

We seek not rest but transformation.

We are dancing through each other as doorways.

We are ripples crossing and fusing, journeying and returning

from the core of the apple, the eye of the mandala,

the cave in the heart of the rose,

the circle without boundaries centered on silence.

Marge Piercy, "Circling"

"You and I" by Deanne Laura Kennedy

Relationships are never easy, and you and I have had our share of struggling and troubled times, but together we made it.

Together, we cared enough to face out problems; we loved enough not to let go.

And now,

what we have is even stronger because of all we've been through, all we struggled with.

I sometimes worry about the future, but with you by my side the future seems much brighter-- the present more precious, more meaningful..

We need the tears to appreciate the laughter,

we must share out problems to realize how much we truly need each other--

to give out love the chance to expand, to strengthen, to endure.

We deserve nothing less than a love that will remain through all aspects of our live.

Together, we will face all obstacles with confidence, because we already know our relationship can endure event he worst of times, as long as we love-- share-- and stay together.

Journey's End/ Sonnet 116

by William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediment. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O, not it is and ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark.
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's tool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But hears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error and upon me proved
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

"The Enchanting Hour" by Khalil Gibran

Will you content yourself with the
Affection of one who looks upon Love
As but an entertainer, and declines
To accept her as his master?

Will you accept a heart that loves,
But never yields? And burns, but
Never melts? Will you be at ease
With a Soul that quivers before the
Tempest, but never surrenders to it?

Will you accept one as a companion
Who makes not slaves, nor will become
One? Will you own me but not possess
Me, by taking my body and not my heart?

Then here is my hand-grasp it with
Your beautiful hand; and here is my
Body-embrace it with your loving
Arms; and here are my lips-bestow
Upon them a deep and dizzying kiss.

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"Rabbi Ben Ezra" by Robert Browning

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life,
For which the first was made.
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned".

Youth shows but half; trust God, see all,
Nor be afraid!

Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be.

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"I Love You" by Karen Hosey

I love your mind
for in it I have found the core
 of your being.
It is the well from which spring
 forth you wisdom, compassion,
 intelligence, and life.

I love your face
 for in it I see the sunshine of tomorrow.

It is the mirror that reflects the
 goodness of your heart.

I love your arms
 for in them I Find the strength and
 security I so desperately need.
They are the life line to my peace
 of mind.
 the cable to which I cling.

I love your hands
 for in them I find the talent and
 sensitivity that bring out my
 respect and admiration.

Your touch so gentle,
your caress so sweet.

I love your body
for in it I find the desire and
warmth that make me fulfilled.

It is precious and priceless --
the outward representation of your
inward beauty.

I love you
for you are the embodiment,
the personification, of all that
I seek.

You are my joy for today,
my hope for tomorrow.

In you, I have found myself,
my life,
my love.

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A MARRIAGE CREED

COMFORT EACH OTHER....Provide a refuge and sanctuary for each other from the trials of the world.

CARESS AS YOU WOULD BE CARESSED.... Warm your loved one's body with your healing touch.

BE A FRIEND AND PARTNER....Create an island of peace and tranquility, separate and apart, from the world of turmoil and strife.

BE OPEN WITH EACH OTHER....Do not bind yourselves in the secrecy that breeds suspicion and doubt.

LISTEN TO EACH OTHER....And understand not only words, but also the language of tone, expression and gesture.

RESPECT EACH OTHER'S RIGHTS....Remember each person is flesh and blood, entitled to unique choices and to mistakes.

ALLOW FOR INDIVIDUALITY....Accept each other as you are, and as you would have yourself accepted.

CHERISH YOUR UNION....Let nothing come between you, not child, not friend, not worldly goods.

AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER....Love is your river of life - an eternal source of re-creation. Above all - LOVE!

Love is the river of life in this world

Do not think that you know it when you stand at the little tinkling brook, the first small fountain

Not until you have gone through the rocky gorges and not lost the stream;

Not until you have gone through the meadow,

And the stream has widened and deepened, until fleets could rise on its bosom;

Not until beyond the meadow you have come to the unfathomable ocean,

And poured your treasures into its depths

Not until then can you know what love is

Henry Ward Beecher

Love Can Last Forever If You Want It To

Love is the strongest and most fulfilling emotion possible

It lets you share your goals, your desires, your experiences

It lets you share your life with someone

It lets you be yourself with someone who will always support you

It lets you speak your innermost feelings to someone who understands you

It lets you feel tenderness and warmth - a wholeness that avoids loneliness

Love lets you feel complete

But in order to have a lasting love relationship

you must make a strong commitment to each other and love

and you must do and feel everything within your mind and body

to make this commitment work

You must be happy with yourself and you must understand yourself

before you can expect someone else

to be happy with you or to understand you

You must be honest about yourself and each other at all times

and not hold any feelings back

You must accept each other the way you are and not try to change each other

You must be free to grow as individuals yet share your life as one
but not live your life through each other
You must follow your own principles and morals
and not follow what societal roles tell you to do
You must believe that men and women are equal
and that neither person should be made to feel inferior in any way
In order to have a lasting love relationship

You must be together always in your heart but not necessarily always in your activities
You must be proud of each other and love
and not be ashamed to show your sensitive feelings
You must treat every day spent with each other as special
and not take each other or your love for granted
You must spend time talking with each other every day
and not be too busy with outside events
that you are too tired for each other
You must understand each other's moods and feelings
and not hurt each other intentionally
but if your frustrations are taken out on each other
you must both realize that it is not a personal attack
You must be passionate with each other often and not get into boring patterns
You must continue to have fun and excitement with each other
and not be afraid to try new things
You must always work at love and your love relationship
and not forget how important this relationship is
or what you would feel like without it
Love is the strongest and most fulfilling emotion possible
If you commit yourself to love
love can last forever if you want it to

Prayer — Let us come together in silence now, each of us to center our self and to
contemplate the events before us. May we open our minds to learning. May we open our
eyes to the beauty of all beings and all creation. May we open our ears to hearing and
understanding each other. May we open our hearts to the love of each other in our
diversity. May we through growing consciousness transcend our limitations and realize
our oneness with all people and all nature and our creator. AMEN

**I want to love you without clutching,
Appreciate you without judging,
Join you without invading,
Invite you without demanding,
Leave you without guilt,
Criticize you without blaming,
And help you without insulting.
If I can have the same from you then we can truly meet and enrich each other.**

*“ I DO NOT WISH YOU JOY WITHOUT A SORROW,
NOR ENDLESS DAY WITHOUT THE HEALING DARK,
NOR BRILLIANT SUN WITHOUT THE RESTFUL SHADOW,
NOR TIDES THAT NEVER TURN AGAINST YOUR BARK,
I WISH YOU LOVE, AND STRENGTH, AND WISDOM,
AND GOLD ENOUGH TO HELP SOME NEEDY ONE,
I WISH YOU SONGS, BUT ALSO BLESSED SILENCE,
AND GOD’S SWEET PEACE WHEN EVERY DAY IS DONE.”*

Native American Blessing

*Now you will feel no rain,
For each of you will be shelter to the other.
Now you will feel no cold,
For each of you will be warmth to the other.
Now there is no more loneliness for you,
Now there is no more loneliness.
Now you are two persons
But there is one life before you.
Go now to your dwelling place to enter into
The days of your togetherness.
And may your days be good, and long upon the earth.*

Happiness in Marriage is not something that just happens.
A good marriage must be created.
In the art of marriage the little things are the big things...

It is never being too old to hold hands.

It is remembering to say "I Love You" at least once each day.

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is at no time taking each other for granted: The courtship shall not end with the honeymoon, it should continue through all the years.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.

It is standing together facing the world.

It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family. It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.

It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful way.

It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have the wings of an angel.

It is not looking for perfection in each other.

It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor.

It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.

It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is finding room for things of the spirit.

It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.

It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal. The dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.

It is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.

Now and forever may both of you be united in love and friendship:
Now and forever may both of you share your moods and dreams with loving care:
Now and forever may both of you keep trust in each other constant and deep:
Now and forever may you find joy in life and warm contentment as husband and wife.

PRAYER OF A HUSBAND AND WIFE

Keep us, O Lord, from pettiness. Let us be thoughtful in word and deed. Help us to put away pretense, and face each other in deep trust without fear or self-pity. Help us to guard against fault-finding, and be quick to discover the best in each other and in every situation. Guard us from ill temper and hasty judgment; encourage us to take time for all things, to grow calm, serene and gentle. Help us to be generous with kind words and compliments. Teach us never to ignore, never to hurt, never to take each other for granted. Engrave charity and compassion on our hearts.

New Testament Reading

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothes yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God.

Pablo Neruda *Love Sonnet LXIX*

Maybe nothingness is to be without your presence,
without you moving, slicing the noon
like a blue flower, without you walking
later through the fog and cobbles,

without the light you carry in your hand,
golden, which maybe others will not see,
which maybe no one knew was growing
like the red beginnings of a rose.

In short, without your presence: without your coming
suddenly, incitingly, to know my life,
gust of a rosebush, wheat of wind:

since then I am because you are,
since then you are, I am, we are,
and through love I will be, you will be, we'll be.

Old Testament Reading

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into God's presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God. It is God that made us, and we are God's; we are God's people, and the sheep of God's pasture.

Enter God's gates with thanksgiving, and God's courts with praise. Give thanks to God, bless God's name.

For the Lord is good; God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations.

Blessing

God, we commend to you Meredith and Eric, who desire your guidance for the new life which they begin together this day. Grant them peace of love and appreciation for each other. Grant them Your pure and peaceful wisdom to enlighten them always. Grant them the power of understanding in their hearts to keep constant their trust in You and one another. Bless them now and always. Shower them with love. And keep them in Your heart forever.

Amen.

Valerie, I give you my promise that from this day forward you shall not walk alone, My heart will be your shelter and my arms will be your home.

The Spirit of God will bless you always, as we walk together through our lives.

I want you to feel deeply loved, for indeed you are.

I will help you see your innocence through my eyes.

I give you my heart today. I have no greater gift to give.

I promise I shall do my best in our marriage

I shall always strive.

I feel honored to call you wife.

I feel blessed to call you mine.

May we feel this joy forever.

I thank God. I thank you. Amen. *(this is based upon Illuminata, M. Williamson)*

Invocation - Our ancestors, all our relations, our families, the Great Spirit in all things; celebrate with us the bonding of hearts and souls and the beauty of love. Help us see and know the divine presence in all that is, and keep that truth alive for us today and through all our years together. AMEN

Benediction - " Praise the Almighty Creator, God the father, God the mother, God of the universe. Praise the spirits. Praise the ancestors. May all the faces of God watch over you. May your African ancestors give you guidance. May your American ancestors give you strength. May your parents give you wisdom. May your children bring you joy. May you live together forever in peace and harmony."

THE UNTUTORED SONG OF MY HEART
Paramahansa Yogananda

I sing a hymn unuttered by any other voice.

To thee I offer the virgin theme that my heart chants secretly.

Alone I have nurtured my song child; now I bring it to Thee for Thy training.

To Thee I give no intellectual, premeditated, and disciplined aria; only the untutored strains of my heart.

For Thee no hothouse flowers, watered by careful emotions; only rare wild blossoms that grow spontaneously on the highest tracts of my soul.

Put your hand on your heart,
say that you love me as
the woods upon the hills
cleave to the hills contours.

I will uphold you, trunk
and shoot and flowering sheaf,
and I will hold you, roots
and fruit and fallen leaf.

PARADISE FOUND

To many people, paradise is a destination, such as a lake, a mountain or a beach.
It's an elusive goal, one they spend their entire lives trying to reach.

For me, however, paradise is defined a bit differently. It's not a home or a ranch or a mountain retreat,
it's our lives together, a sojourn that continues with each and every heartbeat.

To me, the key to paradise is not where you are but whom you're with.
For paradise together is the only kind of paradise that is not a myth.

We begin our journey together here at Magen's Bay,
which is certainly paradise in its own way.
However, because paradise is not a place,
when we leave here, paradise will not be lost, not be lost without a trace.

Instead, the dream that others have strived so hard to get to, will be ours forever because I love you. - Michael D'Angelo for his wedding to Ingrid, February 1998

OATH OF FREINDSHIP

Shang ya!

I want to be your friend
For ever and ever without break or decay.
When the hills are all flat
And the rivers are all dry,
When it lightens and thunders in winter,
When it rains and snows in summer,
When Heaven and Earth mingle--
Not till then will I part from you.

Anonymous, China, 1st century B.C.

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Take a lump of clay, wet it, pat it,
And make an image of me, and an image of you,
Then smash them, crash them, and add a little water.
Break them and remake them into an image of you,
And an image of me.
Then in my clay, there's a little of you.
And in your clay, there's a little of me.
And nothing ever shall us sever;
Living, we'll sleep in the same quilt,
And dead, we'll be buried together.

Madame Kuan

In marriage,
walk the path together,
side by side
whenever possible.
Remember to hold each other
when it is cold.
If the Air becomes too close,
make a little space so each
can breath.
When the path is narrow,
pick one to go first.
Always be willing to follow;
don't be afraid to lead.
Trust your partner, trust yourself,
for marriage is a journey that
leads to great love. --Mary E. Buddingh

You are now
part of my life.

In all decisions
you are a consideration.

In all problems
you are a factor.

In all Joy
you are sharing,
in all sorrow
support.

I love you my friend.

I am a friend to you
My Love.

These are our wishes, our dreams;

That we may always be more than
close; that nothing will come
between the bond we share.

That I will always be there for you,
as you will be for me.

That we will listen with love.

That we will trust and
talk things out.

That we will understand.

That wherever you go, you will be
in my heart, and you hand
will be in my hand.

-- Collin McCarty

"Let's grow old together...beginning with today.

Let's laugh at time
and plan with each other
and wonder how we ever got along
without this love we've found.

Let's hold each other close
and whisper through the night--

pledging our love,
honoring our commitment.

Let's pretend that no one else exists
and lie awake long into the night
sharing our innermost secrets.

Let's make believe our kingdom
is ruled by love alone,
guarded by the promises we've made.

Let's grow old together
and look back on life and smile.

Let's never take for granted
these moments that we've shared,
but always be reminded of how
intensely we have learned to live,
how completely we have learned to love."

The great sea has set me in motion,
Set me adrift,
Moving me like a weed in a river

The sky and the strong wind
Have moved the spirit inside me
Til I am carried away
Trembling with joy

Inuit Shaman Uvavnuk

How Do I Love Thee? Let me Count The Ways

Sonnet Number 43 from The Portuguese

By Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of every day's

Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from praise;

I love thee with the passion put to use

In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints, - I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life! - and, if God choose,

I shall but love thee better after death.