes will help us grow. I promise to support you, respect you, and care for you. I will love you with all of myself, every single day, for the rest of our lives - a promise I can confidently make, because it's the easiest thing I've ever had to do. I ask everyone present to witness that I, ....., take you ....., as my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse.

17. Namaste'. My soul honours your soul. I honour the place in you where the entire universe resides. I honour the light, love, truth, beauty and peace within you, because it is also within me. In sharing these things, we are united, we are the same, we walk together. I promise you shall not walk alone, may my spirit be your shelter and my arms carry you home. You inspire me to walk forward with purpose and I want to say thank you for the sunshine you bring to my life. I truly love you and our family. You have helped me to face the past and let go of the pain and embrace my freedom and our future. Thank you for making me smile, laugh, cry. I believe we are a couple that is meant to be, because we have gone through everything that is designed to tear us apart, but we have come out even stronger. Therefore, I ..... call upon the people here present to be witness that I take you ..... to be my lawfully wedded wife/husband/spouse.

18. I ask everyone present here to witness that I, ....., take you..... To be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse. I offer myself to you to be your husband, your friend, your lover and lifelong companion. I'm thankful for the ways in which you have helped me to grow, the ways our personalities match so perfectly and for the incredible experiences we've shared so far. I promise to stand by you through all of life's challenges and triumphs. I promise to always be your biggest supporter and to encourage you in all of your dreams and goals. Most of all I promise.... to love and cherish you for all of time.

19. I ask everyone present here to witness that I ....., take you..... to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse. Since we started this journey you have changed me for the better physically, mentally and emotionally, for example I planned to wear thongs and shorts yet here I am in formal attire. We started out on a day by day plan enjoying each other's company... this turned into going steady, then moving in together, then engaged, now here we stand promising to be together and yet this changes nothing... in the fact that we still enjoy every day together only now it's forever. I promise to support you in times of need, hold you when you're scared or sick, laugh with you or at you depending on the circumstance, to keep you happy and safe to the best of my abilities. I stand here happy to have you as my wife/husband/spouse and happy to be your wife/husband/spouse. I love you always.

20. I ask everyone present here to witness that I, ..... take you..... to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/ spouse. I will be there for you through the exceptional times and the miserable times. I will be there with you through the silly moments and the difficult times. I vow to love you. I will keep on loving you for the million little things you do, that make you unique and make me smile. I will even love you for the little things you do, that make me frown, because they are also part of who you are. I vow to support you in every endeavour, emotionally, spiritually and financially... I would include physically but I've tried that and you're just too heavy. I vow to be honest. I will be honest with my actions and my words. I will stay true to you, always trustworthy and faithful. I will be straightforward and tell you when I am in need of your presence, your love, support, and your honesty. Most of all, I vow to say "yes" every time you ask me to marry you. I love you.