



New Words for Weddings

Volume 1

By

Melanie James

www.newwordsforweddings.com



Introduction

I love weddings and I think they should be memorable and special. Incorporating special words into a wedding ceremony is one way of achieving this.

In this collection, *New Words for Weddings (Volume 1)*, I've brought together words in the form of prose, verse and poetry that I have written to celebrate the feelings associated with weddings, marriage and married love.

I've also written guidelines and advice on how and where you can incorporate these words. At the conclusion of the book there is a sample complete wedding ceremony.

When readings are included in a ceremony, they help capture the moment. They help change the tempo of proceedings and give pause for reflecting on the wonder and possibilities of a new marriage.

There are no right or wrong words for a wedding. The words that are right for your ceremony are those that ring with meaning for you, your partner and your guests.

In our world, there are thousands of pieces written by a myriad of writers through the ages from which to choose.

My motivation for publishing *New Words for Weddings (Volume 1)* was seeing how many of the traditional wedding poems and readings used in civil marriage ceremonies, whilst beautiful, were becoming tired from overuse.

Many of the writings from centuries of old are too obscure for many of today's couples or don't reflect modern thinking about a married relationship.

I believe that marriage is a celebration of a new loving bond that should not be marred by the guests inwardly groaning at yet another rendition of the *Apache Wedding Prayer* or *The Prophet*.

I've written my words from the heart, inspired by my own beliefs and the joy of my own wedding and married life.

You may find some of the words just right for inclusion in your wedding ceremony. I trust that all the pieces in the collection will find some resonance with readers, highlighting their own experiences of marriage and weddings.

If my words can help you speak the joy of your marriage, I will have achieved my goal.

Feedback on what you think of the poems, or how they worked in your ceremony is very welcome – please email on mail@melaniejames.com.au

About Melanie James

Melanie James is an authorised marriage celebrant. She lives in the village of Branxton, Hunter Valley, NSW, Australia with her husband, Stephen (married 1987) and two children (Alexandra, born 1993 and Patrick, born 1996).

Melanie has been writing about love and life since her early teens. For the past two decades she has worked in communications and marketing roles and has received national and state awards for her achievements.

She completed an honours degree in communications (UTS) in 1993 during which she majored in creative writing and textual, political and social studies. Melanie completed her masters degree in journalism (UTS) in 1998.

Melanie has been Highly Commended in the Australian/Vogel Award for novel writing. She has had several short pieces of creative writing published in anthologies and has had numerous feature articles published, including in The Sydney Morning Herald The Australian and various magazines.

Melanie James is a Justice of the Peace. Melanie's marriage celebrant website is www.hunterweddingcelebrant.com.au

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On Marriage

The public commitment of two people in love to live together as husband and wife never fails to move me. The declaration of love and commitment is a powerful force in this life.

This may be the reason why many people seem almost embarrassed by it are sometimes tempted to insist a short wedding ceremony.

I've written words that aim to help you embrace these moments – for they are pivotal moments in life. You'll never be at this point with this person in front of these guests again, so make it memorable and special.

Words on marriage itself are great for opening and closing wedding ceremonies.

They can set the tone for the wedding and be easily incorporated into the introduction by your celebrant. For example:

Welcome to the marriage of Rachel and Peter. To commence the ceremony, the bride and groom have selected a reading called *Tree of Life* which reflects how they feel as they approach their marriage. (Celebrant then reads *Tree of Life*)

These pieces in this section are also crafted so that wedding party members or other wedding guests could be included in the ceremony. An older family member may like to read a piece like *Have No Illusions* or *Small Things* that speaks of advice to the younger wedded couple. The celebrant could incorporate this as follows:

I'd now like to ask the bride's mother, Joan, to come forward. Joan would like to read *Have No Illusions* by Melanie James. (Joan comes forward and reads the verse)

Another way to incorporate readings is to have your bridesmaids and groomsmen read a selection of works in turn. This would be introduced by the celebrant:

We will now listen to the bridal party members read some words written by Melanie James which have been chosen by Rachel and Peter.

The first reader would step forward, addressing the wedding couple and the wider audience, and say:

The first reading you have chosen is *Vessel of Love*. (First reader completes this reading and the second reader steps forward)

The second reading you have chosen is *Taste of Marriage*. (Second reader completes this reading and the final reader steps forward)

The final reading you have chosen is *Just Kiss*. (Final reader completes the reading.)

The celebrant could then proceed to complete the ceremony with the marriage declaration.

You of course are not limited to this section for openings and closings. Your wedding ceremony is your own and you should incorporate whatever words you think help express what you want to convey to each other and the wider world.

I have written pieces to help enhance the joy of your own very special day. Enjoy it.

The Taste of Marriage I

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

The taste of marriage is fruit
- let's eat
The sound of marriage is music
- let's listen
The look of marriage is light
- let's play
The scent of marriage is sweet
- let's breathe
The touch of marriage is love
- let's love.

The Taste of Marriage II

(read by celebrant or guest)

The taste of marriage is fruit
- let them eat
The sound of marriage is music
- let them listen
The look of marriage is light
- let them play
The scent of marriage is sweet
- let them breathe
The touch of marriage is love
- let them love.

Marriage

(read by celebrant or guest)

Marriage is an invisible,
visible bond;
We see love flowing
between two people;
Enveloping not just those two
but all in their midst;
Creating an aura
of positive energy;
Providing an infinite
Source of soul nourishment.

Vessel of love

(read by celebrant or guest)

From here you are one, but two;
Like decanted wine you've poured
Your souls into one vessel -
Tall and generous to hold this great love;
Blended and enhanced by the union;
Still able to be poured into separate glasses
When you need to travel solo;
But safe in knowing you are
Part of this vast vessel of love.

Tree of Life

(read by celebrant or guest)

Today is not the culmination but
Just the beginning of a growing love;
Today just plants the seed from which will grow
A new tree of life yet untried, untested.
Possibly a tall eucalyptus tree ,
Able to bend with the winds and storms;
Maybe a wattle, reliably bright –
Symbol of nation, of what's right and true.
Or maybe a new breed to us yet unknown,
Which finds meaning and purpose anew.
Today's wedding is just the tree's planting.
Our friendship and love provides the rich soil;
Our best wishes add the right warmth and light;
Your life until now has just tilled the earth,
Working together from here makes love grow.

Have no Illusions

(read by celebrant or guest)

Have no illusions –
Life is challenging
Have no illusions –
Marriage is not easy
Have no illusions –
Sometimes you'll question
Have no illusions –
You will find fault
Have no illusions –
This is marriage
Have no illusions –
You will work it out
Have no illusions –
Hardship brings strength
Have no illusions –
You are each other's rock
Have no illusions –
Love will endure.

Love Scent

(read by celebrant or guest)

In a perfumed garden
Today you were wed
And from this day forward
You'll watch love grow
And remember your happiness
Each time you breathe
The scent of flowers.

Horizons

(read by celebrant or guest)

Your marriage road stretches ahead,
Always to the far horizon.
You can set the course for what you have in view.
But beyond?
You'll need to plan for the unknown
But don't forget to enjoy the moment.
Look out through the mist
That obscures just where the sea and sky meet
And take time to wonder at earth's beauty-
And your love.

Marriage Ditty II

(read by celebrant or guest)

When you've wed the right one
It's said that marriage can be fun -
But you live it day and night
So you'd better get it right.

Kernel of Love

(read by celebrant or guest)

There will be some times
In your married life
When the joy of this day
May seem quite lost;
When each day drains you
With ever more demands;
When tensions rise up and
Almost consume you;
But know that today
A strong kernel forms -
The kernel of love
That is *married* love.
Transformed from that
Which was strong yesterday
To a love that will be
Your strength always.

What is Marriage?
(read by celebrant or guest)

Marriage is a gift from the universe;
A sacred melding of soul and body;
An overarching force for unity
But also liberty to be yourselves.
It is a declaration of status
Pairing you together spiritually,
Physically, legally, socially.
It is an exploration launching pad;
A retreat for weary body and mind;
A caring place to nurture your children;
A lifelong jewel of sensual adventure.

Small Things
(read by celebrant or guest)

Fatigue –
Can make you careless
Can make you cruel
Can make you not care how things are said.

Money –
Can make you mean
Can make you argue
Can make you forget to enjoy what you love in each other.

Small things –
Can make you laugh
Can mean everything
Can save the day
When too much fatigue and too little money
Start to rise above love.

Marriage for Life
(read by celebrant or guest)

Marriage is a commitment for life,
and in many ways is a commitment *to* life.
It offers opportunities for sharing
and knowing one another
that no other relationship can equal.

Sometimes,
as we travel through this life,
another person chooses to walk our path.
The path may not always be easily travelled,
but as Two instead of One,
the load is shared
and each can light the way for the other.

Just Kiss
(read by celebrant or guest)

You don't know what to say;
You're full of the hour's emotion.
You want to say thank you,
And how much it means;
You want to express joy,
Or write a song to capture just now,
Or a symphony
That shares it forever.
But it seems useless –
You're full of the hour's emotion
And the words are stuck somewhere inside.
So, just acknowledge the moment with a smile,
And then,
Just kiss.

(Dedicated to Craig and Lorrain)

This Day

When times get rough
You'll always have this day to draw on -
Its beauty
Its love
Its light

And in case it's hard to recall
You'll always have -
The photos
Friends' recollections
The scent of flowers.

That's why we have weddings –
So each couple has a point in life
When love declared
And shared
Was perfect -
An infinite well
To draw from for life.

On Getting Married

The words I've included in this section can be inserted into a ceremony as you wish. A great place for readings is prior to the celebrant commencing the portion of the ceremony where the couple is asked if they will take each other as husband/wife and vows are subsequently exchanged.

The other appropriate place for readings is just after the rings have been exchanged. Choose words that ring true for you.

Read the words of each piece and see how they feel. You'll see that some would work well anywhere in a ceremony and others would sit best at a particular point.

Some pieces are written from the viewpoint of a woman, others from that of a man. I have no problem if you want to change the "he's" to "she's" and vice versa – as long as it works for you. Many pieces could express feelings of either the bride or the groom, from both of you or those of friends and family.

Again, you or the celebrant could read your selections or you can choose to ask a wedding party member to read. For example, a bridesmaid may incorporate a reading like this:

This afternoon I'm reading some words that Rachel has chosen to express how she feels about marrying Peter called *Loving in Public*.
(Bridesmaid reads verse)

Or the celebrant could introduce the bridesmaid's reading, for example:

Rachel has asked that her bridesmaid, Linda, read some special words that express how she feels about marrying Peter today. (Linda comes forward and reads *Loving in Public*)

Get several people to read the pieces that you like – you're not restricted to just one reading at any given time. It's a great way to get your family and friends involved in the day.

Just make sure they practice reading the selected pieces aloud. Advise them to read clearly and more slowly than normal speaking pace. Many celebrants have a public address microphone system that can assist in all readers being heard.

Don't rush the ceremony, as it will all be over in a flash on the actual day. Don't feel pressured to keep it short by other people or think that people will be bored.

Aim for around 15 - 20 minutes. You'll need to allow another ten minutes or so for the signing of the register. Keep in mind that asking people to stand or to weather hot sunshine without shelter for more than 20 minutes in total will be uncomfortable for your guests. You'll need to take this into consideration when choosing your venue and the time of the ceremony.

Loving in Public

(read by or on behalf of the bride or /and groom)

When I walked in today
And you looked at me
I couldn't hold your gaze.
I thought, how can we
Share such private feelings?
How can we speak the words
That we only speak when alone?
And then I realised
That was the point;
That the point of a wedding is speaking
Private love before others;
In announcing our love to the world,
Of being proud of our decision
And our commitment to a life together.

Holding your hand

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride – he/she)

After you said "I do"
It was so hard to
Simply stand still,
Holding your hand.
I wanted to scream it
And shout it and run
Like a mad thing –
She loves me
She loves me
She loves me
And my heart and soul
Did just that –
Screamed my love
Through each limb,
Blew off the top of my head;
Made me grin
Like a Cheshire cat.
Makes it feel great
To stand here, still,
Just holding your hand.

Marrying you today honours me
(read by or on behalf of the bride or groom)

Marrying you today honours me -
Validates my life.
Touches my core.
Let's love flow like hot lava,
Surrounding,
Enveloping
With futures
And possibilities.

Marrying you today honours me -
Renews me,
Fresh like a deep bush pool;
Makes my soul sing.
Makes me deeply happy.
Feels so right.

Declaration

(read by or on behalf of the bride or groom)

To declare publicly today how much I love you
Affirmed my feeling of love for you

To listen to your public declaration of love for me
Staggered me, rocked my soul with its power

This act of declaration is the magic of the ceremony –
It binds our souls in love.

Aria

(read by or on behalf of the bride)

To have the person I love so deeply,
Declare before those gathered, love for me,
Makes null and void all previous benchmarks
For measuring my happiness and joy.
Tears that filled my eyes were love's overflow,
The surge of feeling unmapped before, found
A pathway of least resistance – as souls
First meet through the eyes and meld through the heart.
And today my soul sings an aria.

Love's Questions

(read by or on behalf of the bride or groom)

Love me?
So much to ask of you,
So much for you to give.
Love you?
So little to ask.
As easy as rolling
With you down a
Green grassy hill.
Love me?
I'm awed that you do.
That you've declared it today.
Love you?
I'm shouting from the rooftops
And writing it
In the heavens
With stars.

This Ring

(read by or on behalf of the bride or groom)

This ring on my finger
Tells the world that
Today you loved me
Enough to marry me.
This ring on my finger
Makes me the happiest person alive.
This ring on my finger
Will stay with me
And hold the energy
Of our wedding day.
This ring on my finger
Honours me and makes me
Proud to be your spouse. (wife/husband)

These Rings
(read by celebrant or guest)

These rings tell the world
that you have publicly declared your love for each other.
These rings hold in them forever
the happiness and joy felt by each of you today.
These rings will stay with you always
and symbolise your unity.
These rings honour you
and show your pride in your commitment to this marriage.

Proclamation
(read by celebrant or guest)

They are marrying each other today
Because they truly want to live
The words of this marriage ceremony.
They take each other for all time,
They will care and nurture each other;
Hold each other
Through good times and bad.
They will show through the way
They live together,
That they honour and cherish each other.
They want their lives to proclaim always
The love they speak before us today.

Drive
(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

We're driving down this highway
And suddenly we need to stop -
There's a bend and no way of knowing
What lies ahead.
But you place your hand over mine,
And we wind down the windows
And shout to the world -
We're in love!
We're getting married!
Then the world smiles back
And laughs with us,
As we speed around the bend.

Doubt

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

At first there were doubts –
Were you the right one?
Was I good enough?
Could we make it last?

And then doubt vanished –
How you felt so right
How two became one,
Entwined together.

There's no doubt today –
That we'll make it through;
Face life's challenges;
Grow stronger each year.

Here Comes the Bride

(read by celebrant or guest)

Here comes the bride
To marry the man she loves
To promise to love
As husband and wife;
To declare she is his, only.

Here comes the bride
So full of pride that this
Man stands before her;
Declaring his love for her,
She trembles inside.

Here comes the bride
Head swimming with love
And expectations;
Never thought she'd make it -
Ecstatic that she's here.

Signing my Love

(for a groom – can be read on his behalf as the bridal party make their way to the signing table)

I look at my mum and see tears of joy;
I look at my dad, shoulders set with pride;
My in-laws look on, smiling approval;
Friends nudge each other, exchanges knowing;
My aunt shakes her head just disbelieving
That life goes so fast - aren't they just babies?
Cousins know better, some with their own kids;
Their smiles familiar, changed with time's distance.
I look at my mate, he's happy for me -
Resigned to the change that has touched our lives.
They wait to witness the signing of love.
I'm glad they are here, they light the way through.
I take up the pen and sign on the page.
Grinning at my bride, I pass on the pen.
It's soon official – we're finally wed.

Couplets

(read by celebrant or guest)

They delight in each other
They love deep and true,
They're there for each other
Sharing life now anew.

They've made this commitment
Built on loving for life,
They'll stand through it all now
As husband and wife.

Fabric of Life

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

We wanted our wedding
To be a gathering of those people
Who our union would mean something to.
To be a gathering
Of just those people we thought so special,
That it would be impossible
To celebrate this most special day
Without them.

You are the fabric of our lives.
As we look around,
You make up our tapestry -
Woven with so many colours and scenes,
That the richness vibrates
With the depth of its meaning.

Love's Times

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

I look forward to quiet, lazy times with you.
Of sitting on ship decks and snoozing and reading;
Soft kisses
And long lie-ins and tranquil walks through rainforests.

I look forward to wild times with you.
Of schussing down ski-slopes and white water rafting;
Of screaming
At concerts, at games, on roller coasters.

I look forward to loving times with you.
Where we recapture the joy of today and set
Each other
Tingling with just a smile, or a touch.

I look forward to all times with you.
The quiet, the wild and the loving;
Just being
Together and loving you for all time.

Why you are here

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

You may be our friends
You may be our family
You may be strangers to each other,
But not to us.
You are all here witnesses.
You maybe mentors and guides;
You know your part
And why you're here with us;
You are all most welcome.
We honour you, truly.
You may have made us;
You may have shaped us;
You're being here to share our wedding
Means everything to us;
You've each had a role to play
In reaching this special moment
We have all shared today.

Celebrate and Let's Marry

(Suitable for reading on behalf of, of by the bride and groom)

It hasn't been smooth sailing getting here;
There were times we thought we wouldn't make it.
Obstacles seemed to go out of their way
To get in our path, or so it seemed then.
We questioned again if the decision
Was right for us both. Was the timing right?
Sometimes it appeared that we'd become lost;
But through it all we hung onto our love.
When we hit quicksand, love held us higher;
When stormy seas tossed us, love was life raft;
And when blackness fell, love shone as beacon.
Love helped us rise and face the dark moments,
To clear hurdles and find the right road.
So, there may never be a perfect time;
Things may never be as we would want them;
But life's too short to wait till that moment.
So, celebrate this love that's carried us,
Celebrate all we have in our lives, and let's marry.

Celebrate and Marry
(for reading by celebrant or guest)

It hasn't been smooth sailing getting here;
There were times they thought they wouldn't make it.
Obstacles seemed to go out of their way
To get in their path, or so it seemed then.
They questioned again if the decision
Was right for them both. Was the timing right?
Sometimes it appeared that they'd become lost;
But through it all they hung onto their love.
When they hit quicksand, love held them higher;
When stormy seas tossed, love was a life raft;
And when blackness fell, love shone as beacon.
Love helped them rise and face the dark moments,
To clear hurdles and find the right road.
So, there may never be a perfect time;
Things may never be as they would want them;
But life's too short to wait till that moment.
So, celebrate this love that's carried them,
As they marry now and proclaim their love.

Wedding Ditty I
(for the groom – good in a speech!)

Shower me with love
Bathe me in kisses
Thank the moon and stars above
Because she's now my missus.

New World
(read by celebrant or guest)

They say that the age
of great explorers is past.
I don't agree.
As each couple weds,
a new world emerges.
With no map to mark out
the scenic route
or places of interest;
With no indication
of where the challenges lie.
Yes, there are broad descriptions
of the terrain,
But they are just guides,
As no-one before you
Has explored your new world.

Love's Path

(read by celebrant or guest)

Today, as the sunlight
Whitened the countryside,
You married your true love.
The path here
Was sometimes rocky
The path ahead
Too, no doubt.
But as you walk
Together on life's road,
You carry always
The light of today's joy.

Love's carriage I

(by or on behalf of bride or groom)

Your love carried me here on a wave crest
Frothy with delight, built on deepest strength.
Rising from oceans ancient, your love lifts me;
Viewing horizons not dreamt of before;
Reaching an apex from which I can launch;
Knowing I am earthed by you, love's anchor;
Your love has carried me here to wed you;
Our love will carry both of us always.

Love's carriage II

(read by celebrant or guest)

Your love carried you here on a wave crest
Frothy with delight, built on deepest strength.
Rising from oceans ancient, your love lifts you;
Viewing horizons not dreamt of before;
Reaching an apex from which you can launch;
Knowing you are earthed, each other's anchor;
Your love has carried you here to marry;
Your love will carry both of you always.

Certain

(by or on behalf of the groom)

Nothing's for certain they say in this life
But I know for certain I want you, my wife
I knew it when you gave me that certain gaze
That certain smile, I want to share all my days
I certainly want to declare love for you
And hear you say for certain
That you'll marry me too.

Loving Each Day

(read by or on behalf of bride or groom)

There were times when I thought my heart would break;
When we were skirting the edges of love,
Testing each other and playing the games.
Sometimes I felt you were carving such deep
Cuts into my heart, would our love survive?
But then we halted, and realisation
That love had sprung up, around and through us
Filled the cracks wholly and smoothed out our souls.
Coated with colours of light and loving
We found we were strong, united in joy.
Once we were certain, our hearts saw freedom
To love each other; the wall fell, crumbling,
So we could commit to loving each day.

Fairytale

(read by or on behalf of the bride)

I was no princess in distress.
Didn't need a knight in shining armour.
Didn't need rescuing.
Or carrying off on a white horse.
I'd thought sharing my life
Would halve my life.
That when one became two
It would mean being less than whole.
How wrong can one be?
I was no princess,
But you made me feel like one.
Your armour of love protects us
Both from dragons.
I'm happy to ride with you
On that white horse forever.

Teamwork

(read by or on behalf of the groom)

I've kicked some goals in life
But nothing matches the exhilaration
Of scoring the best life partner
A man could have.
In life no one wins a game alone
And in marriage
I'm blessed in having
a game partner like you.
Courageous, strong
Clever and glorious –
Together we will conquer.

With my Body I Thee Worship

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

With my body
I thee worship
With my eyes
I'll convey love in hard times
With my ears
I'll listen to your fears
With my lips
I'll kiss away your concerns
With my hands
I'll catch you when falling
With my legs
I'll ford troubled waters
With my arms
I'll hold you when you're scared
With my body
I thee worship.

Take a Moment
(read by the celebrant or guest)

Let's take a moment,
A few seconds of quiet,
To drink in what today means to you.
You've rushed around with arrangements -
Choosing flowers, suits and cars;
Organising seating and music and bridesmaids,
Dress fittings and hen's nights,
Buck's shows and buttonholes,
Bouquets and shoes;
Are the parents happy?
Are the friends coming?
What will you do if it rains?
Will this hairstyle hold out in the breeze?
Will the photos turn out?
Well look, it's all done and you're getting married.
Let's take a moment, a few seconds of quiet;
To savour, to bed down in our hearts,
What today means to you.

On Being in Love

If you're like most people, you've undertaken an enormous amount of work and organisation to plan your wedding. On the actual wedding day, you might like to remember what the wedding is all about – love.

The words in this section are about how you feel when you're in love. They can set the scene for the wedding or be included in the latter parts of the ceremony. They can earth both the bride and groom and the guests in the love that has brought about this wedding.

Incorporate the words as you wish. One or both of the marrying couple can read the words as a way of expressing how they feel. Alternatively, ask your celebrant to read them on your behalf.

For example, your celebrant could say:

Rachel has asked that I read the verse by Melanie James entitled, *I Knew*, which she feels encapsulates the way she felt when Peter asked her to marry him. (Celebrant reads verse)

The groom may want to read a piece himself in response. The celebrant in this instance could say:

Peter has chosen to read the piece called, *Our Love*. (Peter reads verse)

Explore the words and see what works best for you. That is the beauty of civil ceremonies – apart from the bare minimum legal requirements, the ceremony can be just what you want it to be.

My only word of caution if you choose to read the words yourself during the ceremony is to make sure you practice. And practice reading your chosen piece aloud.

Unless you've read the words aloud several times before the ceremony, you'll find yourself so choked with the emotion of the moment, you'll find it difficult to say more than the first line. Practice won't take away the special meaning at the ceremony but it will help you to read fluently.

Our Love

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

Our love is too big to gift wrap
Can't be weighed in tonnes
Won't fit inside an airplane hangar
Can't be submerged in seas
Can't be contained by regulations
Won't disappear by magic
Won't be outshone by sunlight
Can't be tied down by ropes
Shan't go away 'cause you tell it
Won't be beaten by armies
Can't bury its head like an ostrich
Won't ever dry out like a desert.

I Knew

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

I knew
At the first look.
I knew
When we spoke.
I knew
When we touched,
By chance,
On purpose,
With purpose.
I knew
We were meant
For this day,
And all days.
I knew
It was love.

Love it All

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

I love watching you.
Love wanting you.
Love being with you.
Love going away,
And uniting once more.
Love stroking you hair,
Watching your eyelashes
Flutter as you dream.
Love seeing you dance.
Seeing you read.
Seeing you walk -
Down grocery aisles,
Through royal gardens,
Into my arms.
I love talking with you.
Travelling with you.
Love silences with you.
I love our laughter
I love it all.

Waves of Love

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

I am riding the waves of love
With you;
The turquoise gentleness,
The steely blue storms,
The three metre swells where we almost went over.
The calm of the leeward side,
Where we stood
With balmy breezes caressing our skin;
We watch the gold light of day's end
Transform
To velvet night;
Your arms around me keep me afloat,
And I revel in our love's buoyancy.

Lift-Off

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

Are my feet on the ground?
I feel like I'm floating

My tippy-toes barely touching the floor.

Your love's sent me soaring -
Am I still on this earth?

The heart rush you cause spins me into space.

Come fly with me?

Alphabet of Love

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

I will love you Always
You are simply Beautiful
My heart's racing, call in the Cavalry
You're the stuff of Dreams
You've showed me Ecstasy
You're my lover, my Friend
Watching our love Grow
I've never been so Happy
With you I'm Invincible
I never imagined such Joy
The fire within, you've Kindled
I love kissing your Lips
Kissing your cheek, back to your Mouth
Every experience with you is New
I want to scream our love over and Over
I never thought such love Possible
I love watching you in moments Quiet
The way our love flows is beyond Reason
I never knew it could be this Special
It's like we're each other's Teachers
Heading down love's road, Unswerving
Wanting each other with love Voracious
So moved that it's me you want to Wed
You play my body like a Xylophone
You know I'll always be Yours
Because my heart always goes Zoom. (or Zing!)

Bodysurf

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

Once I caught the wave with you
I knew it would take us to eternity
Rising up it drew us to the crest
Dazzling us with its potential and power
Aquamarine shimmers frame our love
Sounds roar in our ears as the swell
Thrusts us forward into the future
Pushes us upwards, higher and higher
Drawing all in front of us into our arc of love
Foaming salty sweet on our skins
Encrusting us with nature's elements
We journey ever forward, not wanting it to end
Unable to fight the force, nor wanting to
It washes us, tangled in each other,
on love's shore.

As I am

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

You love me as I am
Crazy bits and all.
You go along with schemes
And dreams hair brain.
You laugh at my unfunny jokes,
My inability to do irony,
My sarcasm falling flat.
You love my un-co efforts
To ride bikes and run.
You love it when I put things on
That don't go;
And you have to tell me
What would go better.
You eat my experimental cooking,
And my experimental love.
You comfort me
After bad dreams;
And tell me I don't snore,
When I do.
I think you must really love me.

Many loves

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

To say I really love you
Seems so inadequate
To describe how I feel about you.
There are so many loves
That I feel for you.
The love that almost hurts
When I see you working so hard
To make our home beautiful for us.
The love that heals deep wounds
Inflicted on me in the wider world
Outside ourselves.
The love that elevates me
And inspires me to achieve things
That self-doubt would prevent.
The love that envelops me
In caring warmth and makes it safe
To show my real self to you.
The love that floors me with its power
That vibrates with its passion
And sings its joy each day.

Seasons of Love

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

I love you on Summer nights when the balmy breeze
Makes us comfortable and lazy and we're serenaded
By cicada orchestras.
When love tastes like mango and fresh young Verdelho.

I love you on Autumn afternoons, long mountain strolls
Where the fiery colours of Claret Ash and Maple mirror
Heat between us.
When an early night seems like such a good idea.

I love you in Winter when we're sharing the chairlift
Up to top station and our skis track icy on morning snow.
Take in the view.
Then kiss cool mouths before racing to the bottom.

I love you on spring picnics in fresh grass and strolling through church markets
and watching footy finals. I love you more than the warm croissants
We feed each other at brunch. I love you always.

Door of Love

(read by or on behalf of the groom or bride)

I knocked on the door of love
And you answered;
You invited me into your heart,
You asked me to drink from your cup,
And eat honey from your fingers.
You sat me down and plumped a cushion
Under weary feet;
You rubbed the tension from my shoulders
And played sweet songs about love.
You told me tall tales and true
And made me laugh till I ached;
But you made the hurt go away.
You asked if I was okay.
You lit the fire;
You cradled me in such tenderness,
You cracked open my hard shell.
You saw inside my soul
And dived right in -
You revelled in sharing our love;
You showed me
That I was home.

Sample Ceremony I – Sharon Kadinsky and Timothy Golding

Example of a wedding ceremony incorporating the pieces from New Words for Weddings Volume 1. This ceremony is reasonably brief and traditional.

Introduction:

Celebrant:

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Melanie James and I welcome you all here today to witness the joining of Sharon Kadinsky and Timothy Golding in marriage.

Sharon and Timothy, you care deeply for one another and you see this wedding as the opportunity to declare before us all your love, and your intention to live together as husband and wife.

The joy of Sharon and Timothy's love touches us all, and we are privileged to be here today to celebrate their happiness.

Sharon and Timothy see this ceremony today as a stronger commitment to their relationship. They have called you together, their family and friends, to make this commitment clear to you and to call on your acknowledgement and support.

This ceremony gives public recognition to their love.

Love makes burdens lighter because you divide them; it makes joys more intense because you share them. It makes you stronger so you can reach out and live life in ways you would never dare to risk on your own.

Love is an experience that we share with all people throughout the world. Yet to everyone who falls in love it is the most unique and precious thing in the world.

Sharon and Timothy, you have chosen words written by Melanie James, called Proclamation, to help express the way you feel today as you commence your married life together.

They are marrying each other today
Because they truly want to live
The words of this marriage ceremony.
They take each other for all time,
They will care and nurture each other;
Hold each other
Through good times and bad.
They will show through the way
They live together,
That they honour and cherish each other.

They want their lives to proclaim always
The love they speak before us today.

Official statement:

Before we proceed further I am obliged to inform you that I am duly authorised by law to conduct marriages according to the law.

Before you are joined in marriage in my presence and in the presence of these witnesses, I am obliged to remind you of the solemn and binding nature of the relationship into which you are about to enter.

Marriage, according to law in Australia, is the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

Giving away of the bride:

A noted writer and marriage celebrant, Dally Messenger, said that one of the most understated but deepest relationships in human life is that between a caring father and a loving father.

He noted that one of the rare occasions that this relationship is acknowledged is at a wedding ceremony.

Peter, today, represents his family, but in this special gesture, he symbolises his own love for his daughter. So it is with great pleasure that that I now ask, who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Peter: I do.

Peter places Sharon's hand in Timothy's hand and then returns to the other guests.

The Asking

Sharon and Timothy before we proceed, I ask you whether you are both here today giving yourself freely to one another in marriage.

Sharon and Timothy: *We are.*

Celebrant to Timothy:

Timothy Golding, do you take Sharon Kadinsky to be your lawful wedded wife? Do you promise to love her, comfort her, honour and keep her, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, keep only unto her, so long as you both shall live?

Timothy: I do

Celebrant to Sharon:

Sharon Kadinsky, do you take Timothy Golding to be your lawful wedded husband? Do you promise to love him, comfort him, honour and keep him, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, keep only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

Sharon: I do

Celebrant:

I ask now that you face each other and hold hands as you take your vows.

Timothy, please repeat after me:

I call upon the persons here present to witness that I Timothy, take you, Sharon, to be my lawful wedded 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 for as long as we both shall live and hereto I pledge you my faithfulness.

Sharon, please repeat after me:

I call upon the persons here present to witness that I Sharon, take you, Timothy, to be my lawful wedded husband, 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 for as long as we both shall live, and hereto I pledge you my faithfulness.

Symbols of Unity – The Rings

Sharon and Timothy, you have exchanged vows declaring your commitment as husband and wife, I now ask you to exchange the wedding rings that are a symbol of your love and unity.

Sharon and Timothy stay in the same position, the celebrant will take the bride's ring from the best man and give it to the groom, who holds it over the tip of the bride's ring finger on the left hand, and repeats the words, phrase by phrase, after the celebrant.

The groom then slides the ring onto the bride's finger.

This is then repeated by the bride for the groom's ring.

Timothy:

Sharon, with this ring I wed you. Take it and wear it as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

Sharon:

Timothy, with this ring I wed you. Take it and wear it as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

Celebrant:

“These rings tell the world that you have publicly declared your love for each other.

These rings hold in them forever the happiness and joy felt by each of you today.

These rings will stay with you always and symbolise your unity.

These rings honour you and show your pride in your commitment to this marriage.”

*(words by Melanie James acknowledged in
service
booklet but not during the service)*

Celebrant:

I would now like to read a poem called, Vessel of Love:

From here you are one, but two;
Like decanted wine you've poured
Your souls into one vessel -
Tall and generous to hold this great love;
Blended and enhanced by the union;
Still able to be poured into separate glasses
When you need to fly solo;
But safe in knowing you are
Part of this vast vessel of love.

And so Timothy and Sharon have declared before us today their commitment to each other.

They have made special promises and have symbolised their union with the exchanging of rings.

By the power vested in me as an authorised marriage celebrant, I now declare Timothy and Sharon to be husband and wife.

Timothy, you may now kiss the bride.

Signing of the register - The register and marriage certificate are signed. Bride signs, then groom, then bridesmaid, then best man, then celebrant.

The celebrant will then present the couple with their marriage certificate.

Ladies and Gentleman, please congratulate the bride and groom, Mr and Mrs Golding.

This concludes the ceremony.

Sample Ceremony II – Rachel Edwards and Peter Bloom

Example of a wedding ceremony incorporating the pieces from New Words for Weddings Volume 1. This ceremony is quite long but it does provide an idea of how different members of the wedding party, and families and friends, can take part in a service

Celebrant:

Good afternoon everyone. We are here today to join Rachel and Peter in marriage.

Rachel and Peter, you care deeply for one another and you see this wedding as the opportunity to declare before us all your love and your intention to live together as husband and wife.

Rachel and Peter have chosen words written by Melanie James, to help express the way they feel today as they commence their married life.

The first reading they have chosen to lead into the ceremony is *Marriage For Life*:

*Marriage is a commitment for life,
and in many ways is a commitment to life.
It offers opportunities for sharing
and knowing one another
that no other relationship can equal.
Sometimes,
as we travel through this life,
another person chooses to walk our path.
The path may not always be easily travelled,
but as Two instead of One,
the load is shared,
and one can light the way for the other.*

Before we proceed further I am obliged to inform you that I am duly authorised by law to conduct marriages according to the law.

Before you are joined in marriage in my presence and in the presence of these witnesses, I am obliged to remind you of the solemn and binding nature of the relationship into which you are about to enter.

Marriage, according to law in Australia, is the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

Peter and Rachel will now read a passage called *Why You are Here*.

Peter and Rachel share the reading:

*You may be our friends
You may be our family
You may be strangers to each other,
But not to us.
You are all here witnesses.
You maybe mentors and guides;
You know your part
And why you're here with us;
You are all most welcome.
We honour you, truly.
You may have made us;
You may have shaped us;
You're being here to share our wedding
Means everything to us;
You've each had a role to play
In reaching this special moment
We have all shared today.*

Peter and Rachel, you have invited some family members to read some words that they themselves have chosen to help celebrate your wedding. I'd like to invite the Father of the Bride, Frank, to read *Tree of Life*.

Frank:

*Today is not the culmination but
Just the beginning of a growing love;
Today just plants the seed from which will grow
A new tree of life yet untried, untested.
Possibly a tall eucalyptus tree,
Able to bend with the winds and storms;
Maybe a wattle, reliably bright –
Symbol of nation, of what's right and true.
Or may be a new breed to us yet unknown
Which finds meaning and purpose anew.
Today's wedding is just the tree's planting.
Our friendship and love provide the rich soil,
Our best wishes add the right warmth and light;
Your life until now has just tilled the earth,
Working together from here makes love grow.*

Celebrant:

Thank you, Frank. Peter's sister, Teresa, has chosen to read *Door of Love*:

Teresa:

I would like to read this as Peter would read it to his bride:

*I knocked on the door of love
And you answered;
You invited me into your heart,
You asked me to drink from your cup,*

*And eat honey from your fingers.
You sat me down and plumped a cushion
Under weary feet,
You rubbed the tension from my shoulders
And played sweet songs about love.
You told me tall tales and true
And made me laugh till I ached;
But you made the hurt go away.
You asked if I was okay,
You lit the fire,
You cradled me in such tenderness
You cracked open my hard shell.
You saw inside my soul
And dived right in -
You revelled in sharing our love;
You showed me
That I was home.*

Celebrant:

Thank you Teresa.

Peter and Rachel, before we proceed, I ask you whether you are both here today giving yourself freely to one another in marriage.

Peter and Rachel: *We are.*

Celebrant:

Rachel, before you take your vows you have asked me to read *Marrying You Today Honours Me*:

*Marrying you today honours me -
Validates my life.
Touches my core.
Let's love flow like hot lava,
Surrounding,
Enveloping,
With futures
And possibilities.
Marrying you today honours me -
Renews me,
Fresh like a deep bush pool.
Makes my soul sing
Makes me deeply happy,
Feels so right.*

Peter, before you take your vows you have asked me to read *Loving in Public*:

*When I walked in today
And you looked at me
I couldn't hold your gaze.
I thought, how can we
Share such private feelings?*

*How can we speak the words
That we only speak when alone?
And then I realised
That was the point;
That the point of a wedding is speaking
private love before others;
In announcing our love to the world,
Of being proud of our decision
And our commitment to a life together.*

Celebrant to Peter:

Peter Bloom, do you take Rachel Edwards to be your lawful wedded wife? Do you promise to love her, comfort her, honour and keep her, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, keep only unto her, so long as you both shall live?

Peter: I do

Celebrant to Rachel:

Rachel Edwards, do you take Peter Bloom to be your lawful wedded husband? Do you promise to love him, comfort him, honour and keep him, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, keep only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

Rachel: I do

Celebrant:

I ask now that you face each other and hold hands as you take your vows.

Peter, please repeat after me:

I call upon the persons here present to witness that I Peter Andrew Bloom, take you, Rachel Alice Edwards, to be my lawful wedded 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 for as long as we both shall live.

Rachel, please repeat after me:

I call upon the persons here present to witness that I Rachel Alice Edwards, take you, Peter Andrew Bloom, to be my lawful wedded husband, 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 for as long as we both shall live.

Symbols of Unity

Peter and Rachel, you have exchanged vows declaring your commitment as husband and wife, I now ask you to exchange the wedding rings that are a symbol of your love and unity.

Peter:

Rachel, with this ring I wed you. Take it and wear it as a sign of my love and fidelity.

Rachel:

Peter, with this ring I wed you. Take it and wear it as a sign of my love and fidelity.

Celebrant:

You have chosen your next reading, *This Ring*:

*This ring on my finger
Tells the world that
Today you loved me
Enough to marry me.
This ring on my finger
Makes me the happiest person alive.
This ring on my finger
Will stay with me
And hold the energy
Of our wedding day.
This ring on my finger
Honours me and makes me
Proud to be your spouse.*

I'd now like to ask the Mother of the Bride, Joan, to read her chosen poem, *Have No Illusions*:

Joan:

*Have no illusions –
Life is challenging
Have no illusions –
Marriage is not easy
Have no illusions –
Sometimes you'll question
Have no illusions –
You will find fault
Have no illusions –
This is marriage
Have no illusions –
You will work it out
Have no illusions –
Hardship brings strength
Have no illusions –
You are each other's rock
Have no illusions –
Love will endure.*

And now Peter's best man, Robert, will read *New World*.

Robert:

They say that the age

*of great explorers is past.
I don't agree.
As each couple weds,
a new world emerges.
With no map to mark out
the scenic route
or places of interest;
With no indication
of where the challenges lie.
Oh, there are broad descriptions
of the terrain,
But they are just guides,
As no-one before you
Has explored your new world.*

We'll now close with *Love's Path*:

Celebrant:

*Today, as the sunlight
Whitened the countryside,
You married your true love.
The path here
Was sometimes rocky;
The path ahead
no doubt too.
But as you walk
Together on life's road,
You carry always
The light of today's joy.*

And so Peter and Rachel have declared before us today their commitment to each other.

They have made special promises and have symbolised their union with the exchanging of rings.

By the power vested in me as an authorised marriage celebrant, I now declare Peter and Rachel to be husband and wife.

Peter, you may now kiss the bride.

Signing of register.

Presentation of the married couple.

Ladies and Gentleman, please congratulate the bride and groom, Mr and Mrs Bloom.

* * * * *

Go to www.hunterweddingcelebrant.com.au for more sample ceremonies.

Dedication:

To my husband, Stephen, my love and inspiration.

To our children. Alexandra and Patrick, who were inspired by this project and contributed their own new words for weddings:

And, from the pens of babes:

Graffiti was bad but now it's all about love.
Hearts is the key for the future.
Love is all.

- Patrick James, age 8

Bones without love don't work and are sad.
Bones with love are bright and move.
You need love to move as well.

- Patrick James, age 8

Where you find darkness, love will find you light
When you feel scared, love will find you courage
And when alone, love will bring you together, forever,
But not forever, for eternity.
Forever, Eternity, Love will keep you.

- Alexandra James, age 11

Love. Not alone. Not darkness. Not scared. Together. Light. Courage. Eternity.
Together.

- Alexandra James, age 11

THE END