

Readings from Various Sources

For Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

Foundations of Marriage

~ Regina Hill ~

Love, trust, and forgiveness are the foundations of marriage. In marriage, many days will bring happiness, while other days may be sad. But together, two hearts can overcome everything.... In marriage, all of the moments won't be exciting or romantic, and sometimes worries and anxiety will be overwhelming. But together, two hearts that accept will find comfort together. Recollections of past joys, pains, and shared feelings will be the glue that holds everything together during even the worst and most insecure moments. Reaching out to each other as a friend, and becoming the confidant and companion that the other one needs, is the true magic and beauty of any two people together. It's inspiring in each other a dream or a feeling, and having faith in each other and not giving up... even when all the odds say to quit. It's allowing each other to be vulnerable, to be himself or herself, even when the opinions or thoughts aren't in total agreement or exactly what you'd like them to be. It's getting involved and showing interest in each other, really listening and being available, the way any best friend should be. Exactly three things need to be remembered in a marriage if it is to be a mutual bond of sharing, caring, and loving throughout life: love, trust, and forgiveness.

We Need One Another

~ George E. Odell ~

We need one another when we mourn and would be comforted. We need one another when we are in trouble and afraid. We need one another when we are in despair, in temptation, and need to be recalled to our best selves again. We need one another when we would accomplish some great purpose, and cannot do it alone. We need one another in the hour of success, when we look for someone to share our triumphs. We need one another in the hour of defeat, when with encouragement we might endure and stand again. We need one another when we come to die, and would have gentle hands prepare us for the journey. All our lives we are in need, and others are in need of us.

Falling

~ Robert Hardy ~

You already know about love. You fall in love. Falling is easy. Maybe you don't see it coming. Maybe you brace yourself against the wind in the door, see the earth circling below and jump. Falling is easy. It feels like flight. You feel your kinship with clouds, with light, stuff of stars, atoms that float and fall, meteors, stars that still glow with the start of everything. You raise your arms like wings. Butterfly or belly-flop. You feel the earth expanding – don't look down. Reach for the cord. Falling is easy. But is this love or gravity? Pull the cord. Yes – love blossoms from the weight you carry, the question, the tug at your heart. The parachute pops like a cork. Now you float in the arms of the

atmosphere, milkweed floss, dandelion seed, no longer afraid to take root in the earth – but still floating awhile, ecstasy and trust, your high-altitude heart settling back into a steadier beat, the tilt of the earth, seasons and days. But here you are floating – buoyed by invitations and arrangements. Now you look down. The ground looms like a date, circled for landing. The fields look like RSVPs. Your feet touch. The parachute falls around you like a wedding dress. You’ve landed together. Dance while the earth steadies beneath your feet. Hold each other up. Now you will walk together in ordinary days. Your parachute may become a maternity dress, a mortgage, a tissue for your tears. It may be divided into diapers, water-proof sheets, a layette, stories to tell your grandchildren. Days may come when you forget how it felt to float. But still this moment of landing lives inside you, when the touch of the ground felt like a vow – I will always be there. I will catch you if you fall.

Marriage Joins Two People in its Circle of Love

~ By Edmund O’Neill ~

Marriage is a commitment to life, to the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other human relationship can equal; a joining that is promised for a lifetime. Within the circle of its love, marriage encompasses all of life’s most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other’s best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener, and critic. There may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing, and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child. Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller; memories are fresher; commitment is stronger; even anger is felt more strongly, and passes away more quickly. Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing love through the seasons of life. When two people pledge to love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique to themselves, which binds them closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, a potential, made in the hearts of two people who love, which takes a lifetime to fulfill.

Fidelity

~ DH Lawrence ~

Man and woman are like the earth, that brings forth flowers in summer, and love, but underneath is rock. Older than flowers, older than ferns, older than plasm altogether is the soul underneath. And when, throughout all the wild chaos of love slowly a gem forms, in the ancient, once-more-molten rocks of two human hearts, two ancient rocks, a man’s heart and a woman’s, that is the crystal of peace, the slow hard jewel of trust, the sapphire of fidelity. The gem of mutual peace emerging from the wild chaos of love.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make
us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, union;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;
O Divine Master, Grant that we may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

From *The Prophet*

~ Kahil Gibran ~

Love has no other desire but to fulfill itself. But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires: To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night. To know the pain of too much tenderness. To be wounded by your own understanding of love; and to bleed willingly and joyfully. To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving; to rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy; to return home at eventide with gratitude; and then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise on your lips.

From the *I Ching*

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

From *A Natural History of Love*

~Diane Ackerman~

“Love. What a small word we use for an idea so immense and powerful. It has altered the flow of history, calmed monsters, kindled works of art, cheered the forlorn, turned tough guys to mush, consoled the enslaved, driven strong women mad, glorified the

humble, fueled national scandals, bankrupted robber barons, and made mincemeat of kings. How can love's spaciousness be conveyed in the narrow confines of one syllable? Love is an ancient delirium, a desire older than civilization, with taproots spreading into deep and mysterious days. The heart is a living museum. In each of its galleries, no matter how narrow or dimly lit, preserved forever like wondrous diatoms, are our moments of loving, and being loved."

From Know Thyself, Know Thyself More Deeply

~D.H. Lawrence~

"Go deeper than love, for the soul has greater depths, love is like the grass, but the heart is deep wild rock molten, yet dense and permanent. Go down to your deep old heart, and lose sight of yourself. And lose sight of me, the me whom you turbulently loved. Let us lose sight of ourselves, and break the mirrors. For the fierce curve of our lives is moving again to the depths out of sight, in the deep living heart."

From Union

~Robert Fulghum~

"You have known each other from the first glance of acquaintance to this point of commitment. At some point, you decided to marry. From that moment of yes to this moment of yes, indeed, you have been making promises and agreements in an informal way. All those conversations that were held riding in a car or over a meal or during long walks - all those sentences that began with "When we're married" and continued with "I will and you will and we will"- those late night talks that included "someday" and "somehow" and "maybe"- and all those promises that are unspoken matters of the heart. All these common things, and more, are the real process of a wedding. The symbolic vows that you are about to make are a way of saying to one another, "You know all those things we've promised and hoped and dreamed - well, I meant it all, every word." Look at one another and remember this moment in time. Before this moment you have been many things to one another - acquaintance, friend, companion, lover, dancing partner, and even teacher, for you have learned much from one another in these last few years. Now you shall say a few words that take you across a threshold of life, and things will never quite be the same between you. For after these vows, you shall say to the world, this - is my husband, this - is my wife "

From Corelli's Mandolin

~Louise De Bernieres

"Love is a temporary madness, it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides. And when it subsides you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your roots have so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of promises of eternal passion. That is just being "in love," which any fool can do. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident."

From *The Strength to Love*

~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.~

“The meaning of love is not to be confused with some sentimental outpouring. Love is something much more than emotional bosh. An overflowing love which seeks nothing in return, [agape] is the love of God operating in the human heart. Love is the most durable power in the world. This creative force, so beautifully exemplified in the life of our Christ, is the most potent instrument available in mankind’s quest for peace and security. The great military leaders of the past have gone, and their empires have crumbled and burned to ashes. But the empire of Jesus, built solidly and majestically on the foundation of love, is still growing.”