

Write Your Vows Together

spoken  heart
CEREMONIES

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You've seen it a million times on TV: a couple is about to get married, and they just can't write their vows—either they can't find the time or the right words. Or they're nervous theirs won't be as good as their partners. They procrastinate but end up scratching out something touching & powerful at the last minute. Or maybe they improv—but magically, it's eloquent & sincere!

These are great plot devices for drama and tension—but drama & tension aren't what most people want for their wedding day.

Your wedding is your real life. This should be a moment of bonding & love. Who wants to be stressed out about their vows? Why should the ultimate moment of union feel like a moment of competition? In fact, now that you're starting to think about it . . . what *are* vows anyway?

Vows are promises.

That's it. Your vows are the promises you make on your wedding day & work to keep for the rest of your lives. On some level, you already know what those vows are—after all, you've been having conversations about the *kind* of relationship you want to have for your entire relationship! As you prepare for your wedding day, writing your vows together is a powerful way to articulate your values & your commitment to each other.

Vows are timeless.

Your vows aren't a one-time, in-the-moment speech. The vows you make your wedding day should be vows you can make to each other every year—they should be just as relevant 50 years from now as they are today. Your love will grow & change, but your vows will endure.

Vows are shared.

Traditionally, partners make the same vows to each other. Making the same promises emphasizes the equality of your relationship; it shows you are both in this together & want to give each other the same love & support. If you write them together, they will be blend of the two of you—just like your marriage.

That said, if you want to have a short vow introduction where you tell your partner what you love about them & why you want to make this commitment, that can be a meaningful way to personalize your vows.

Ok, so how do we do this?

Step 1: Brainstorming

Start with some individual brainstorming. Get some paper & pen. Get down some ideas related to the questions below. Spend some time writing & thinking. Answer whichever ones catch your fancy!

- ◆ Make a quick list of values that you think are most important to the two of you as a couple.
- ◆ What makes you work best as a couple?
- ◆ How do handle struggles, conflict, difficulties as a couple? (when you are at your best!)
- ◆ What kind of relationship or family do you want to create together?

Step 2: Make a list of promises

With those ideas in mind, make a list of 8-10 promises that are important to you as an individual. Don't worry too much about wording—just your ideas!

Step 3: Compare your lists of promises!

Read your answers & compare your lists! You chose each other so I'm guessing half of your ideas will be the same—and your partner will probably have some ideas that make you immediately think, “of course!”

Step 4: Decide on your core vows.

Make a list of the final 8-10 promises that are most important to you as a couple. I always think of this as relationship mission statement! This is the most important part!

Step 5: Look at some sample vows.

Look at some sample vows to get ideas for how your vows might begin or end. I send my couples a packet of example vows they can use to inspire them or to steal some beautiful phrases. It's easy to get caught up in the details & forget to say important things like “I choose you to be my wife!” There are lots of great online resources for vows. Looking at a few can help you figure out what you want your vows to sound like. For examples of inspiring vows go to www.spokenheartceremonies.com ---and look for my blog under Wedding Vows Inspiration.

Step 6: Write your vows together....

You can write every single word yourself from scratch ---or borrow phrases from the vows you researched. What matters most is that you end up with promises that are deeply meaningful to you.

Now that you have your wedding vows, make them part of your life. My husband & I read our vows to each other every year on our wedding anniversary!