

# 10 Tips to help you have a worry free wedding day

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## Tip 1: What is important to you about your wedding?

This tip is really simple but very important!

Here it is.....Grab that fiance' of yours go somewhere relaxing and start to talk about what is most important to you for your wedding. Make a list of what is important to him and to you then talk about them and... you may need to compromise but that will really get you started down the path of being able to resolve your differences without ending up in divorce court!

Here are some ideas to get you started:

**Food** -Are you a foodie...is food really important to you or not so much Music - Are you really into music and really love to dance if so put it up there at the top of the list. If not well put it where you feel m the most comfortable.

**Flowers and decoration** - How much does it matter to you that the church and or the reception venue really look sharp do you need to satisfy your inner designer?

**The Ceremony venue** - Are you tied to a church or have always dreamed of a lake side or mountain top wedding? Dig deep and discover your dreams!

**Party Time** - Is having a good time really up there, so good a time that you might not remember what you did the next day? Well put it up there ahead of everything else and remember that it likely will involve an open bar!!

OK you get the idea!

Why this process is important is it helps you prioritize where to spend your money and in the process reduces the stress of planning and helps you rest assured that your day will be what you want. Oh! it can also help keep you focused on your vision.

One final thing...share your priorities with your wedding party and most importantly your photographer. Why the photographer, because she will be with you the entire day and if she knows your priorities she can focus her energy in the right direction. As an added bonus she can also fine tune her services so they match your priorities.

## Tip 2: How to be a green and thrifty princess.

Your dress is the Princess dress you have dreamed about since can remember. As a little girl you may have played dress up with your friends and may even had a "wedding" or two with neighbor boy you had a crush on! It is very easy to fulfill that dream when we a in an economic boom but right now we are not so maybe you might want to think about ...Plan B!

As you already know you are only going to wear that dress once (hopefully). So why spend thousands and then have it sit in a box somewhere? What else can you do?

Well for starters you could pick out a dress that can be used after your wedding... A simple number that reflects your stylishness and still keeps the princess alive.

The folks down under and elsewhere have pioneered this by opting for non-white dresses! Yes you read that right...we have seen red, blue and even green wedding dresses AND the cool thing is they seem to help create an atmosphere of fun and celebration. After all that is what it is...a celebration.

Others are opting for renting and even picking up a used one. Many of the brides who participate in "Trash the Dress" shoots get some pretty cool dresses for even cooler prices on eBay! Others have gotten great ones at the Salvation Army and even the Goodwill.

The additional benefit of all of this besides saving you money is the green factor...by focusing on multiple uses for your dress or recycling one you help reduce consumption! And that is good for all of us... plus it frees up cash for other things that may be higher on your priority list.

Stay happy and relaxed!!

## Tip 3: Say no to stress on your day!!

Take the stress out!

Remember when we talked about the Princess thing? Well here is another part of that to help you reduce the stress of the days before your wedding and on the day itself.

Ok...take a deep breath let it out slowly and repeat the following: "There is no such thing as a perfect wedding however my wedding turns out is how it will be".

Leave the rainbow to Dorothy!!

Now once you have started repeating this mantra put some serious thought into finding a good and supportive friend who also happens to be good with details. This lucky person will be your very own personal attendant and assistant. So when Aunt Susie asks "where do I put the gifts?" raise you arm and point ever so innocently while you say " thanks for asking and my good friend (insert name) is completely in charge so I can be princess of the day and savor my memories!"

See that was easy wasn't it?

One final thing...sit down with your friend and make a list of all those things that could or might go wrong for you, not the guests or even the groom but for you. So what would you do if you forgot your false eyelashes? Or you snagged your dress on the door knob and oops does anybody have some thread?

You get the idea... This kind of early anticipation can make a major difference in your stress level on your day.

#### **Tip 4: Use your priority list to help you choose your photographer**

Believe it or not, the photographer you select to photograph your wedding can make or break your wedding day and not just your photographs. Because he will be there with you and your family, in person interacting with all your family and guests. Every part of your wedding is touched by the photographer and her ability to coordinate, and communicate amidst the excitement and anxiety of one of the biggest days of your life.

As you will see later, we are talking about how everything does or does not come together and how you remember your day based on the emotions you were feeling. Your photographer determines this, by the way she helps you plan your wedding, the way she treats you and your family and friends, and the way she conducts herself throughout the day.

So spend some time with your photographers, pay attention to whether they are listening to you, or if they are just pitching to you. That is why it is important to know your style preferences ahead of time. Also, pay attention to their personality and make sure there is a fit in that department as well. While the pictures are important your ability to work with your photographer and her ability to hear your desires will make the difference between enjoying good memories of your wedding day or not.

One way to make help you figure this out is to make sure at least one engagement session is included in the photographer's services. To really make a difference the engagement sessions should be at least an hour and not limited to studio poses. Engagement sessions give you, your guy and your photographer a chance to see how each other works and to adjust accordingly.

#### **Tip 5: Help your photographer help you**

OK so you have figured out what is important to you in Tip #1 above. Now regardless of what you chose as a priority you probably still are going to have someone take photos. So this tip is very important for you to address early on and it is important because you are paying a lot of money for photographs of a very important day in your life.

Sit down with your photographer and talk about how best to use the photos of your wedding AFTER your wedding. You read that right...you see many brides pay thousands of dollars to have their wedding documented only to leave the CD or DVD containing those photos in a drawer...what a waste!

A good photographer will not only help you with the HOW part but also the WHO. And a good photographer will also not try to sell you something you may not need. Figure out if your families will want photos and how they would like to use them. Also sit down with your guy and talk about how and where you would like to use your photos. Here are some ideas:

Would your family like a wall collection or a single bridal portrait?

Do you want album or are you more of stack of photos do it yourself girl?

Do you have some empty walls that you are saving for a collection of your favorite photos?

Holiday and Thank You cards can be a great use of wedding photos...knowing you want to use some of your photos this way will help your photographer make sure she gets images that will work well for that use.

#### **Tip 6: Make sure your photographer can deliver**

This seems so obvious, and yet brides miss this one all the time, and pay a BIG PRICE for it after their wedding! Be sure the photographer has lots of happy brides and grooms, who have taken time to write and tell the photographer how happy they were with both him, and his work! We're talking TESTIMONIALS here! From real people, with their full names, and their city and state, so you can call them if you want to, just to check them out and make sure that they really said what the photographer says they said. (That is a hard sentence to read, but you get the point! Sorry!)

I'm sorry to be so skeptical, but the switch to Digital has made it possible for anyone with a digital camera to think of themselves as professional. ALWAYS ask how long they have been photographing weddings and very important, ask to see samples of more than one complete wedding. If they have been photographing for less than 2 years get names of clients and call them.

While we all recognize the importance of budgeting if you have determined that photography is very important to you do not settle for the cheapest. A photographer who charges \$500.00 to cover 12 hours of you wedding, perform accurate post production, full fill your print orders, is not paying themselves anything. In the end you end up losing memories of one the most important days of your life.

#### **Tip 7: A Magic Way To Have A Great Wedding.**

One of the things that you really want to look for in your photographer, is someone who knows how to identify the important parts of an ongoing story. One who knows what to look for and can capture it in the style you prefer without taking a hundred zillion pictures.

Also look at the photos closely does the composition reflect your style? Does the collection tell a story that is heart felt and authentic. Does each photo contain a story?

#### **Tip 8: Be the center of the universe on your wedding day.**

This is very important whether you are engaging a caterer, a venue, or photographer. Make sure you are the only show in town for them on your wedding day, especially for the services you have identified as top on your priority list.

While this is less of an issue with food service and venues it is still important to make sure they understand that you want them to focus on you on your day doing so will almost guarantee their best service. This issue is particularly important when it comes to photographers since many will cram as many weddings into a day as they humanly can. This means they must rush from your wedding, to get to another, and then rush from that one, to get to another.

Also, as I mentioned earlier, digital photography has made it extremely easy for what has become known as "Debbie Digitals" and "Uncle Bobs" to offer their "services" without really knowing what is involved in providing great wedding coverage. More often than not, they have decided that "taking wedding pictures" is an "easy" way to make some cash on the side. Nothing is further from the truth, good wedding photographs require a photographer who knows how to use a variety of lenses, understands light and can provide more than snapshots.

SO...If capturing the story of your day in a way that evokes your memories and emotions no matter when you view the photos is high priority, then this type of photographer is probably not going to be a good fit for you.

HOWEVER...If after working through your priorities you determine that photography isn't as important as say your meal, or the music then this type of photographer may work just fine.

REMEMBER ...This basic law:

You always get what you pay for!

A photographer who only photographs one wedding per weekend or better yet is very selective about the number of clients she works with will be fresh and alert for you. She limits her weddings because she understands how important this day is to you, and the importance of being there for you from the beginning.

A selective photographer is a photographer who values each and every client as more than a source of income, working with you is more than a simple transaction.

#### **Tip 9: Choose a leader and collaborator over a vendor**

Why is this so important? Well a vendor is defined as "a person or company or company offering something for sale." This definition implies a single transaction with little or no concern for your needs or desires, in other words a vendor implies a product and not a service. When a caterer, photographer, or venue sees themselves as providing a service satisfaction of your needs is the center of their attention. Make sure also that they see themselves as a member of your team. That way they are much more likely to be available to you from the day you decide to work with them. There is one service provider that is definitely needs to have a team approach and that is your photographer.

#### **WHY IS THE PHOTOGRAPHER SO IMPORTANT?**

As I said earlier the photographer touches every part of a wedding and very often is the sole determining factor effecting your memories of the day. A good photographer knows how and most importantly cares enough to keep everything moving on schedule and to take charge when things start falling apart. How often have you been in a wedding and had to stand around waiting with no idea of what is supposed to happen?

You see, doing a really professional and thorough job requires a huge amount of planning, care, and effort. A good photographer will work closely with you to set up a time line to make sure everything flows with ease.

A good service provider should meet with you as many times as needed to help you work out the details of your wedding especially your photographer. She can help you get ready and coach you with everything from your make-up to your dress. Most brides are planning their weddings ALONE or nearly alone, it is not an easy job. That is were a good photographer will be available to you to help with not only the photos but also be there to answer scheduling questions, event timing and generally moral support. Why? Because they know how much energy is required to make sure your wedding turns out the way you dream of it. They also know that there comes a time in every bride's preparation when she just doesn't want to make decisions anymore...and your photographer can help by knowing you so well that he can take some of that load off.

That way you can relax and ENJOY every minute of the day!

#### **Tip 10: Feel good, Look good**

If you remember as a little girl when you started visualizing your wedding day you saw yourself almost as a glowing princess radiating happiness and joy on your special day. However, let's go a little deeper, your radiating beauty was there not because of your dress, your shoes or flowers but because of the feeling you got from the way everything came together smoothly and reinforced your image.

As I mentioned above most brides do their own planning and often end up fried and frazzled by the time their big day arrives. Once again the photographer is one of your strongest shoulders to lean on, because they have to see the big picture of your day in order to really capture it in a meaningful way. Most brides discover after their wedding that when they hired a good photographer what they were really hiring was a coordinator and supporter to be there when things inevitably start falling apart. They can offer a shoulder, a piece of advice or best of all they can nip a potential problem in the bud. As strange as it may seem a good photographer gets paid to be there for you and the photographs are just an added bonus.

So, as a result of having everything coming together and having someone there to handle those little disasters you feel good. That good feeling translates into relaxation which in turns reinforces and builds the beauty and joy you radiate! Your family and friends continually complement you on your glow. And you have happy memories to look back on.

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