



**Welcome to the**

**Pick  
Three  
Words**

**method of  
writing your  
Marriage Vows**



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TO THE VIDEO**

## So what are marriage vows anyway?

### European Christian Tradition

Traditional Asian and Middle Eastern religions don't have them – Muslims, Hindus and Jews have other ritual things they say but not private, individual promises.

### Ancient marriage rites didn't include them.

Although the ancient Romans kinda sorta did it. They would recite a chant together.

### What we are all familiar with goes back to the 1100's

The ones we are familiar with started in the middle of the 1500's.. when prayer books started being published in English. The lines are based on a much older text from the 1100's – which the priest would say in Latin first and then the couple would say to each other:

**I N. take thee N. to my wedded wife, to have and to holde from this day forwarde, for better, for wurse, for richer, for poorer, in sickenes, and in health, to love and to cherishe, til death us departe: according to Goddes holy ordeinaunce: And therto I plight thee my troth.**

With the woman of course, also promising to obey – which incidentally was dropped in the 1920's. Even though we still make jokes about it today, most probably even your grandmothers didn't promise to obey.

Plight thee my troth means “promise you my loyalty”.

### We do not have to copy 1000 year old traditions

## WEDDING VOW FAQ'S

### How long should they be?

While there are no rules – my feeling is that they shouldn't really be too long... (tell old lady in the butcher's story). I have seen people write 3 full pages but that is a VERY long time for you to be public speaking unless you do it all the time, and a bloody lot to write that will hold peoples' attention if you're not used to creative writing.

Long, long pieces expressing your innermost feelings are perhaps better written as a letter to be shared with your partner the night before, or left for them to read in the morning... and maybe that's your reception speech right there!

Experience tells me that about half to one page (A4 typed) is nice and that's what I'm hoping we'll end up with today.

### Should they be the same length?

It's also nice if both of you have written approximately the same amount. Not to the word, but it's embarrassing for the partner who's written three lovely paragraphs if the other half pulls out a novel to read. That's one of the reasons I like to see what my couple are going to say in plenty of time... not because I'm nosy but so I can reassure them that they're in the ballpark with each other. It also gives me time to print them up on the souvenir vow cards AND work out where we're going to put the compulsory legal sentence.

## WEDDING VOW FAQ'S

### What about the legal vow?

(Not relevant if you're outside of Australia)

You've probably been made aware of "the legal vow". A lot of celebrants do this as a separate element (which I've always thought stuck out like dog's balls)... some ask their couples to say it when they exchange wedding rings... I've done that for very simple elopement or legals only ceremonies... but my preference is to find a place within your personal vow to include it.

We will discuss that when the time comes.

### Who goes first?

You can plan ahead who goes first or you can decide on the day. I've done "rock, paper, scissors", tossed coin, and one time used a spinning prize wheel.... With heterosexual couples I tend to ask the bride to go first – I tell her it's because she'll get too emotional if the groom has the first say and she'll find it harder to get the words out... but here's the real truth... often the blokes come up with better material. Blokey blokes without a romantic bone in their bodies have had even me sobbing quietly on the day when they take the one opportunity to really share their feelings without getting shit stirred about it.

The way I plan this out means we tackle the main sections, in baby steps, in a logical order. Then we'll add the promises at the end.. when your personal vows are complete I'll take you through how I add the legal bit to your own and you can make up your own minds from there.

I don't really expect you to perfect a final copy today, although some of you may, but you will have your workbook and the tools to finish in your own time.

**So are you ready? We're going to start with a simple exercise that I call "PICK THREE WORDS".**

# 1. PICK THREE WORDS

- Don't worry about what we're going to do them
- Choose the first three words that come to mind
- Pick from some of my random ones OR
- Choose three of your very own

## a) What was life like before you met?

|         |           |             |
|---------|-----------|-------------|
| BORING  | SIMPLE    | MEANINGLESS |
| EMPTY   | UNCERTAIN | STABLE      |
| LONELY  | CALM      | PLANNED     |
| ANXIOUS | EXCITING  | EXHAUSTING  |

**Write your three words here.**



## b) How you felt when you met?

|             |           |              |
|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| COMFORTABLE | REASSURED | OVERWHELMED  |
| WARY        | SURPRISED | UNDERWHELMED |
| ANXIOUS     | ATTRACTED | RELAXED      |
| EXCITED     | CERTAIN   | HOME         |

**Write your three words here.**



## c) How do you see your partner?

|        |            |         |
|--------|------------|---------|
| STRONG | DEPENDABLE | RELAXED |
| WISE   | FUN        | CAPABLE |
| LOVING | CARING     | BRAVE   |
| KIND   | SINCERE    | HONEST  |

**Write your three words here.**






## d) How do they make you feel?

|           |         |             |
|-----------|---------|-------------|
| SAFE      | RELAXED | CLEVER      |
| LOVED     | FUNNY   | TALENTED    |
| RESPECTED | WANTED  | COMFORTABLE |
| VALUED    | NEEDED  | IMPORTANT   |

**Write your three words here.**



## 2. Write a couple of sentences using the words you've just chosen.

- Please don't be put off because the 1 or 2 short sentences don't seem to have a lot of meaning yet. We're building a scaffold at this stage – somewhere to start.
- Change the word a bit to make sense if you have to ..... you'll see in the examples where I changed "directionless" to "lacked direction"... the words are just a starting point.
- Don't worry if it sounds a bit corny at this stage.
- Use your partner's name once somewhere in one of the sentences.
- Also – it doesn't have to be all seriousness. If you want to keep it light hearted or funny, the principle is the same.
- Later we'll build on your 3 words sentences... funny it up in round two if the mood strikes you.

### Example One, Sarah's vows to John

a. What was life like before your partner?  
**Planned, simple, lonely.**

Once upon a time, John, I thought I had everything **planned**. My life was **simple**; but deep down I was very **lonely**.

b. How did you feel when you met? **Surprised, anxious, overwhelmed.**

Then I swiped right. I was **surprised** by how confident you were on our first date, while I was **anxious** and **overwhelmed**.

c. How do you see them? **Capable, brave, honest.**

I grew to learn just how **capable** you really are. Now I know you are the **bravest** and most **honest** man I have ever met.

d. How do they make you feel? **Important, respected, valued.**

Your love has helped me feel **important** like I never did before. I know how much you **respect** and **value** me and I cannot thank you enough.

### Example Two, John's vows to Sarah

a. What was life like before your partner?  
**Uncertain, directionless, boring.**

Sarah you have no idea how much you have changed my life. Before we met I was **uncertain** about the future, I had **no direction** in my life and everything seemed **boring**.

b. How did you feel when you met?  
**Comfortable, attracted, certain.**

When I first met you at my cousin's wedding I was amazed at how **comfortable** you made me feel. The **attraction** was instant and I was **certain** I wanted to see you again.

c. How do you see them? **Wise, kind, caring.**

You are the **wisest, kindest** and most **caring** person I have ever met.

d. How do they make you feel? **Wanted, relaxed, funny.**

I have never felt so **wanted** or **relaxed**, and the way you laugh at all my corny jokes sometimes I think I'm the **funniest** man alive.

**Write a couple of sentences using the words you've just chosen.**

**a) What was life like before you met?**

**b) How did you feel when you met?**

**c) How do you see your partner?**

**d) How do they make you feel?**

### 3. Let's build on your two sentences.

Go back to the beginning. Re-write those sentences into paragraphs and this time include your “why”. The points below might help.

#### a. Your old life

- Did you always know something was missing?
- Did you want something to change?
- Did you think life was already complete?

#### b. When you met

- What were your expectations?
- Was it instant or a low burn?
- How long before you knew this was “it”?

#### c. How you see them

- What makes them that way?
- Do you bring out the best in each other?
- What special something do you admire?

#### d. How you feel now

- Has the relationship changed the way you see yourself?
- Do you function better together?
- Is there something they've really helped you with?

For every word you've chosen, ask “why” or “how” and answer the question in your vows.

Have a look at some more worked examples.

## Example One, Sarah's vows to John

a. What was life like before your partner? **Planned, simple, lonely.**

Once upon a time, John, I thought I had everything **planned**. My life was **simple**; but deep down I was very **lonely**.

**But why? Did I want my life to change or did I think everything was fine. Did I think I had it all together or do I know better now?**

Once upon a time, John, I thought I had everything **planned**; I had a good job, great friends and a nice place to live. You came along and turned my **simple**, well-planned life upside down.

From the way you leave all your shoes scattered by the front door, to your spur of the moment camping trips; the house is always a mess and I never know what's coming next. However, with my tidy life and ordered calendar I was also very **lonely** and needed someone special to share the good times with.

## Example Two, John's vows to Sarah

John is shaping up to be a bit more serious!

d. . How do they make you feel? **Wanted, relaxed, funny.**

I have never felt so **wanted** or **relaxed**, and the way you laugh at all my corny jokes sometimes I think I'm the **funniest** man alive.

**How does she do this? Why is it important? Has the relationship changed the way you see yourself?**

Since meeting you I've finally been able to **relax** and enjoy just being myself because I like who I am when we're together. I've found the confidence I lacked because I feel needed and **wanted**.

Being able to make you laugh when you're stressed out or upset – the fact that you find me **funny** at all – just proves that we were meant to be together. You get me, and that is more important than you'll ever know.

\*see how "funniest man alive" has changed? The first couple of lame sentences were only the start!

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

**a. What was life like before your partner?**

**b. How did you feel when you first met?**

**c. How do you see your partner?**

**d. How do they make you feel?**

## 4. The next part is about your promises for the future.

- This is where we round it all up with the promises of forever you are making.
- Use your partner's name here, even if you've already mentioned it before. It makes it more personal for them.
- You may want to use your original 3 word sets for inspiration.
- 3 to 5 "vows" are a good benchmark.

### Example One, Sarah's vows to John

*(planned, simple, lonely) (surprised, anxious, overwhelmed)*  
*(capable, brave, honest) (important, respected, valued)*

John, I trust you with my life and my heart and promise to treat you with the honesty and respect you deserve.

I promise to be your equal partner in all the important things, and to value your opinions, even when you're clearly wrong.

There are times when I will lean on you, and times when you will rely on me, because our marriage is about mutual support and each taking turns at being brave and strong when the other needs comfort and support.

Today I promise you that I will always embrace the unexpected and always remind you to pick up your shoes.

I love you.

### Example Two, John's vows to Sarah

*(uncertain, directionless, boring)*  
*(comfortable, attracted, certain)*  
*(wise, kind, caring) (wanted, relaxed, funny)*

I want you to know, Sarah, that you can rely upon me to always rate my family above all else.

That I have found my true purpose, and that is being there for you.

I promise to support you in every decision you make, and be there to pick up the pieces if anything goes wrong.

I will listen to you advice, learn from your kindness and continue to grow into a man you can be proud of.

Above all, I promise to love you for the rest of my life.



## YOUR TURN

**Once you have these promises,  
add them at the end of your  
four other paragraphs and  
you're practically done!**

## 5. Adding the legal bit (for Australia)

There are a few variations that you're allowed to say. The simplest and easiest to get your mouth around when you're already nervous is this:

***I ask everybody here to witness that I (full name) take you (full name) to be my lawful wedded (wife/husband/partner in marriage).***

Ask your celebrant about the different options if you're looking for something fancier. Like "I call upon the persons here present".... or "I take thee".

They will know all the rules about what words can be changed and that you can "lawful wedded", "lawful", or "wedded" but not just wife/husband/partner without one of those words.

Some celebrants do this as a separate thing, some do it with the rings, but I like to find somewhere it works within what a client has come up with.

I feel saying it as a separate element can sometimes feel a bit awkward if everything else in your ceremony is tailored to you and your way of speaking. Sneaking it in between your own words, in a logical place, fulfills the legal requirement without making a welter of it.

Let's look at 3 different places (marked \*\*\*\*\*) in Sarah's final vows where I think it would work (adding in the odd word to make the sentence flow).

The middle one is my favourite and the one I would recommend if she were my client.

Once upon a time, John, I thought I had everything planned; I had a good job, great friends and a nice place to live. You came along and turned my simple, well-planned life upside down. From the way you your leave all your shoes scattered by the front door, to your spur of the moment camping trips; the house is always a mess and I never know what's coming next.

However, with my tidy life and ordered calendar I was also very lonely and needed someone special to share the good times with.

I swiped right and you quickly became that someone. Your confidence swept away all my anxiety and overwhelm and you brought with you an organized chaos that I now couldn't live without. *(and so \*\*\*\*\*)*

I grew to learn just how capable you really are even though you try really hard to hide your talents, acting like you don't care about stuff when you're all the time thinking and planning how to make our lives more exciting.

Now I know you are the bravest and most honest man I have ever met and I am SO lucky to have found you. Your love has helped me feel important like I never did before. I know how much you respect and value me and I cannot thank you enough.

John, I trust you with my life and my heart and promise to treat you with the honesty and respect you deserve. *(and so \*\*\*\*\*)*

I promise to be your equal partner in all the important things, and to value your opinions, even when you're clearly wrong.

There are times when I will lean on you, and times when you will rely on me, because our marriage is about mutual support and each taking turns at being brave and strong when the other needs comfort and support.

Today I promise you that I will always embrace the unexpected and always remind you to pick up your shoes. *(and more importantly, \*\*\*\*\*)*

I love you.

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million, and the number of people in the public sector who are employed in health care has increased from 2.5 million to 3.5 million (Department of Health 2000).

There are a number of reasons for this increase. One of the main reasons is the increasing demand for health care services. The population of the UK is ageing, and there is a growing number of people with chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and asthma. This has led to an increase in the number of people who are admitted to hospital and the length of their stay. In addition, there has been a growing emphasis on preventive care, which has led to an increase in the number of people who are seen by their general practitioners and other health care professionals.

Another reason for the increase in the number of people employed in the public sector is the increasing demand for health care services in the private sector. The private sector has grown significantly in the last few years, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the private sector. However, the public sector still remains the largest employer in the health care sector.

There are a number of challenges facing the public sector in the future. One of the main challenges is the increasing demand for health care services. The population of the UK is ageing, and there is a growing number of people with chronic conditions. This will lead to an increase in the number of people who are admitted to hospital and the length of their stay. In addition, there will be a growing emphasis on preventive care, which will lead to an increase in the number of people who are seen by their general practitioners and other health care professionals.

Another challenge facing the public sector is the increasing demand for health care services in the private sector. The private sector has grown significantly in the last few years, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the private sector. However, the public sector still remains the largest employer in the health care sector.

There are a number of ways in which the public sector can meet these challenges. One way is to invest in preventive care. This will help to reduce the number of people who are admitted to hospital and the length of their stay. In addition, there is a need to invest in the training and development of health care professionals. This will help to ensure that the public sector has the skills and resources to meet the increasing demand for health care services.

Another way in which the public sector can meet these challenges is to work in partnership with the private sector. This will help to ensure that the public sector has the resources and expertise to meet the increasing demand for health care services. In addition, there is a need to work in partnership with the public sector to ensure that the private sector is able to meet the increasing demand for health care services.

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So there you go! You should now have a pretty good idea of where to start, and how to proceed with writing the wowiest wedding vows your guests have ever hear.

Want to work with me?

- Personal assistance with vow writing
- Bespoke Poetry written about you and for you to use in your ceremony
- Having a friend doing your ceremony? I have an eBook full of hints and tips for creating a ceremony that flows including where your celebrant needs to do the legal bits.
- Need a celebrant? Yes I'll travel if you're not in Brisbane and think I'm fabulous enough to shout me a plane ticket.



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