# Opening Words and IntroductionThe Opening Words & Introduction of a Wedding Ceremonysets the tone for the wedding. It’s a statement about the occasion, its importance, the significance to the world as well as the couple getting married.Opening Words and Introduction 1

Friends and Family of the BRIDE and GROOM, welcome and thank you for being here on this important day.

We are gathered together to celebrate the very special love between BRIDE and GROOM, by joining them in marriage.

All of us need and desire to love and to be loved.

And the highest form of love between two people is within a monogamous, committed relationship.

BRIDE and GROOM, your marriage today is the public and legal joining of your souls that have already been united as one in your hearts.

Marriage will allow you a new environment to share your lives together, standing together to face life and the world, hand-in-hand.

Marriage is going to expand you as individuals, define you as a couple, and deepen your love for one another.

To be successful, you will need strength, courage, patience and a really good sense of humor.

So, let your marriage be a time of waking each morning and falling in love with each other all over again.

**Opening Words and Introduction 2**

Good evening, welcome to this most important moment in the lives of this couple.

We invite you to leave behind the worries and concerns of everyday life and join us in the celebration of their marriage.

This is an opportunity for us to share not only in the joy of BRIDE and GROOM’s love but also to reaffirm and appreciate the love and the friendship we experience in our own lives.

May we all celebrate by being fully present during our short time together.

BRIDE and GROOM have chosen this setting in which to be married because it provides an appropriate backdrop for the public affirmation of their love.

BRIDE and GROOM view marriage as a coming together at all levels of being – mind, body, and spirit.

A marital commitment includes the willingness to be open and vulnerable, and the courage to take risks.

Marriage is a conscious act of will.

To remain in marriage we must continually renew our will to be married.

Marital partners accept the challenges that living together in love offer.

They decide that they will face the fears that are a necessary part of establishing and nurturing an intimate relationship.

And you, BRIDE and GROOM have made the commitment to create and recreate this conscious partnership.

Those of us who are married or in relationships may take this moment to consciously reaffirm our commitment to our partners and ourselves.

Marriage consists of entrusting our deepest selves into the loving care of another.

It is a public and legal act to be sure.

It is also an emotional and spiritual act.

The spiritual aspect of marriage must be embraced openly, seriously, and completely for the marriage to endure.

BRIDE and GROOM commit themselves today to each other in sacred trust.

They promise to embrace conflict as well as peace; to work as well as play; to struggle as well as coast; to give as well as receive; and to be with, stay with, and move toward one another.

**Opening Words and Introduction 3**

Today there will be no dearly beloved, no betrothed, and no ancient rhyme of the married.

Today there are no dead languages to solemnize vows that are very much alive and will remain so for a lifetime.

Today promises become permanent and friends become family.

However, this day is not about the words spoken or the rings exchanged, nor is it about grand pronouncements and recessional marches.

This day – the day of BRIDE and GROOM’s wedding – is about love.

One of my favorite authors once wrote*,*“If love is not all, then it is nothing: this principle, and its opposite, collide down all the years of my breathless tale.”

BRIDE and GROOM, your breathless tale is about to begin.

If love is not all, then it is nothing.

Its opposite – If love is all, then it is everything – is going to be the basis for every aspect of your relationship.

All you have to do is simply love one another and that love shows through in everything you do for one another, how you treat each other, in good times and bad.

Love isn’t just a word; it’s an action.

Love isn’t something you say, it’s something you do.

Love is genuine, honest, and open, compassionate and kind, passionate and blind, love doesn’t know space or time, nor look through jealous eyes, and in the modified words of Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

Love never dies.”

There are many different kinds of love, almost if not all of which are represented here today.

There is romantic love, the love of parents and children, of brothers and sisters and family, and love among friends.

Not only do BRIDE and GROOM love one another romantically – and they do, you can see it in every look, every touch, every moment they’re together – they also love one another as friends.

In fact, they’re best friends, constantly giggling and taunting and teasing and very plainly and obviously having fun together.

That love and enjoyment of each other as best friends will sustain them through this marriage.

In addition, the love collectively in this room, from friends and family, will help sustain and support the promises they make today.

All of us here will help solidify this bond, as these two individuals are joined as husband and wife.

This new journey will be at times richly rewarding and extremely difficult, but, most importantly, it will be a journey you take together.

Marriage is much more than your signatures on a legal contract.

You are promising, in front of all these people you love, that you want to be with each other and only each other for the rest of your lives, and that you will do everything in your power to honor the promises you are making here today.

For their part, the people who love you will also do everything in their power to try to help you hold up your end of the bargain.

**Opening Words and Introduction 4**

Today is a celebration.

A celebration of love, of commitment, of friendship, of family, and of two people who are in it for forever.

You don’t have to have a ceremony to have a marriage.

And when you think about it, the whole thing is kind of weird, right?

You’re standing on in front of a lot of people, looking fancy, holding flowers, and being stared at by pretty much everyone who has meant anything to you.

So why do we do it?

The marriage ceremony has been an important feature across nearly every culture, religion, generation, and society.

We have thousands of important moments that happen throughout our lives, but this one is regarded as one so critical, we acknowledge its special status by sharing it with others.

Why this moment?

Because despite all of our differences, love is what we all share.

It’s the great unifier — our one universal truth.

That no matter who we are, where we’ve come from, what we believe, we know this one thing: love is what we’re doing right.

That’s why you are both standing here.

And that’s why you all are here to watch them stand up here.

We have all loved in our lifetimes, and in this moment, we’re reminded that the ability to love is the very best part of our humanity.

All of us here today have our own love stories.

Some are short, others long.

Some are yet unwritten, while others are just getting to the good part.

There are chapters in all of our stories that are sad or disappointing — and others that are exciting and full of adventure.

[Insert love story here]

And that brings them here, a time to pause, look back, and smile at all the moments that brought them here.

And a time to look ahead to all the moments that are still to come.

I’m here — we’re all here — because we want those moments for you.

We’re here to hope with you, to support you, to be proud of you, and to remind you that love isn’t happily ever after, love is the experience of writing your story.

It’s not one moment — not even this moment. It’s every moment.

Big ones like saying “I love you,” moving in together, getting engaged — but mostly a million little ones that come in between the big moments.

Falling asleep next to one another, making dinner together, spending holidays with your families, getting a big hug when you get home from work…

These everyday moments fuse together into one big experience.

And even though this experience is so incredible, words fail us when we try and explain it.

That’s just the way it is with love — it’s meant to be felt, not described.

But trying to describe love is one of our favorite pastimes.

We use the words we have to write stories, and poems, and songs about love.

And even though we describe love in different ways — and even though love can look different from one person to the next — we all know it when we see it.

And we see it here.

**Opening Words and Introduction 5**

We have been invited here today to witness and celebrate the uniting in marriage of BRIDE and GROOM.

They are taking the first step of their new beginning; their new life together.

The ability and desire for one human being to love another is perhaps the most precious and fulfilling gift that has been entrusted to us.

It is an all-consuming task, a lifelong endeavor — the journey we’ve been preparing for all of our lives.

Loving someone is a reason to stretch beyond our limits, to become more for the sake of the other.

It is to look into the soul of your beloved and accept what you see.

Loving is the ultimate commitment which challenges humans to become all that we are meant to be.

As they join in marriage today, BRIDE and GROOM are announcing to the world that they are welcoming that challenge.

**Opening Words and Introduction 6**

Hello and welcome!  May your hearts be glad and your spirits be light.

For every thing there is a season and a time for every purpose under Heaven.  Now is the time for a wedding.

BRIDE and GROOM have asked you all here today to bear witness to the forming of their covenant.

In honor of this event, they will say heartfelt words, perform age-old rituals and validate this event in your presence, their family and friends.

They will laugh and cry, dance and sing, and above all, celebrate their love with the blessings of the people who matter most to them.

To this day BRIDE and GROOM bring the joy in their hearts as a gift to one another.

They bring their shared dreams, which tie them together.

And they bring the seeds for their future, out of which will grow their life together.

You have been invited to share in their joy because of your bonds to the bride and groom and their families.

Again, they welcome you and thank you for coming.

**Opening Words and Introduction 7**

Hello everyone and welcome.

Thank you for joining us on this day of gladness and good fortune.

BRIDE and GROOM are coming together to publicly proclaim their undying love through the celebration of their marriage.

We are all here to learn about loving and being loved, and to watch the miracle of love exchanged enriches every one of us.

Therefore, we appreciate the opportunity to witness the shared love of this beautiful couple.

Their enthusiasm is contagious, their certainty of their destiny together is inspiring and their great expectations give us all a glimpse of the heights love can reach.

Marriage is a very special place.

It’s an oasis, a haven, and a sanctuary where we can safely learn about ourselves in the presence of another.

Like the harmony with the melody, marriage weaves two lives together, creating a deeper and richer song.

We are honored that BRIDE and GROOM are sharing some of their beautiful music with us on this day.

We ask that the vision they have of one another always reflect the electric attraction that first brought them together.

And we pray that, as they enter into the lifelong bond that is marriage, they may always see one another in the light of all light; the light of love.

**Opening Words and Introduction 8**

We have come together – families and friends – to witness BRIDE and GROOM as they exchange their vows of marriage.

We share with them their delight in finding love with each other, and support their decision to be together from now until the end of time.

As this couple enters into marriage, they do so with thought and reverence.

They give thanks for the past, which brought them to this place, and look forward with hope to what the future will bring.

Marriage is like a great umbrella that shelters love from the elements.

Corinthians One says that love is patient and kind.

It is not jealous or boastful, not irritable or resentful, not arrogant or rude.

Love does not insist on its’ own way.

It does not rejoice in the wrong, but rejoices in the right.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes in all things and endures all things.

Love never ends.

This marriage is a symbol of BRIDE and GROOM’s commitment to that love.

**Opening Words and Introduction 9**

We are here on this magnificent and beautiful day to celebrate one of life’s greatest moments — we are all present to give recognition to the worth and beauty of love — and to publicly witness the creation of an outward marriage bond that BRIDE and GROOM have already been creating inwardly.

Their love and intention has created this marriage and we are gathered here today to join in the celebration and acknowledgment of that bonding.

**Opening Words and Introduction 10**

We would like to welcome all of you, honored guests, and thank you for being with us today.

We are gathered here this evening, in the presence of God and of His company, to join BRIDE and GROOM in Holy Union, and bear witness to the miraculous power of love.

Love is our purpose in being here; it is the essence of who we are.

With Love as their foundation, marriage offers BRIDE and GROOM the opportunity to become their essence with one another.

Marriage is an art form that brings profound joy and demands great responsibility, awareness, and commitment.

We who partake of this occasion bind ourselves as witnesses to the journey of love that they are undertaking here.

**Opening Words and Introduction 11**

Love has brought BRIDE and GROOM together.

But what do we mean by love?

When we love, we see things other people do not.

We see beneath the surface to the qualities, which make our beloved special and unique.

To see with loving eyes, is to know inner beauty. And to be loved is to be known, as we are known to no other.

We who love, can look at each other’s life and say, “I touched his life,” or, “I touched her life,” just as an artist might say, “I touched this canvas.”

“Those brushstrokes in the comer of this magnificent mural, those are mine. I was a part of this life, and it is a part of me.”

Marriage is to belong to each other through a unique and diverse collaboration, like two threads crossing in different directions, yet weaving one tapestry together.

The secret of love and marriage is to be in love and in trust, to know in your hearts that you want only the best for each other.

It takes dedication, to stay open to one another, to learn and grow, even when it is difficult to do so.

And it takes faith, to go forward together without knowing what the future holds for you both.

The true art of married life is an inner spiritual journey.

It is a mutual enrichment, a give and take between two personalities, a mingling of two endowments, which diminishes neither, but enhances both.

It is, ultimately, the emergence of the Highest Selves of each person.

**Opening Words and Introduction 12**

You have come here today, BRIDE and GROOM because you believe that by being together your lives will be better and more productive than they would be apart.

In marriage, a new perspective is created with the joining of male and female views of life.

Through this partnership, each partner becomes stronger, each becomes wiser and each becomes more loving.

But marriage is a garden, which needs to be tended every day:  the benefits we receive through marriage are not free.

If we don’t make time to tell our partner how much we value what we have together, we will begin to take each other for granted and lost the very special quality that we originally united to enjoy.

The importance of marriage to humans is so great, that it is the oldest rite or ritual of any kind recorded in history; it’s scope so great that it is virtually the only custom recognized by every human government and religion.

It is into this dynamic and wonderful state of partnership that you two come, today, to be joined.

**Opening Words and Introduction 13**

We are gathered here in this beautiful place to join together this man, GROOM, and this woman, BRIDE, in marriage – a state instituted in love, occasioned by joy.

Honored and renewed by each person who pledges themselves to each other.

It is therefore, not to be entered into lightly, or, unadvisedly. It is to be entered into with praise and delight for it’s inexpressible gifts.

Let us be honest enough with ourselves to know that there is no true marriage, except the inward bond of trust and love that dwells in the hearts of BRIDE and GROOM.

Only the two of you will know what marriage exists between you – the outer forms are only signs and covers over the love of your hearts.

We wish that you will find together, a richness beyond the wealth of money – a depth of soul that will make beautiful everything you do in life,  both separately and together.

**Opening Words and Introduction 14**

The stream had flowed through the center of the forest for as long as anyone could remember.

It began as a cold, clear fountain in a fractured hillside, then tumbled down over mossy stones and last year’s autumn leaves.

At the foot of the hill the stream took a course running southeast through tall stands of beeches, maples, and oaks, and by the time it left the forest five miles later it carried a river’s ambitions.

But in the center of the forest it was a watery dream, about ten feet wide and ten inches deep. Fallen logs made bridges for chipmunks, foxes, and children looking for secrets.

Occasional shafts of sunlight revealed freshwater muscles in the silt, crayfish picking over pebbles, water beetles dancing on the surface, and young trout darting among roots, branches, and softly bubbling falls.

The stream was full of life, and full of lessons for those who knew how to see them.

And regarding it silently on the bank stood the master and the student.

The master and the student had arrived at the stream after walking the forest path for nearly two hours.

Every step of the way, the student spoke anxiously of the impending choices that filled his mind with confusion.

Should he travel?

If so, where?

Should he continue his studies?

If so, in what field of knowledge?

Should he learn a new trade, or perhaps join the family business?

Should he save his money, or spend freely and enjoy life to its fullest?

And on, and on, and on. And every step of the way the master only listened.

When they reached the stream the student fell silent.

They stood side by side, watching the water.

Then, pointing to a fallen twig, the master asked, “If you throw that stick into the stream, where will it go?”

The student answered, “It will go downstream, of course.”

But the master shook his head. “No,” he said, “I want you to tell me exactly where it will go.”

The student crouched down on the bank and observed the water carefully.

He noted the paths of leaves, the surge of bubbles, and the sway and drift of weeds growing on the bottom, until he was sure.

“Well,” he said, “If I throw the stick to land at that spot there, it will follow the current between those two rocks, rush over that fall, then swirl in that eddy for a moment, then pass under this branch, and then move off under that fallen log over there.”

The student smiled, supremely confident.

“All right,” the master said. “Throw the stick.”

And the student did.

And it traveled on a course entirely different from the one he had predicted.

They watched the stick drift out of sight. The student shuffled his feet and looked at the ground, but finally met the master’s eyes.

“The important thing,” said the master,” is to throw the stick!”

We are here today because  BRIDE and GROOM have decided to throw the stick.

In a world of endless choices, unpredictable outcomes, and no guarantees, they are doing the finest thing two people can do: making a commitment before friends and family to devote their lives to each other.

We call this a wedding.

It comes from an old Germanic word meaning “a pledge.”

And this is worth remembering as we consider what this day is all about.

We make few pledges in our modern lives.

But today we celebrate with BRIDE and GROOM as they make theirs: a pledge to and for each other, not as individuals, but as two that are choosing to become one.

**Opening Words and Introduction 15**

Hello and welcome.

Today we are here to witness the act of love.

Love is the magic that has brought BRIDE and GROOM together and through that magic, we are joining them today.

But what do we mean by love?

When we love, we see things other people do not see.

We see beneath the surface, to the qualities, which make our beloved special and unique.

To see with loving eyes, is to know inner beauty. And to be loved is to be seen, and known, as we are known to no other.

One who loves us, gives us a unique gift: a piece of ourselves, but a piece that only they could give us.

We who love, can look at each other’s life and say, “I touched his life,” or, “I touched her life,” just as an artist might say, “I touched this canvas.”

“Those brushstrokes in the corner of this magnificent mural, those are mine.

I was a part of this life, and it is a part of me.”

Marriage is to belong to each other through a unique and diverse collaboration, like two threads crossing in different directions, yet weaving one tapestry together.

The secret of love and marriage is to be in love and in trust, to know in your hearts that you want only the best for each other.

It takes dedication, to stay open to one another, to learn and grow, even when it is difficult to do so.

And it takes faith, to go forward together without knowing what the future holds for you both.

The true art of married life is an inner spiritual journey.

It is a mutual enrichment, a give and take between two personalities, a mingling of two endowments, which diminishes neither, but enhances both.

It is, ultimately, the emergence of the Highest Selves of each person.

Marriage is a supreme sharing of experience, and an adventure in the most intimate of human relationships.

It is the joyous union of two people whose comradeship and mutual understanding have flowered in romance.

Today BRIDE and GROOM proclaim their love and commitment to the world, and we gather here to rejoice, with and for them, in the new life they now undertake together.

**Opening Words and Introduction 17**

Hello & welcome.

We are here to witness the creation of a marriage.

Marriage is the most intimate of all relationships.

It is the ultimate commitment to love, share, trust and grow with another person.

It is the beginning of a whole new life.

By entering into this marriage BRIDE and GROOM are stating publicly, the feelings and commitments they have held privately between them.

They are proclaiming their love for, their trust in and their loyalty to the one they cherish above all others.

Marriage has been described as living in love with your best friend.

Love is one of the few constants in the universe.

It is reality, affinity and communication.

Only love is capable of joining living beings by their deepest essence, uniting, completing and fulfilling them.

Marriage is a symbol of the commitment to create a lifelong partnership based on love.

**Opening Words and Introduction 17**

Today, before this company, BRIDE and GROOM will declare their intention to join their lives together, to intertwine them in the partnership of marriage for all of the seasons of their lives.

This is the beginning of the journey they now undertake together for their mutual growth in character, in mind, and in spirit.

Marriage doesn’t stay still.

Tomorrow will be different from today, and so marriages too change from day to day, year to year.

Marriage is an ever changing, ever-growing relationship moving the couple toward greater contentment within themselves, with each other, and all those whose lives they touch.

A good marriage makes room for the participants to spread their wings and soar toward their own self-realization.

Marital love is like the seasons of our hearts. BRIDE and GROOM are in the springtime of their love.

It is as tender as the green shoots that in the springtime push their heads through the earth and take nourishment from the morning sun.

With tending and care their love will grow dramatically; it will flower and bear fruit and grow ever stronger in the heat of summer.

Together they will harvest the mature fruit of their union in the warm days of autumn and enjoy the contentment of their labors.

And with the onset of the quiet days of winter when words are no longer necessary, the love that they have cultivated and harvested with such care will sustain them for always.

Someone once said to me – “Man plans, and God laughs.”

I think about life that way.

We make plans and they don’t necessarily turn out the way we envisioned, but somehow life happens, and shapes and molds us to be better than we are.

Marriage is the single most important relationship that challenges us to be always better.

It molds and strengthens our character.

**Opening Words and Introduction 18**

We are here on this magnificent and beautiful day to celebrate one of life’s greatest moments—we are all present to give recognition to the worth and beauty of love—and to publicly witness the marriage bond that BRIDE and GROOM have been creating inwardly.

Their love and intention has created this marriage and we are gathered here today to join in the celebration and acknowledgment of that bonding.

Aware that there is one Presence and Power, and that we are each part of that Divine unity, we join in blessing BRIDE and GROOM as they bring their hands together in Namaste.

Namaste is a beautiful greeting used widely in the East.

As BRIDE and GROOM join their hands in Namaste, and gaze into each other’s eyes, they will repeat after me, the meaning of this greeting as a symbol of their love and commitment to each other:

Namaste

I honor the place in you,

Where the entire universe resides,

I honor the place in you,

of love, of light, of peace.

I honor the place within you, where

If you are in that place in you,

And I am in that place in me,

There is only one of us.

**Opening Words and Introduction 19**

Welcome to all of you, who have come to share in this important moment in the lives of  BRIDE and GROOM.

I ask you to join together in celebrating, acknowledging, and honoring this day and the vows that they will be making.

By your presence, you witness and affirm the truth of their love and commitment to each other.

No one gets married in a vacuum.

Each person lives in the context of their culture and community, and most importantly, within a special network of family members and close friends who make up what we might call their “tribe.”

For BRIDE and GROOM, you are these people.

By birth or good fortune, you have had a significant place in sharing, affirming and shaping their lives, and they yours.

Your cherished connections endure, despite the distances that separate you, your busy lives, and all the changes that life takes you through.

Their wedding has brought all of you to one place – an event in itself – and has made the tribes suddenly visible.

Today the two tribes are about to become one.

The Bride’s tribe will take the Groom into their hearts and the Groom’s tribe will take the Bride into theirs.

Through the joining of the couple, so are their tribes joined.

This is a wonderful thing for you, since you may never have a better opportunity to develop connections with so many good people.

You’ll be sharing the evening with some of the best people around, hand picked by the happy couple.

This occasion also provides an opportunity to stop and appreciate the love and friendship you experience in your own lives.

Take a moment to recall the special people who make up your tribe. Think of them with appreciation and gratitude.

**Opening Words and Introduction 20**

We are gathered here today to celebrate one of life’s greatest moments, the joining of two hearts.

In this ceremony today we will witness the joining of BRIDE and GROOM in marriage.

Today we have come together to witness the joining of these two lives.

For them, out of the routine of ordinary life, the extraordinary has happened.

They met each other, fell in love and are finalizing it with their wedding today.

**Opening Words and Introduction 21**

Out of affection and honor for BRIDE and GROOM, we are here today, before God, to witness their vows, which will unite them in marriage.

To this moment they bring the fullness of their hearts as a treasure to share with one another.

They bring the spark and spirit which is uniquely their own, and out of which has grown for some time, and will continue to grow, deepen, and strengthen, the precious reality of their life together.

We share joy with them this special day in their lives.

This day they affirm and declare each other as life partners in a celebration of love, which will bring empowerment to their life’s path together.

Let us all give our blessing and love to  BRIDE and GROOM during this ceremony as they pledge their love to one another.

May the wisdom and spirit of all-giving and all-understanding love pervade the words spoken and the love given here today, that these vows offered will remain strong and true in the presence of love all the days of their lives.

May all of us present feel the strength and depth BRIDE and GROOM’s love and experience a rebirth of the power of love in our own lives.

**Opening Words and Introduction 22**

Good evening.

It is truly a blessing from heaven for two people to find one another and to love so deeply that they embrace the holy bond of marriage.

That is why we are all here today, to witness and celebrate Bride and Groom’s commitment to their union.

On behalf of them, I welcome you all.

**Opening Words and Introduction 23**

Good afternoon.

We gather here today to witness and celebrate an act of deep love.

Bride and Groom, in their devotion, respect, and love for each other wish to unite in the holy bond of marriage, and to dedicate themselves to each other’s happiness and well-being as life mates and partners.

On behalf of them, I welcome you all.

**Opening Words and Introduction 24**

Although this is their day, it is also a tribute to all of you.

For knowing you and interacting with you has helped to make our Bride and Groom who they needed to be to find each other.

They would like to thank you all for that.

All of you are the threads of which have woven the tapestry of their lives.

Each one of you is an important piece in the story it tells.

It is the fabric that they wrap around themselves and take comfort in when the world seems cold.

And on days like today when everything is right in their world, that tapestry is proudly spread out and displayed for everyone to see, with all the glorious colors and textures that your diversity adds.

You all hold a place in their hearts reserved for those that they have chosen to call ‘Family’ and “Friends” and they are deeply grateful for each and every one of you here today

**Opening Words and Introduction 25**

Out of affection and honor for BRIDE and GROOM, we are here today, before God, to witness their vows, which will unite them in marriage.

To this moment they bring the fullness of their hearts as a treasure to share with one another.

They bring the spark and spirit which is uniquely their own, and out of which has grown for some time, and will continue to grow, deepen, and strengthen, the precious reality of their life together.

We share joy with them this special day in their lives.

This day they affirm and declare each other as life partners in a celebration of love, which will bring empowerment to their life’s path together.

Let us all give our blessing and love to BRIDE and GROOM during this ceremony as they pledge their love to one another.

May the wisdom and spirit of all-giving and all-understanding Love pervade the words spoken and the love given here today, that these vows offered will remain strong and true in the presence of love all the days of their lives.

May all of us present feel the strength and depth of BRIDE and GROOM’s love and experience a rebirth of the power of love in our own lives.

To make this relationship work, therefore, takes more than love.

It takes trust, to know in your hearts that you want only the best for each other.

It takes dedication, to stay open to one another, to learn and grow, even when it is difficult to do so.

And it takes faith, to go forward together without knowing what the future holds for you both.

While love is our natural state of being, these other qualities are not as easy to come by.

They are not a destination, but a journey.

The true art of married life is an inner spiritual journey.

It is a mutual enrichment, a give and take between two personalities, a mingling of two endowments, which diminishes neither, but enhances both.

**Opening Words and Introduction 26**

If it were possible to begin this ceremony by gathering together all the wishes of happiness for BRIDE and GROOM from all present here . . . if we could gather together those precious wishes of affection and our very fondest hopes and turn them into music, we would be listening now to a most inspiring anthem, composed of the most harmonious notes possible to produce.

Even though this is not possible, just speaking of it should assure BRIDE and GROOM that our hearts are attuned to theirs in these moments so meaningful to all of us.

For what greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined together to strengthen each other in all labor, to minister to each other in all sorrow, to share with each other in all gladness.

Marriage is an act of faith and a personal commitment as well as a moral and physical union between the parties.

Marriage has been described as the best and most important relationship that can exist between two human beings; the construction of their love and trust into a single growing energy of spiritual life.

It is a moral commitment that requires and deserves daily attention since no earthly happiness exceeds that of a reciprocal satisfaction in the conjugal state.

Marriage should be a life-long consecration to the ideal of loving kindness, backed with the will to make it last.

**Opening Words and Introduction 27**

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony.

The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee.

It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people.

The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity and, when it is God’s will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord.

Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, bit reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

Into this holy union BRIDE and GROOM now come to be joined.

If any of you can show just cause why they may not lawfully be married, speak now, or else for every hold your peace.

I require and charge you both, here in the presence of God, that if either of you know any reason shy you may not be united in marriage lawfully, and in accordance with God’s Word, you do now confess it.

**Opening Words and Introduction 28**

Before God we have come together today, for marriage is one of the most sacred of His wishes, and now, through me, He joins you together in one of the holiest of bonds.

**Opening Words and Introduction 29**

Dear family and friends we have gathered here today to joyfully acknowledge the wedding of BRIDE and GROOM.

They have requested your presence on this memorable occasion in order that you might share with them the pledging of their everlasting love on this day of commitment. Let us pray in silence as we wish them all the happiness in their new life together.

**Opening Words and Introduction 30**

We have gathered here today, in the presence of family and friends to join BRIDE and GROOM in Matrimony.

**Opening Words and Introduction 31**

BRIDE, GROOM and their families extend a warm welcome to all of you.

They are elated that you could be here today for this joyous marriage celebration.

We have come together this day to uphold you, BRIDE, and you, GROOM, as you exchange your vows of marriage.

We celebrate with you the love you have discovered in each other, and we support your decision to continue your life’s journeys together as husband and wife.

BRIDE and GROOM came together from different backgrounds and experiences.

Through their marriage they do not leave those things behind, but instead form a new family that will broaden the circle of love and understanding in the world.

Whatever source of spiritual guidance you follow, I’m sure you will agree that as inhabitants of Planet Earth, we are one family.

With that in mind, BRIDE and GROOM have asked me honor you – their immediate and extended families – by combining both of their individual spiritual traditions into this ceremony.

The principles and sentiments expressed today will be very familiar to you all.

**Opening Words and Introduction 32**

Marriage is a supreme sharing of experience, and an adventure in the most intimate of human relationships.

It is the joyous union of two people whose comradeship and mutual understanding have flowered in love.

Today BRIDE and GROOM proclaim their love and commitment to the world, and we gather here to rejoice with and for them, in the new life they now undertake together.

The joy we feel now is a solemn joy, because the act of marriage has many consequences, both social and personal.

Marriage requires “love”, a word we often use with vagueness and sentimentality.

We may assume that love is some rare and mystical event, when in fact it is our natural state of being.

So what do we mean by love?

When we love, we see things other people do not see.

We see beneath the surface, to the qualities that make our beloved special and unique.

To see with loving eyes, is to know inner beauty.

To be loved is to be seen, and known, as we are known to no other. One, who loves us, gives us a unique gift: a piece of ourselves, but a piece that only they could give us.

We, who love, can look at each other’s life and say, “I touched his life, ” or, “I touched her life, ” just as an artist might say, “I touched this canvas.”

Marriage is to belong to each other through a unique and diverse collaboration, like two threads crossing in different directions, yet weaving one tapestry together.

The secret of love and marriage is similar to that of religion itself.

It is the emergence of the larger self.

It is the finding of one’s life by losing it.

Such is the privilege of husband and wife – to be each himself, herself and yet another – to face the world strong, with the courage of two.

To make this relationship work, therefore, takes more than love.

It takes trust, to know in your hearts that you want only the best for each other.

It takes dedication, to stay open to one another, to learn and grow, even when it is difficult to do so.

And it takes faith, to go forward together without knowing what the future holds for you both.

While love is our natural state of being, these other qualities are not as easy to come by.

They are not a destination, but a journey.

The true art of married life is an inner spiritual journey.

It is a mutual enrichment, a give and take between two personalities, a mingling of two endowments, which diminishes neither, but enhances both.

**Opening Words and Introduction 33**

We are gathered here today to unite BRIDE and GROOM in marriage.

This celebration is but an outward sign of an inward union of heart, mind and spirit.

This is a celebration of the joining of two souls already attuned to each other.

When such a true bond already exists between a man and a woman, it is fitting that an outer acknowledgment be made.

We are here to bear witness to the entry into the closer relationship as husband and wife of these beloved friends who are already one in spirit.

**Opening Words and Introduction 34**

Dear family and friends, we have gathered here today, together in the sight of God, to witness and celebrate the marriage of BRIDE and GROOM.

They have requested your presence on this memorable occasion in order that you might share with them the pledging of their everlasting love on this day of commitment.

Mutual love is one of the richest experiences and most precious gifts we know.

Marriage is both a threshold and a continuing process in that experience.

The relationship must continue to grow with care, nurture, and an unending awareness of each other’s needs and feelings.

It requires a solemn commitment, which is to be entered into reverently, but also with joy and celebration. In this we now share.

BRIDE and GROOM, I charge you with the responsibility to keep alive; to grow, to change, to maintain the capacity for wonder, for spontaneity, for humor; to remain pliable, warm and sensitive.

I charge you to give fully; to show your real feelings, to save time for each other, no matter what demands are made upon your day.

I charge you to see the meaning of life through the changing prism of your love; to nurture each other to fullness and wholeness, and in learning to love each other more deeply, learn to love the creation in which the mystery of your love has happened.

**Opening Words and Introduction 35**

We come together not to mark the start of a relationship, but to recognize a bond that already exists.

This marriage is one expression of the many varieties of love. Love is one, though its expressions are infinite.

It is fitting to speak briefly about love.

We live in a world of joy and fear and search for meaning and strength in the seeming disorder.

We discover the truest guideline to our quest when we realize love in all its magnitudes.

Love is the eternal force of life.

Love is the force that allows us to face fear and uncertainty with courage.

For the giving of our self in love is difficult, for you must learn to give of your love without total submission of yourself.

Therefore, in your giving, give your joy, your sadness, your interest, your understanding, your knowledge – all expressions that make up life.

But in this giving, remember to preserve yourself – your integrity, your individuality.

This is the challenge of love within marriage.

Although you will be sharing one life, never forget, you are two separate people.

Cherish and affirm your differences.

Love each other.

Keep your commitment primary.

Together you will laugh and cry, be sick and well, be happy and angry, share and grow.

Grow, sometimes together, sometimes separately.

But never remain stagnant. Love and life are always changing, always new.

If you will insure a healthy lasting marriage, always, always value each other.

Although you will disagree, remember to respect each other’s feelings, needs and wants.

So it is our hope for you both that in all areas of your life together you will weave a durable fabric of mutual consolation and support and of help in time of trouble.

May each of you achieve the ability to give of yourselves freely so that you will each live better life and become greater persons.

**Opening Words and Introduction 36**

BRIDE and GROOM, the relationship that you have nourished together stands for love that will blossom and grow with each passing day.

Before you knew love, you were friends, and it was from this seed of friendship that is now your destiny.

Marriage is the clasping of hands, the blending of hearts, the union of two lives as one.

Marriage is caring as much about the welfare and happiness of your marriage partner as your own.

It is not total absorption into each other. It is looking outward in the same direction together.

Marriage makes burdens lighter because you divide them.

It makes joys more intense because you share them.

It makes you stronger, so that you can be involved with life in ways you dare not risk alone.

To make your relationship work will take love.

This is the core of your marriage and why you are here today.

It will take trust, to know in your hearts that you truly want the best for each other.

It will take dedication, to stay open and honest with one another – and to learn and grow together.

It will take faith, to go forward together without knowing exactly what the future brings.

And it will take commitment, to hold true to the journey you both promised today to share together.

An intimate and secure relationship is not based on promises, but rather on trust, respect, faithfulness and the ability to forgive.

A lasting marriage is based on all of these, bound together by love.

**Opening Words and Introduction 37**

We must give ourselves in love, but we must not give ourselves away.

As Saint Exupery said, “Love does not consist in gazing into each other’s eyes, but in looking together in the same direction.”

That is why love must always say no to live in a closed world with just the perfume of the beloved and no other essences from nature or humanity.

So it is on this summer eve, let us rejoice yet know that we are here not just to observe but also to participate in this marriage ceremony.

May we all remember that the path of love is meant to be walked together with God and with all of humanity.

No persons in a love relationship can have meaning apart from their family, their friends and their community.

Who gives their blessing to this marriage, and in the giving who says an enthusiastic “Yes!” to this new relationship?

**Opening Words and Introduction 38**

A marriage between mature people is not an escape but a commitment shared by two individuals that becomes part of their commitment to themselves and society.

Yet to love is also to accept the mystery of the loved one, and to refuse to violate that mystery.

**Opening Words and Introduction 39**

Dear friends, we are gathered to celebrate a historic and extraordinary event.

At the invitation of BRIDE and GROOM, we are here to see for ourselves their love and commitment, to witness their claim to their civil rights, to surround them with prayer and support, and to share in their joy.

**Opening Words and Introduction 40**

We welcome all of you here today as we have gathered together in the presence of God and these witnesses to join GROOM and BRIDE in holy matrimony.

Marriage is a gift, a gift from God, given to us so that we might experience the joys of unconditional love with a lifelong partner.

God designed marriage to be an intimate relationship between a man and a woman—mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Just as the two of you make vows to one another today, God also made vows to you and me that show how much He loves and cares for each one of us.

Listen to these vows God made that are recorded for us in His Word: “I will betroth you to myself forever in lawful wedlock with unfailing devotion and love; I will commit myself to you, to have and to hold, and you shall know the Lord.”

GROOM and BRIDE because your deep love for each other comes from God above, this is a sacred moment, and it is with great reverence that I now ask you to declare your intent.

**Renewal of Vows Opening Words and Introduction 41**

Friends, we are gathered here at this hour to celebrate the marriage of these two individuals.

We are here to re-affirm BRIDE and GROOM in marriage, to rejoice with them in the making of this important commitment.

The essence of this commitment is the taking of another person in his or her entirety, as lover, companion and friend.

It is a decision which was not entered into lightly, but rather undertaken with great consideration and respect for both the other person and oneself.

Love is one of the highest experiences that we human beings can have and it can add depth of meaning to our lives.

The day-to-day companionship, the pleasure of doing things together or in exchanging individual experiences, is a continuous and central part of what two people who love each other can share.

What marriage is about is what life is about – growth.

The relationship between two people must keep growing and changing, forming a constant adventure and development which will not be without conflict.

If differences are faced openly, the possibility of learning how to convert problems into opportunities will not be lost and the marriage will prosper.

A marriage that lasts is one which is continually developing and in which each person is individually growing while growing in understanding of the others.

Deep knowledge of another is not something that can be achieved in a short time and real understanding of the other can develop fully only after years of intimacy.

This wonderful knowledge of another person grows out of caring enough to want to truly understand what the other is feeling.

Thus, it is possible to share not only joys and successes but also the burden of sorrows and failures. To be known in this way is a priceless thing.

Such understanding and acceptance makes it easier to live with our problems, failings and worries.

To give ourselves in love is not to give ourselves away.

A good and balanced relationship is one in which neither person is overpowered or absorbed by the other.

It is out of the tension between separateness and union, that love, whose incredible strength is equal only to its incredible fragility, is born and reborn.

**Renewal of Vows Opening Words and Introduction 42**

Hello and welcome.

As these two people have come together before, pledging everlasting love, so we are gathered together today to once again join this woman and this man in holy matrimony.

But now they wish to extend that joy in a new affirmation, based not upon what they hope the future years will bring, but on what the past has already brought them and what they know of their future together.

Additionally, as they honor one another in memory of the years already shared, the family now grown, and the joys and hardships together endured, they wish to pledge their love anew. This pledge represents not only what will be, but also honors what has already been.

When a couple first decides to marry, it is an act of faith; faith that the new spouse will be as wonderful as his or her behavior has led each of them to believe.

But we all know that sometimes married life can reveal hidden aspects to your spouse’s personality.

It then becomes a test of love and endurance to maintain a marriage.

BRIDE and GROOM have come through their challenge wiser, more mature and with their love intact.