How to Write Your Own Wedding Vows

A workbook & fill-in companion — from the officiants at Niagara NY Weddings

Somewhere between "I don't know where to start" and "I wrote six pages" is the vow that actually gets said out loud. This workbook is your running start — a few prompts, a simple structure, and the permission to keep it short. We hear vows every weekend; the ones people remember are almost never the longest. They are the truest. — Rev. Robert Carnrike, DD, DM & the Reverends of Niagara NY Weddings

The structure — four ingredients, in this order

1. **One true beginning** — a single short line about the moment you knew. Not your biography. "I knew in the car that morning" is plenty; "we met at a wedding in 2019 and I thought she was funny" is even better. Pick one true moment, not a timeline.
2. **Three real promises** — three promises that are actually about us: the last fry, the 6 a.m. flight, the way you argue fair. If a promise could describe anyone, rewrite it until it could only describe her.
3. **A future in view** — one line about the life you are choosing: growing old gracelessly, a ridiculous dog, Sunday mornings in the same kitchen. Say something we will obviously be doing together.
4. **A closing that lands** — end on the word that means the most: "I love you, and I choose you — today and every day after." One clean sentence. That is the note people carry out of the room.

> Length rule of thumb: 60–120 seconds when said slowly. If it takes longer than two minutes to read aloud, cut one promise and one future. If it takes less than thirty seconds, add one detail only you would know.

Three prompts that make the vows write themselves

Answer any three of these, honestly, in ~2–3 lines each. Then lift the good lines into the structure above.

1. What was the exact moment you knew — the one you tell as "our story"?

2. Name one small, specific thing only they do that you would miss terribly.

3. What is a promise you can keep for fifty years? Make it small and true, not grand.

4. *What does "home" look like in ten years, if it all went right?*

5. *What do they make easier just by being in the room?*

6. *What do you want to say to them on a hard day, not a good day?*

7. *Finish this sentence: "I choose you because ___, and also because ___."*

8. *What will you still laugh about when you are both old?*

9. *What do you most want them to know on the day you say this aloud?*

10. If you were only allowed one promise forever, what would it be?

A fill-in template — if you want a running start

"(Name), I knew I was choosing you when .

Today I promise to ,

to even on the days it is hardest,

and to for as long as we both live.

I look forward to together, and to when we are old.

I love you, and I choose you — today and every day after."

The part the movies skip

Vows are written to be *said*, not read. Say them out loud at least three times before the wedding — in the car, in the shower, to the mirror. You will find the line that sounds wrong in your mouth and fix it before two hundred people hear it. Print them on a small card you can hold; no one can see the paper. A mistake is not a problem — the moment you stumble is the moment everyone stops holding their breath and starts pulling for you.