

Readings and poetry for your
civil partnership ceremony



Published by Bracknell Forest Registration Service

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A dance by Colin Wicker

A good relationship is something like a dance – built on the same rules. Partners in a dance do not need to hold on tightly, because they move in the same patterns, confident in each other. To touch heavily would be to arrest the pattern and freeze the movement - to check if not to stop the beauty of its unfolding. There is no place here for the possessive clutch, the clinging arm, the heavy hand. Only the barest touch in passing is sufficient to carry the deepest wealth of meaning. Now arm-in-arm, now face-to-face, now back-to-back - it doesn't matter which. As dancers, they know they are partners responding to the same rhythm, creating a pattern together and being invisibly nourished by it. The joy of such a dance is not only the joy of creation: it is also the joy of living in, and for, the moment. The joy of knowing that lightness of touch and life itself are inter-twined.

Oh, the comfort

Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort, of feeling safe with a person; having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pour them all out, just as they are, chaff and grain together. Knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping and then - with the breath of kindness - blow the rest away.

The following are readings which are suitable for civil partnerships.

If you wish to use a reading not included in this booklet, please ensure that it has been agreed with the Superintendent Registrar who will conduct the ceremony, at least 7 days before the day. Please be aware that by law, no religious content can be allowed at a civil partnership ceremony.

You may like to ask a friend or relative to give the reading. You will see in the ceremony some spaces where readings can slot in, please use any or all of these opportunities.

Robert Browning to Elizabeth Barrett 1846

I look back, and in every one point, every word and gesture, every letter, every silence - you have been entirely perfect to me . I would not change one word, one look. My hope and aim are to preserve this love, not to fall from it.



Partnership is more

Partnership is more than standing here side by side,
Exchanging looks full of love, full of pride.
It's more than the ceremony, which lasts just a while,
It's a promise that's shared, it's an intimate smile.

It's a personal bond that you know will not end,
The knowledge that someone your love will defend.
It's a vow of commitment, special and true,
It's a hope and a dream of love endless for you.

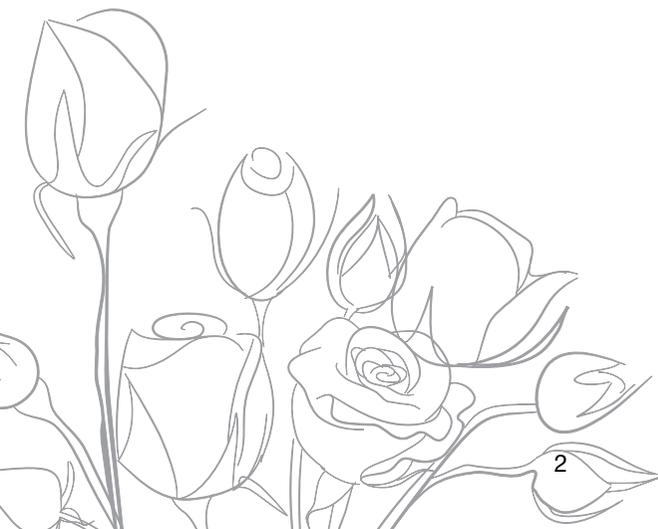
Always love each other by Larry S Chengges

If you can always be as close and as happy as today, yet be secure
enough to grow and change along the way.

If you can be as one, and walk through life hand in hand, yet still
support the goals and dreams that each of you have planned.

If you can dare to always go your separate ways together, then all the
wonder of today will stay with you forever.

Love is born with the pleasure of looking at each
other, if fed with the necessity of seeing each other,
it is concluded with the impossibility of separation.



Us two by AA Milne

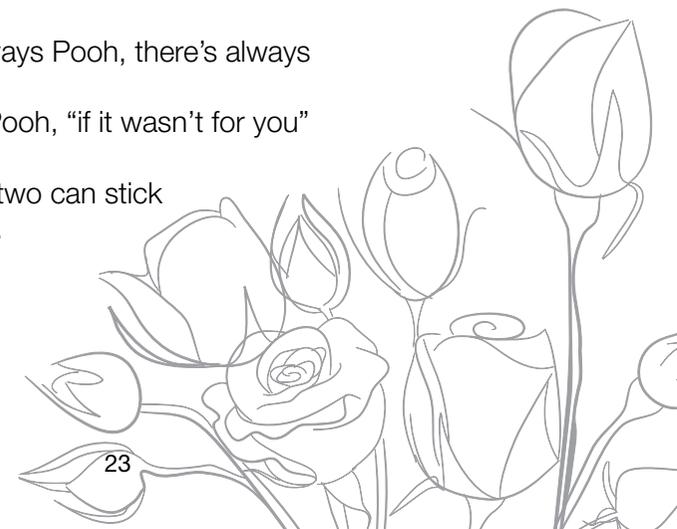
Wherever I am there's always Pooh,
there's always Pooh and Me,
Whatever I do, he wants to do,
"Where are you going today?" says Pooh, " well that's odd cos I was too."
" Lets go together", says Pooh.

"What's twice eleven?" I said to Pooh,
" Twice what," said Pooh to me.
"I think it ought to be twenty-two" " Just what I think myself" said Pooh.
"It wasn't an easy sum to do, but what's what it is" said Pooh.

"Lets look for dragons", said Pooh,
"Yes let's", said Pooh to me.
We crossed the river and found a few,
"Yes, those are Dragons all right", said Pooh.
"As soon as I saw their beaks I knew"
"That's what they are", said Pooh, said he.
"That's what they are" said Pooh.

"Let's frighten the Dragons", I said to Pooh.
"That's right", said Pooh to Me. "I'm not afraid", said Pooh to Me.
And I held his paw and shouted "Shoo!"
Silly old dragons, and off they flew.

"I wasn't afraid", said Pooh, said he,
"I'm never afraid with you".
So wherever I am, there's always Pooh, there's always
Pooh and Me.
"What would I do", I said to Pooh, "if it wasn't for you"
and Pooh said "True".
It isn't much fun for one, but two can stick
together, says Pooh, says he.
"That's how it is", says Pooh



Together

Hand in hand we walk together, through the days ahead.
Side by side we stand and face all problems head to head.
All our love we pool, in it's sharing it grows stronger,
now that two are one, we are alone no longer.
Let friends and family witness that our love has brought us here,
and may you all be joyful as in our joy you share.

Towards a happy future

Loving, thoughtful, understanding,
giving, taking, undemanding.
Little words with lots of meaning
when on each other you are leaning.
But these all help to pave the way
for a Happy Future from this day.

From Anne Sophie Swetchine

In the opinion of the world, love ends all, as it does in comedy.
The truth is precisely the opposite: it begins all.

I will be here

If in the morning when you wake, if the sun does not appear,
I will be here.
If in the dark we lose sight of love, hold my hand and have no fear.
I will be here.

I will be here,
When you feel like being quiet, when you need to speak your mind
I will listen,
Through the winning, losing and trying we'll be together,
and I will be here.

If in the morning when you wake, if the future is unclear,
I will be here.
As sure as seasons were made for change, our lifetimes were
made for years,
I will be here.

I will be here,
and you can cry on my shoulder,
when the mirror tells us we're older.
I will hold you, to watch you grow in beauty, and tell you all the
things you are to me.
We'll be together and I will be here.

I will be true to the promises I've made to you, and to the one
who gave you to me.
I WILL BE HERE.



The day

May this be the start of a happy new life
that's full of special moments to share ...

May this be the first of your dreams coming true
and of hope that will always be there ...

May this be the start of a lifetime of trust
and of caring that's just now begun ...

May today be a day that you'll always remember
the day when your hearts become one ...

When I look at you

I see all the hope and promise of our life together.

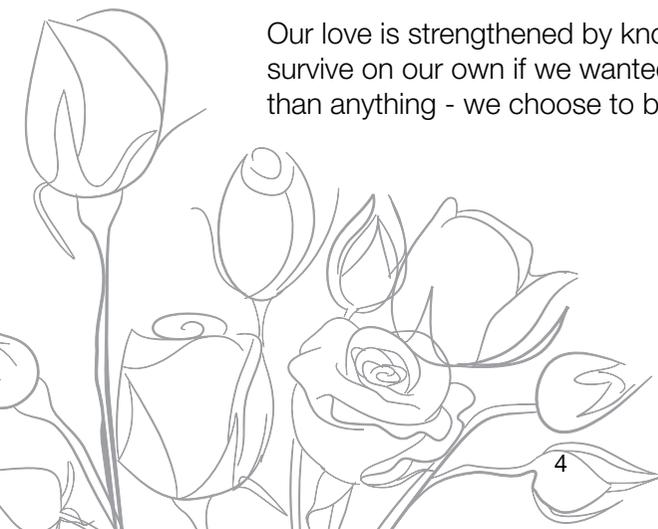
As the love that was always there in us grows stronger still. I see the wonder,
the mystery, the miracle of love and all our dreams waiting to be born.

I see that we've learned what it takes to make a relationship work, and ours
does. Thank you for being you, and making me feel so loved.

Because what we have is special, and together as it will only grow.

If we wanted to

Our love is strengthened by knowing that, each of us could
survive on our own if we wanted to- but realising that more
than anything - we choose to be together.



Building a relationship

A happy relationship is the best thing life has to offer. It is built up brick by
brick over the years, and cemented as much by the moments of tenderness
as by those of irritation.

Words from a Native American ceremony

May the sun bring you new energies 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 then, 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 of you will be shelter for the other.
Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other.
Now there is no more loneliness, for each of you will be companion to the
other . Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you.
Go now to your dwelling-place, to enter into the days of your life together.
May beauty surround you both, in the journey ahead and through all the
years. May happiness be your companion to the place where the river meets
the sun.

And may your days together be good and long upon the earth.



Walk with me

Do not walk in front of me, I may not be able to follow.
Do not walk behind me, I may not be able to lead.
Just walk beside me and be my friend.

Love is ...

Learning to give not always to take,
learning to forgive each little mistake,
learning to love whatever the cost,
always remember alone you'd be lost.

Trying so hard your partner to please,
trying to save whilst paying the fees,
trying to smile when things turn out wrong,
always remember to curb your tongue.

Never think of only your self,
never to say you wish you had wealth,
never let your temper get hot,
always be thankful for what you have got.

If you remember all of these things,
you will discover the joys that it brings,
then you'll have what so many folks miss,
always you'll have a life full of bliss.

Let me be the person
that you walk with in the mountains.
Let me be the person
that you pick flowers with.
Let me be the person
that you talk to in confidence.
Let me be the person
that you turn to in sadness.
Let me be the person
that you smile with in happiness.
Let me be the person
THAT YOU LOVE

Crazy with love

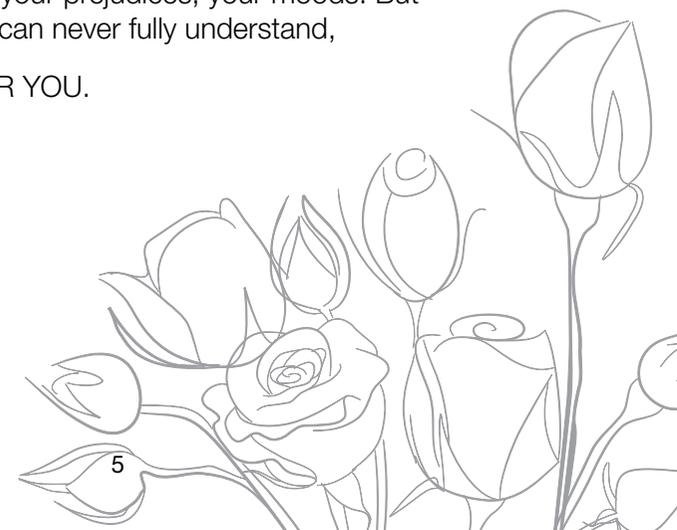
I know every bump, every bulge, every wrinkle, every sag, every
bag, every scar, every flaw.

I know that you flood the bathroom floor with water, and leave
the bath towels in a heap, that you never take your plate out to
be washed up, that your clothes and shoes can be found strewn
throughout the house.

I know that your socks never reach the wash-bin, that you tell me
the endings to detective novels, that you track mud through the
house, that you never remember to pay the bills on time.

I know all your eccentricities, your prejudices, your moods. But
somehow, for some reason I can never fully understand,

I AM CRAZY WITH LOVE FOR YOU.



True love holds the key

The partnership commitment begins with a promise.
That two people lovingly say.
And everyday life, hold the key to the secret
for keeping this promise each day....
A good sense of humour, an unbroken trust.
Giving compliments, comfort and praise
and taking some time for the fun things together
in thoughtful affectionate ways.
A partnership is made up of everyday kindness,
and that is the beautiful key,
to make every moment of life together,
as wonderful as it can be.

I love you by Deanne Laura Gilbert

'I Love You' means that I accept you for the person that you are, and that I don't wish to change you into someone else. It means that I do not expect perfection from you, just as you don't expect it from me.

'I Love You' means that I will love you and stand by you even through the worst of times. It means loving you when you are in a bad mood or too tired to do the things I want to do. It means loving you when you are down, not just when you're fun to be with.

'I Love You' means that I know your deepest secrets and do not judge you for them, asking in return only that you do not judge me for mine. It means that I care enough not to let you go. It means thinking of you, dreaming of you, wanting and needing you constantly, and hoping you feel the same way for me.

'I love you' means forever

Partnership is the blending of two hearts, two lives, two minds into one everlasting love. Many things in life are best in pairs.
A bird's song is more beautiful when it is returned by a companion.
Laughter is more joyful when accompanied by another.
Success is more satisfying when there is someone with whom to share it.
And love is never so wonderful as when there is someone to return it.

Friendship by Elizabeth Jennings

Such love I cannot analyse, it does not rest in lips or eyes.
Neither in kisses or caress, partly I know it's gentleness.

And understanding in one word, or in brief letters.
It's preserved by trust and by respect and awe.
These are the words I'm feeling for.

Two people, yes, two lasting friends, the giving comes the taking ends
There is no measure for such things, for this all nature slows and sings

I cannot promise you an easy pathway,
that leads away from change or growing old.
But I can promise a love that's ever true and ever growing,
and a hand to hold in yours through each tomorrow.

I cannot promise you a life of sunshine,
I cannot promise riches, wealth or gold.
But I can promise all my hearts devotion
and a smile to chase away your tears of sorrow.

Your day

Now comes the knitting, the tying, entwining into one,
mysterious involvement of two, whole, separate people
into something altogether strange and changing, new and lovely.
Nothing can ever be, we will never be, the same again,
not merged into each other irrevocably, but rather
from now on we go the same way, in the same direction,
agreeing not to leave each other lonely, or discouraged, or behind.
I will do my best to keep my promises, to treasure you and keep you warm,
and we will make our wide bed beneath the bright and ragged quilt of all the
yesterdays that make us who we are.
The strengths and frailties we each bring to this relationship, and we will be rich
indeed.

Poem by Leslie Adams

As you stand at this your threshold to the treasure house of life
may you use it's riches wisely, to avoid all pain and strife.

As you pass along the path of life, do remember all the way,
that the joys you reap in years to come, spring from seed you sow today.

And when in later years you pause, to reflect on what you've done,
may you look back contented and value what you've won.

This life

The life that I have is all that I have, and the life that I have is
yours. The love that I have in this life that I have, is yours for
evermore.

The confirmation by Edwin Muir

Yes, yours, my love, is the right human face.
I in my mind had waited for this long.
Seeing the false and searching for the true.
Then found you as a traveller finds a place of welcome suddenly,
amid the wrong valleys and rocks and twisting roads.

But you, what shall I call you?
A fountain in a waste, a well of water in a country dry,
or anything that's honest and good.
An eye that makes the whole world bright.
Your open heart, the simple with giving, gives the primal deed.

The first good world, the blossom, the blowing seed.
The hearth the steadfast land, the wandering sea.
Not beautiful or rare in every part,
but like yourself, as they were meant to be.
you constantly, and hoping you feel the same way for me.

From the I ching

When two people are at one in their inmost hearts, they shatter even the
strength of iron or bronze. And when two people understand each other in their
inmost hearts, their words are sweet and strong like the fragrance of orchids.

A new chapter

Today is a very special day, for it is the day you start another chapter in your book of life.

As parents, we always know that one day our children will grow to need much more than we can offer. Now that day has finally arrived, and you have both found the special person with whom you want to share your love and your life. Someone who can make the sun shine in your heart – even on the cloudiest of days, and someone who will fill the next chapter in your life with happiness beyond your dreams.

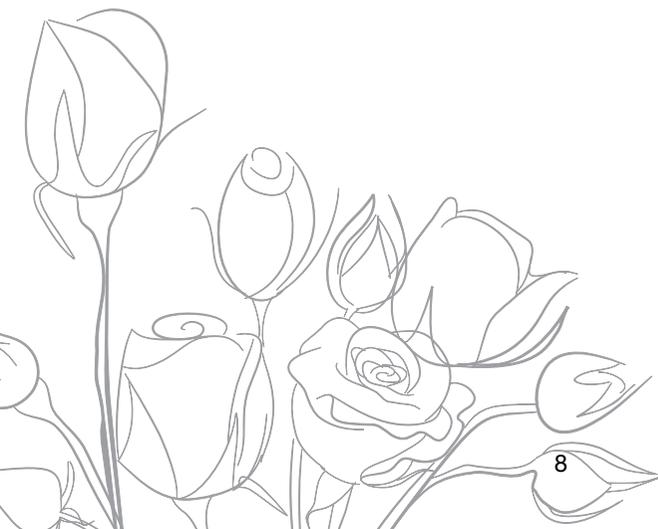
Live the life you believe in, and you will have everything you need to reach those dreams. Just look into your hearts and you will find the strength in each other that will make each new challenge easier to face – together.

The close friends and family, sharing this day with you, all have memories very precious and personal to each of them, but would ask only this of both of you. Always give the best of yourselves to each other and ask no more than you can give. Accept one another for the way you are.

You fell in love with the qualities and abilities and the outlook on life that you both have - don't try to change them. Share your time, your close attention, and bring joy, strength and imagination into your relationship.

Grow along with each other, be willing to face changes as you both change in order to keep your relationship alive and exciting.

And most importantly, love each other in good times and in bad, in the only way you know how. Completely and forever.



A walled garden

Your relationship...should have within it, a secret and protected place, open to you alone. Imagine it to be a walled garden, entered by a door to which only you hold the key. Within this garden you will cease to be a mother, father, employee, homemaker or any other of the roles which you fulfil in daily life.

Here you are yourselves - two people who love each other. Here you can concentrate on one another's needs. So take my hand and let us go back to our garden. The time we spend together is not wasted but invested. Invested in our future and the nurture of our love.

I promise by Dorothy R Colgan

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

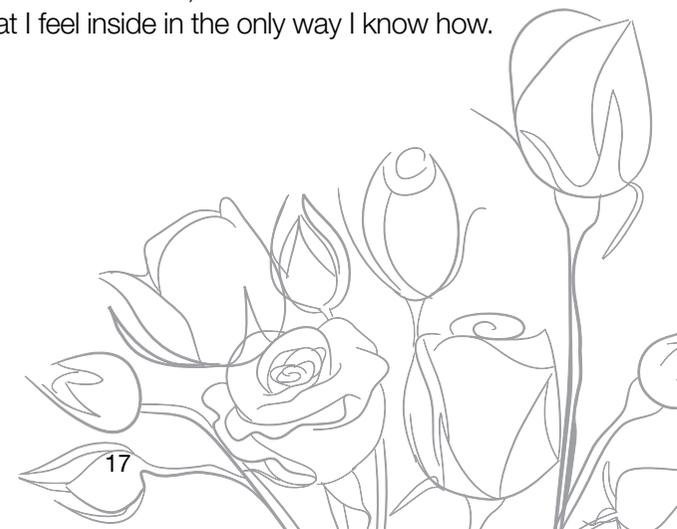
I promise to respect you as your own person
and to realise that your interests, desires and needs
are no less important than my own.

I promise to share with you my time and my attention,
and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship.

I promise to keep myself open to you
To let you see through the windows of my world into my innermost fears, and
feelings, secrets and dreams.

I promise to grow along with you, to be willing to face changes
In order to keep our relationship alive and exciting.

I promise to love you 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.



What is love

Sooner or later we begin to understand that love is more than verses on Valentines and romance in the movies. We begin to know that love is here and now, real and true, the most important thing in our lives. For love is a creator of our favourite memories and the foundation of our fondest dreams. Love is a promise that is always kept, a fortune that can never be spent, a seed that can flourish in even the most unlikely of places. And this radiance that never fades, this mysterious and magical joy, is the greatest treasure of all - one known only by those who love.

If I can make you cry by Paul Williams

If I can fill your eyes with pleasure, just by holding you,
in the early hours of morning, when the day that lies ahead's not quite begun.
If I can make you smile, if I can move you close to laughter with a word or two.
When your day's been filled with strangers,
and the castles that you build all tumble down.
Oh well, that's enough for me. That's all the hero I need to be.
I smile to think of you and me, you and I
And how our pleasures make you cry.

Love is giving

Love is giving, not taking, mending, not breaking,
trusting, believing, never deceiving.
Patiently bearing and faithfully sharing each joy, every sorrow,
today and tomorrow.
Love is kind, understanding, but never demanding.
Love is constant, prevailing, its strength never failing.
A promise once spoken for all time unbroken,
love's time is for ever.

How to stay together one more day!

Laugh at yourself and at each other. Practice unselfishness.
Show your love. Take to, not at, each other. Respond lovingly to his or her request. Greet and leave each other with kind words. Criticise the action, not the person. Hold hands. Resolve the day's differences before bedtime. Admit your failings and ask for forgiveness. Don't fight dirty. Enjoy the present and welcome the future. Make love, not waves.

Into the future

Each year you've been together, your love has grown and grown.
Undaunted by the trials you've faced, reassured by the joys you've known.
And now you stand before us, side by side and hand in hand,
to take this step together, towards the future you have planned.
The promises you're making, you make with love filled hearts.
Safe in the knowledge that today, is the day that future starts.



Sometimes

Sometimes it seems as if you were always meant to be together. That even from the time of your birth your lives have followed paths which have inevitably brought you to today. To these promises of a shared future. Now it is important to plan for that future. Be always together, but within the togetherness let each partner have space to grow as an individual. For each must learn the art of communication, compromise and commitment. Not making a bond of love, rather allowing love to be the rock on which a secure shared future can be built. A happy relationship cannot be created by one person, just as a happy tune cannot be played on a single note.

When you met

When you met you were not planning to fall in love, you were not planning to feel so attracted to someone. But when you met you awakened feelings inside yourselves that you had forgotten existed. On the day you met, you did not realise how much your love would grow, that the attraction which first brought you together would reach beyond passion, to the comfort of knowing that you each had someone very special. Someone who would be not only a lover, but also a close friend. When you met you had no idea where your relationship would lead you, or how beautiful you would make each other's world, but today you know that without a doubt the luckiest day of your lives was the day you met.

In love or real love

In love brings goosebumps and butterflies.
In love is obsessed with the colour of eyes.
In love swings like a pendulum, in love rises and falls.

Not so for real love, this is for always.
Real love holds you when you feel alone.
Real love is unconditional and enduring.
Your best friend always.

Real love sees the wrinkles and loves you more.
For they tell a story of a path walked together.
In love washes in and out, like waves on the sand.
Real love strengthens and binds you together.
Real love is a choice not a feeling.
Choose real love today and forever.

Love

by Guy De Maupassant

Love is a short word, but it contains all,
it means the body, the soul, the life, the entire being.
We feel it as we feel the warmth of the blood,
we breathe it as we breathe the air, we carry it in ourselves as we carry our thoughts. Nothing more exists for us. It is not a word, it is an inexpressible state indicated by four letters.



Love's testing

Life is precious and isn't always filled with the best or the worst:
It is not all roses or all thorns.

There are ups and downs, good days and bad – and then there are some days
which are the nadir, the pits, the all-time lows.

It is those times when your love for each other will be tested. It is at those times
when you most become true partners and friends. It is at those times that you
must show patience and kindness.

When your love is tested, show respect for each other. Be the most important
person in each other's life. Love and care for each other when you are strong, be
each other's strength in weakness.

Consult with each other and communicate. For communication allows for
disagreement with being disagreeable. When you love, give generously of
yourself, without counting the cost of giving. Remember the saying,

If you love a little, you give a little,
But love a lot and you give a lot.
For true love, when tested, endures.

I love you by Dylan Thomas

I love you, it's almost too wonderful to me to say: but I want to say it and
I am saying it – I love you.
And we'll always keep each other alive. We can never do nothing at all
now, but that both of us know all about it.
You can do anything and be anything, so long as it's with me.

The first day by Christina Rossetti

I wish I could remember the first day,
First hour, first moment of your meeting me:
If bright or dim the season, it might be
Summer or Winter for aught I can say.
So unrecorded did it slip away,
So blind was I to see and to foresee,
So dull to mark the budding of my tree.
That would not blossom yet for many a May.
If only I could recollect it.
Such a day of days I let it come and go
As traceless as a thaw of bygone snow.
It seemed to mean so little, meant so much
If only now I could recall that touch,
First touch of hand in hand! - Did one but know.

Love one another by Kahil Gilbran

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 the same cup.
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be 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 palace stand apart, and the oak tree
and the cypress.
Grow not in each other's shadow.

The keys to love

The key to love is understanding ... the ability to comprehend not only the spoken word, but those unspoken gestures, the little things that say so much in themselves.

The key to love is forgiveness ... to accept each other's faults and pardon mistakes, without forgetting-but with remembering what you learn from them.

The key to love is trust ... though dark doubts lay in hollowed thoughts, it must shine brightly on with reassuring radiance that suppresses fear with faith.

The key to love is sharing ... facing your good fortunes as well as the bad, together, both conquering problems forever searching for ways to intensify your happiness.

The key to love is giving ... without thought of return, but with hope of just a simple smile and giving-in, but never up.

The key to love is respect ... realising that you are two separate people with different ideas, that you belong with each other and share a mutual bond.

The key to love is inside us all ... it takes time and patience to unlock all the ingredients that will take you to its threshold, it is a continual learning process that demands lots of work ...

... but the rewards are more than worth the effort.

And you are the key to me.

Love by 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 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 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, perhaps what is what being a friend means after all.

Keres Indian song

I add my breath to your breath, that our days may be long on the earth.
That the days of our people may be long, that we may be one person.
That we may finish our roads together.

