



THE VOWS & THE RINGS

So, what exactly *are* your wedding vows? Basically, your vows are the promises that you and your partner make to each other on your wedding day. This heartfelt expression of your commitment to one another is the high point of your ceremony. And the rings...? Typically, at some point during the vows, the happy couple also exchange rings. These rings are the material symbol for the eternal nature of the couple's love and the vows they are exchanging.

There are no set-in-stone words for these moments, so it is important to choose the vows that you both feel most comfortable with and which best reflect who you are as a couple.

Thinking of writing your own vows... or prefer something more classical/modern already in circulation? Either way, it is entirely up to you. No pressure. Here is a helpful statistic from weddings I have conducted over the years that may help you decide what is best for you. Just 40% of couples write and read out their own vows. The majority of couples (60%) *don't* and seem to prefer classic or modern vows, occasionally giving them a personalised tweak or two.

Also, many couples admit to being quite shy and even uncomfortable speaking in public. For this reason, they often choose simple question & answer vows or opt to repeat something short along with the celebrant.

There are a few different formats for the sharing of vows and exchanging of rings. For example, some couples say their wedding vows and exchange rings all in one go. Some say their their vows and then go on to exchange rings with another set of vows.

Naturally, with internet, there are limitless sources to choose your vows from. However, the examples below illustrate a broad spectrum of possibilities for inspiration that I have heard at 200+ real ceremonies. They range from the simple-yet-classic "*Do you take X to be your wedded...?*" to the more personalised options like "*Do you promise to stop pretending you're listening to X, and occasionally take their advice?*". I have split them into two main categories: THE VOWS & THE RINGS. Within these categories are a number of sections showing the different ways vows are said, including question and answer formats or simply repeating after the celebrant.

I hope this is all useful to you when trying to decide which style of vows are for you.

DEFINITION: the word VOW comes from the Latin noun *votum* which mean wish.

THE VOWS

1. classic & modern vows (read out by the Couple)

*I, X, take you, Y, to be my husband/wife and these things I promise you:
To be your loving friend and partner in marriage. To talk and listen, to trust and appreciate you. To respect and cherish your uniqueness; and to support, comfort, and strengthen you through life's joys and sorrows. And I promise to share hopes, thoughts and dreams as we build our lives together.*

:: :

I, X, take you, Y, to be my beloved wife/husband, to have and to hold you, to honour you, to treasure you, to be at your side in sorrow and in joy, to laugh with you in the good times, to comfort and solace you in the bad, and to love and cherish you always. I promise you this from my heart, with my soul, for all the days of my life, eternal.

:: :

I, X, choose you, Y, to be my partner in life. I promise you my unconditional love and my fullest devotion through the pressures of the present and the uncertainties of the future. I promise to love and honour you, pledge to respect your every talent and ability and to lend you strength to reach your dreams as you do mine. I promise to care for you, encourage you and inspire you. From this day forward my heart will be your home

:: :

*I, X, in the presence of my family and friends accept you, Y, in marriage. Today I marry my best friend, today I marry the one I love, the one I've laughed and cried with, the one I've learned from and shared with, the one I've chosen to support and care for. I promise to cherish you when our love comes easy **and** when it is an effort. I promise to encourage and inspire you, to laugh with you, and to comfort you in times of struggle - whatever we may encounter, let us encounter it together. And, throughout all our days, I give myself to be the best partner I can be.*

:: :

X, I choose you as my wife/husband, in friendship and in love, in strength and weakness, to share good times and misfortune, in achievement and failure. I will cherish and respect you through all the changes of our lives, forever giving thanks that we found each other.

:: :

I, X, take you, Y, to be my beloved wife/husband, to have and to hold you, to honour you, to treasure you, to be at your side in sorrow and in joy, to laugh with you in the good times, to comfort and solace you in the bad, and to love and cherish you always. I promise you this from my heart, with my soul, for all the days of my life, eternal.

:: :

*I, X, take you, Y, to be my husband/wife,
And these things I promise you:
I will be faithful to you and honest with you.
I will respect, trust, help, and care for you.
I will share my life with you.
I will try with you to better understand ourselves, and through the best and the worst of what is to come, as long as we live. I am thankful for the day we met and the memories we have shared over the years. While I was initially drawn to your beauty and your confidence, I have since been overwhelmed by your warmth and sincerity that is evident in your relationships with your family and friends.*

:: ::

I, X / Y, take you, Y / X, to be my lawful wedded husband/wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death do us part. This is my solemn vow.

:: ::

I promise to be a true and faithful partner, from this day forward, in all life's circumstances, as we face them together. In the joys and sorrows, the good times and bad, in sickness and health, I will always be there for you, to comfort you, to love you, honour and cherish you, now and forevermore.

:: ::

I, X / Y, take you, X / Y, to be my husband/wife, 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 for as long as we both shall live.

:: ::

*I, X / Y, take you, X / Y to be my lawful husband/wife.
I pledge to you to be your loving friend and partner in marriage.
To talk and listen, to trust, respect and appreciate you; and to support, comfort and strengthen you through life's joys and sorrows.
I promise to share hopes, thoughts and dreams as we continue our lives together. I promise to work at our love and always make you a priority in my life.*

:: ::

I see these vows not as promises but as privileges. I get to laugh with you and cry with you; share adventures and journeys with you; run with you and walk alongside you; build with you and grow old with you.

:: ::

*I will share my joy with you,
that it be multiplied.*

*I will share your pain,
that it be divided.*

*I will walk by your side
as we travel together through life's changes.
I will sleep in your arms
and that love will be my home*

:: ::

I, X, take you, Y, to be my beloved husband/wife, to have and to hold you from this day forward, to be at your side in sorrow and in joy, for better, for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and cherish you until death do us part. I promise you this from my soul for all the days of my life and beyond the bounds of life, beyond the bounds of time.

:: ::

I, X, take you, Y, to be my lawful wedded husband/wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death do us part. This is my solemn vow.

:: ::

I, X, promise to remember the pride and love I feel towards you, Y today and throughout our lives together as PARTNERS

I promise to always stand by you and to respect you through the good times and the bad. I promise to work hard every day to be the best version of myself and to support you in all that you are and all that you do.

:: :: ::

2. classic & modern vows

(question & answer format)

X / Y, do you take Y / X to be your wedded wife / husband and do you promise to love, respect and care for her / him from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, for as long as you both shall live?

*X / Y:
I do*

:: ::

X, do you take Y to be your wedded wife/husband, to live together in the bonds of marriage? Do you promise to love her,/him comfort her/him, honour and keep her/him, so long as you both shall live?

I do

:: ::

X / Y, do you take X / Y as your husband/wife and promise to love and cherish them, uphold and honour them in any situation where your life together might take you?

X:

I do.

:: ::

X, do you take Y to be your wedded wife/husband, to live together in the bonds of marriage and to love them, comfort and honour them and keep them, so long as you both shall live?

I do

:: ::

X, will you take Y to be your wife/husband, your lifelong partner? Will you promise to renew your love daily, striving to remain honest and open with them, sensitive to what is in their heart, wanting their growth, freedom and happiness throughout the years?

I will

:: :: ::

3. personal vows

(written and read out by the Couple)

I choose you to share my life, and I promise to always look after you. I will talk and listen, trust and appreciate you. I will help you make and follow your dreams, and will always try new experiences with you. No matter what, I will give you my love. I promise to treasure our time together and will always put you first.

:: ::

*On this beautiful summer's day I dedicate myself to you.
I promise to respect you, so you will feel loved.
I promise to listen to you, so you will feel understood.
I promise to work hard to make our love grow stronger.
I promise to love you and to take care of you.
I promise you this from my heart, my body, my mind and my soul.
For all our life together.*

:::

Today is the beginning of a new chapter in our life were we will continue our adventures together, exploring your favourite castles and tasting the wines of the world. You have supported me when I have needed you the most and given me the confidence to achieve where I am today. I promise to be by your side, cheering you through your next challenge and keeping your chocolate tin full. Because of you I love, I laugh, I smile and look forward to spending the rest of my life with you.

:::

You know me better than anyone else in this world and somehow still you manage to love me. You have helped me triumph over challenges; encouraged me and picked me up when needed. You know the way to my heart is a kinder egg or a day at the zoo. You have helped me become the person I am today. I will ask for help when I need it, and offer help to you always. I promise to love you even though you leave the lights on everywhere and take 40 minutes to make a 20 minute meal. Let us be friends and lovers, and grow old disgracefully together.

:::

Most of you will know I have always believed in MAGIC! And it can ONLY happen if you believe! So I have found my magical amazing partner for life and wow what a journey it has been. If you don't believe... it can never happen!! I cannot wait for the amazing adventures that life has in store for us! Hand in hand I shall nurture, cherish, respect and love you with all my heart for ever. I love you.

:::

I have loved you since the moment you held me in your arms & the world made complete sense; this ring is a symbol of that love. I promise to always adore you as I do now, to hold your hand through all of our adventures & challenges, to laugh with you, cry with you, to be your rock. You make me happier than I knew existed. You are my everything and I will protect, love & cherish you unconditionally & forever.

:::

I choose you as my husband, my life partner, in friendship and in love, in strength and weakness, to share good times and misfortune, in achievement and failure. I promise to touch you everyday (it's nice to be touched!!) I promise to excite you (we don't want to ever be boring and married), I promise to laugh with and at you (but keep you wondering what will make me laugh) and I promise to live in the present with you; it's all we have and it's amazing with you in it.

:::

I see these vows not as promises but as privileges. I get to laugh with you and cry with you; care for you and share with you. I get to run with you (literally and figuratively) and walk with you; build with you and live with you. It's a privilege to get to be the person who respects and protects you, and above all else, simply endeavors to make your life not only easier but better.

:::

I promise to grow with you and respect your ideas and expressions, to always talk with you and listen. I promise to be honest with you, to support and love you and I choose to spend my life with you.

:::

X, from the moment we met, you've surprised me, distracted me, captivated me and challenged me in a way that no person ever has. I've fallen in love with you again and again, countless times, without reservation. I promise to be true to you, to uplift and support you, to encourage you to achieve all of your goals, to laugh with you and cry with you, to always be open and honest with you and to create with you the beautiful moments of life that I know we will have together as a couple and together with our wonderful friends and family. No matter what trials we encounter together or how much time has passed, I know that our love will never fade, that we will always find strength in one another and that we will continue to grow side by side. I am so thankful for having met you and I will love you forever and always.

:::

X, I still can't believe that we found each other, and that I found the best man in this world; the man of my dreams. I never would have imagined we would be getting married in a place like this, a place that we have both come to love so much. You are the most loving, caring and kind person I have ever known, and I have no doubt that you make me a better person.

You believe in me and have shown me unconditional love and acceptance. Every day you reaffirm to me that you are my soul mate. I can feel your love for me in the way you look at me and it fills my heart. Together we are the most amazing team and our love for one another continues to deepen. I'm not sure that a lifetime is long enough for me to return all that you have given me but I promise to spend my days by your side wholly and truly. I promise to inspire you, laugh with you, cherish you, share your dreams with you, be there for you and grow with you. I am so thankful for having met you and I will love you forever and always.

:::

I X / Y promise to support and encourage you.
To talk and to listen,
To challenge and frustrate you,
And to appreciate your uniqueness.
Because of you, I laugh and smile.
I love you, very simply, very truly. Always.

:::

X, I vow to always trust and value your opinions, and stand by your actions. I promise to always treat you as my best friend and equal. I will ask for help when I need it, and offer help and support to you always. You are my soulmate and I can't wait to grow old disgracefully with you.

:::

Y, I vow to love you as you love me, through all hardship, darkness and pain to reach for our joys, our hopes and always with honesty and faith. You are the one that makes me laugh when I am sad, makes me consider when I want to be rash and finds me when I am lost. I love you and I will be there for you as your partner forever.

:::

I ask everyone to witness that I Brendan take you Steph to be my wife.
I promise to laugh with you, sing with you and dance with you around the world.

I promise to love you each day like it's our last.

I promise to always protect your happiness as if it were my own, and strive to be your favourite person.

Steph, I choose you.

:: ::

You are my best friend. I love you for who you are and who I am with you. Loving what I know of you, and yet, what things I will discover. I will laugh with you in times of joy, and comfort you in times of sorrow. I will listen to you with compassion and understanding (and speak to you with encouragement). I promise to forgive and practise self-forgiveness. I promise to be patient and to remember that all things between us are rooted in love. I promise to nurture your ambitions and to help you reach them. I promise to share my whole heart with you and to remember to show you how deeply I care for you, no matter what challenges may come our way. I promise to fiercely protect and defend you and to be a safe space for your secrets and vulnerabilities. I will have faith in your love for me. I am devoted to you in every way. May we have many adventures and grow old together. I marry you with no hesitation or doubt, and my commitment to you is absolute.

:: :: ::

4. personal vows

(question & answer format written by the couple, read by James)

1. *Do you promise to live for each other, to be lovers and best friends forever more?*
2. *Do you promise to be each other's side-kick and comrade in adventure, ready for wherever life's journey takes you?*
3. *Do you promise to be right by each other's side with all your heart when life becomes a battle?*
4. *Do you promise to accept each other's faults with patience and grace?*
5. *Do you promise to be supportive partners in parenthood?*
6. *Do you promise to nurture each other with all your love to achieve your wildest dreams?*

We do

(NB: next questions were asked to each individual, alternately)

7. *Steve, do you promise the house will be ready before your first baby is born?*
8. *Tamara, do you promise, for richer for poorer, not to spend all your money on ASOS?*
9. *Tamara, do you promise to give Steve sniff-kisses forever and ever?*
10. *Steve, do you promise to never ever, ever stop giving the best cuddles in the world?*

I do

:: ::

James - Do you X promise to love and cherish Y, be by her/his side always and continue to make her/him laugh every day for the rest of her/his life?

X - I do

James - Do you promise to grow with Y and learn more about the world and each other with open minds and open hearts as a team?

X - I do

James - Do you promise to let Y do the weekly shop at Whole Foods and buy clothes from Net A Porter even though you think it's a total waste of money?

X - I do

James - Do you promise to be her/his lover, her/his best friend, her/his support system and wife/husband forever and ever?

X - I do

James - Do you promise to love X, care for X and feed him/her so he/she doesn't get hangry?

Jenny - I do

James - Do you promise to be big spoon when you fall asleep?

Jenny - I do

James - Do you promise to buy him/her another dog after the wedding?

Jenny - I do

James - Lastly do you promise to be his/her best friend, laugh with him/her and grow old with him/her and love him/her forever and ever?

Jenny - I do

:: ::

Do you X promise to love and cherish Y, be by her/his side always and continue to make her/him laugh every day for the rest of her/his life?

I do

Do you promise to always share your meals with her/him? Even though she/he said she/he wasn't hungry when you were ordering?

I do

Do you promise to care for and protect her/him, in good times and bad, and tell her/him when she is being a numpty?

I do

Do you promise to her/his best friend, her/his support system and husband/wife forever and ever?

I do

Do you promise to love X, care for him/her and support him/her, and not shout at him/her when he/she buys another camera?

I do

Do you vow to always be understanding and supportive, and encourage him/her in all that he/she does?

I do

Do you promise to love him/her the way you love Ziggy and Zara*?

I do

Do you promise to stop pretending you're listening to him/her, and occasionally take his/her advice?

I do

Lastly, do you promise to be his/her best friend, laugh with him/her, grow old with him/her and

love him/her forever and ever?

I do

* the couple's dogs

:: ::

Do you, X, take Y to be your husband/wife, to share in his/her hopes and dreams, to respect his/her goals and ambitions and to make decisions together with him/her as all good teams do. Do you promise to be there for the good and bad, to love him/her for the person he/she is, not the person he/she could become, knowing that the relationship is the sum of two halves together.

I do

:: ::

Do you, X / Y, promise to protect X / Y in good times and in bad times?

I do

Do you promise to always share your meals with them even though they said they weren't hungry when you were ordering?

I do

Do you promise to love Y, care for them, support them and encourage them in all that they do, especially when they are planning another weekend away with you or others?

I do

Do you promise to be X / Y's best friend, laugh with them and grow old with them and love them for ever?

I do

Do you, X / Y, promise to love and cherish X / Y, be by their side always and continue to make them laugh every day for the rest of their life?

I do

Do you promise to stop asking them for their credit card, and when they do give it to you, do you promise to return it the same day?

I do

Do you promise to care for and love them in good times and in bad and make them dinner at least once a week? (Toasted sandwiches are not dinner by the way).

I do

Do you promise to be their best friend, their pillar, their walking companion and loving partner forever?

I do

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THE RINGS

1. repeating after James

As this ring has no end, neither shall my love for you.

:: ::

X, I give this ring to you,

My beloved,

My friend,

My husband / My wife.

Whenever I see this ring,

I will remember the cherished bonds we have created here on this day

As we stand here in front of each other.

:: ::

I, X, take you, Y, to be my husband/wife

Your love is my anchor,

Your trust is my strength

I will give you all my love

From now until eternity ends.

All that I am I give to you.

:: ::

With this ring I, X, take you, Y, to be my wedded wife/husband, to love and to cherish from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, for as long as we both shall live.

:: ::

X/Y, I give you this ring,

As a reminder,

That I will love, respect and care for you,

In all times,

In all places,

And in all ways,

Forever.

version B

X/Y, I give you this ring,

As a reminder,

*that I will love, honour, and cherish you,
In all times,
In all places,
And in all ways,
Forever.*

::::

I, X, give you this ring as a sign of our love, friendship and loyalty, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health for as long as we both shall live.

::::

*I, X take you, Y to be my wife/husband.
Your love is my anchor,
Your trust is my strength,
I will give you all my love
from now until eternity ends,
You make my life complete.
As this ring has no end,
Neither shall my love for you.*

::::

X/Y, I give you this ring as a sign of our love, trust and marriage. I promise to care for you above all others, to give you my love, friendship and support, and to respect and cherish you throughout our life together.

::::

*With this ring, I give you my promise
that from this day forward
you shall not walk alone
I have no greater gift to give.
May my heart be your shelter
and my arms be your home
May we walk together through all things
May you feel deeply loved,
for indeed you are.
May you always see the innocence in my eyes.
May we feel this joy forever.*

abridged version:

*With this ring, I give you my promise
that from this day forward
you shall not walk alone.
I have no greater gift to give.*

:: ::

With this ring I, X, take you, Y, to be my wife/husband, to love and to care for from this day forward, in sunshine and in storm, in darkness and in light, through good times and bad. Together we are united, unstoppable, and unbreakable, today and for all of our days.

:: ::

X/Y, I offer this ring to you as a symbol of my love and of the vows I have just spoken.

:: ::

With this ring, I, X, take you, Y, to be my wedded wife/husband.

:: ::

X / Y, I give you this ring, as a symbol of my love, my commitment and all that we share.

version B

X / Y, I give you this ring as a pledge of my love and commitment.

:: ::

X / Y, let this ring be a symbol of our never-ending adventures together, and the promise of all my tomorrows. I love you always, my best friend.

:: ::

*With this ring I, X, take you, Y, to be my wedded husband/wife.
I will share my joy with you, that it be multiplied.
I will share your pain, that it be divided.
I will walk by your side as we travel together through life's changes.
I will sleep in your arms and that love will be my home.*

::::

I, X take you Y to be my husband/wife, my partner in life and my one true love. I will cherish our friendship and will love you today, tomorrow, and forever. I will trust you and respect you; I will laugh with you and cry with you. I will love you faithfully and unconditionally through the best and the worst, the difficult and the easy. Whatever may come, I promise I will always be there for you.

::::

With this ring I, X, take you Y, to be my wedded husband/wife, I promise to cherish you dearly and respect you always, prize you above all others, and remain faithful to you all the days of our lives. I promise to love you when life seems easy and when it seems hard and every day be grateful that you are my husband. I choose you as the person with whom I will spend the rest of my life.

::::

This ring is my promise to accept your imperfections, to recognise your beauty, and to love you, always.

::::

I choose you, X above all others, to be my wife/husband. I promise to share all that I am and all that I have for all time to come. I offer this ring as a symbol of my love and commitment to you, and with it, I join my life to yours.

::::

I pledge to you to be your loving friend and partner in marriage. To talk and listen, to trust and appreciate you; to respect and cherish your uniqueness; and to support, comfort, and strengthen you through life's joys and sorrows. I promise to share hopes, thoughts and dreams as we build our lives together.

::::

I, X, give you, Y, this ring, as a symbol of my commitment to love, honour, and respect you.

version B

I, X, give you, Y, this ring, as a symbol of my commitment to love, support, and respect you.

:: ::

X, with this ring, I thee wed, and with all I am, and all I have, I honour you.

:: ::

*X, I offer you my love.
I offer you my strength.
I offer you my weaknesses.
I offer you my support.
I offer you my loyalty.
I offer you my faith,
For as long as we both shall live.
I give you this ring
To wear upon your hand,
As a symbol of our love and unity.
With this ring I marry you.*

:: ::

*I X, do promise this day
To love, honour and cherish you
As my husband/wife, companion, and partner.
I place this ring upon your hand
As a sign of my love and fidelity.*

version B

*I X, do promise
to love, support and cherish you
As my husband/wife, companion, and partner.
I place this ring upon your finger
As a sign of my love.*

:: ::

*X, you were my yesterday,
You are my today, you will be my tomorrow.
All that I am I give to you.*

:: ::

I, X, take you, Y, to be my beloved wife/husband, to have and to hold you, to honor you, to treasure you, to be at your side in sorrow and in joy, to laugh with you in the good times, to comfort and solace you in the bad, and to love and cherish you always. I promise you this from my heart, with my soul, for all the days of my life, eternal.

:: ::

*I, X, take you, Y, to be my husband/wife
Your love is my anchor
Your trust is my strength
I will give you all my love
from now until eternity ends,
You make my life complete.*

version B

*I, X, take you, Y, to be my wife/husband.
Your love is my anchor,
Your trust is my strength.
I will give you all my love
From now until eternity ends.
All that I am I give to you.*

:: ::

In all the world there is no heart for me like yours. In all the world there is no love for you like mine. With this ring I pledge my love and life to you.

:: ::

*I, X, take you, Y, to be my wife/husband,
To share all that I am,
And all that I have,
For all time to come.
And I promise to do all in my power
To keep my love as deep and as strong as it is today.*

:: ::

X / Y, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love for you. Let it be a reminder that I am always by your side and that I will always be a faithful partner to you.

::::

With this ring I thee wed and with it I bestow all of the treasures of my mind, heart and hands.

::::

I give this ring in pledge of my love and devotion. With this ring I thee wed

::::

X, with this ring I marry you. I choose you to be my wife/husband, this day and forevermore.

:: :: ::

2. question and answer format

X do you take Y to be your wedded husband / wife and do you promise to love and cherish them from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, for as long as you both shall live?

I do.

::::

X, do you take Y to be your wedded wife / husband and do you promise to accept their imperfections, to recognise their beauty and to love and cherish them always, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, for as long as you both shall live?

I do

::::

*With this ring,
Do you promise to love, respect and care for X
In all times,
In all places.
And in all ways.*

Forever?

I do

:: ::

X, do you take Y to be your wedded wife / husband and do you promise to love, respect and care for them from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, for as long as you both shall live?

I do

:: ::

With this ring, do you X, take Y, to be your lawfully wedded husband/wife and trusted partner for life?

I do.

:: :: ::