

Barbara's wedding vows to Richard:

For months I have been thinking about what I wanted to pledge to you on our wedding day. Because I am human and may fall short of my pledges, writing vows is not an easy task. But here goes:

1. **SUPPORT:** I promise always to be by your side—and on your side—and support you in all of your endeavors, joys, and hardships. When I disagree with you, I will take a step back and try to understand your vantage point. I will work hard to express my differing point of view while respecting yours.
2. **HEALTH:** We were not spring chickens when we met, but we are doing everything we can to make up for lost time. I will do my part to keep us both healthy, so that we can come as close as possible to meeting your often-stated goal of the two of us living forever (with all our faculties intact and bodies that work well and look great, of course).
3. **DIFFERENT HISTORIES:** Because we have very different histories—in our past relationships, our professional backgrounds, and more—we continue to learn from each other and about each other. In some ways, I think that our differences, rather than acting as obstacles in our relationship, actually bring us closer. I promise to work at being respectful of your history and understanding you in that context, and at being comfortable in sharing with you my history—even when it entails emotional risk taking.
4. **THE MIND:** Intellectual stimulation is important to both of us. I will continue to explore and nurture opportunities for us to enjoy learning opportunities, both as students and as teachers, separately and as a couple.
5. **HUMOR:** Humor is an essential cornerstone in our relationship. I will focus on that when we are faced with difficulties—medical, emotional, or otherwise—and remember always to welcome laughter and joy in our home.
6. **RETIREMENT:** In our so-called retirement, we spend a lot of time together. In spite of that, I promise to give you whatever space you need for personal reflection and growth, confident that at the same time you will do the same for me.
7. **ROMANCE:** I promise to nurture the romantic component of our relationship and keep it fresh. Love and sexuality are not just for kids!
8. **INTELLECTUAL BANTER:** I will try very hard not to be right every time and to give you a turn to be the one who is correct from time to time. And I will remind both of us, when appropriate, that perfection is not what it's cracked up to be.
9. **COMMUNICATION:** Knowing how frustrating it is to you when I ask a question that you answered moments before, I shall keep searching on line for a replacement marquee that is larger and that allows for more text.
10. **SEX:** Like a good wine, improves with age; I shall say no more on this subject, lest I embarrass the youngsters at this august gathering.
11. **LOVE:** Finally and foremost, it goes without saying that I will love you forever.

–June 3, 2012