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“How to Have a Wonderful Wedding”

By Maureen Parnell

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About the Author

Maureen Parnell was a part-time singer and musician who specialized in weddings and other functions around her home town.

She began to suffer from arthritis and had to give up her performing.

Then, she started to teach music and singing to children and adults.

This is her first book and she has used her experiences with her customers and also people she knows to provide a wide range of tips and suggestions.

She hopes “Your Wedding, Your Way” will help new brides start right and even give people that have already been through a wedding or two some tips they wished they knew before.

The Campaign Begins

Congratulations, you're engaged!

Better start planning your wedding, because you will probably need every minute!

And, time is not all you'll need.

You'll need careful planning as well as enough tenacity to bounce back up and continue when some completely unexpected hazard gets in your way.

I tried hard with this ebook to save you money, time and frustration. It's aimed to protect you from all kinds of problems and save you money and time.

Read it now (spare time will get real scarce soon) and keep it handy as you go toward your happiest day.

It's based on my experience and those of my friends and colleagues who shared with me their experiences - sometimes on condition of strict anonymity. I've also been lucky enough to be able to include tips from people I know who provide their services or products to weddings and other functions.

You can find plenty of information about the traditional wedding arrangements here.

I've tried to show how you can, if you want to, adapt or even discard them to make a more pleasant and memorable experience for you and everyone involved.

The first rule for your wedding is that it's YOUR WEDDING.

Let's get started ...

Maureen Parnell

Reduce Stress Whenever Possible

If you haven't enough stress in your daily life, planning a wedding is likely to give you more than you need.

I don't have a 'magic cure' – there is none.

Alcohol and pills are likely to increase problems rather than help you get through them.

Here's a few quick tips that should help.

- ✓ Focus on your normal obligations with your job and your social network. If you start to push them aside because of your wedding preparations, you could build up problems for your return.
- ✓ Don't begin every conversation with something about you, your groom or the wedding. Your friends and colleagues need a break and so do you.
- ✓ Think about doing relaxation exercises and meditation. They're not the exclusive domain of particular religious groups and there are books which show how you can fit them into your regular lifestyle.
- ✓ Start or continue to exercise regularly. You need your strength and resilience to be the best it can.
- ✓ Have a complete health check-up.
- ✓ Have a massage or complete body toning session, preferably with one or more of your close female friends – better than a shower for your mental state and your diet!

A Better Wedding without Breaking Your Budget.



A wedding will probably cost the happy couple and their parents more than they expect, even if they're used to sticking to a budget.

There are so many things which have to be paid for!

I've put together some tips to help you keep control of your spending. Otherwise, you will start your life as a married couple with a financial hangover that it could take months or even years to recover from.

I can almost guarantee that your expenses will be more than you thought. It's like a "Parkinson's Law" for Weddings; instead of "work expands to fill the available time", you get "expenses grow to swallow the available budget!".

Your Budget.

1] Decide what you must have, list what you would like to have and be ruthless about trimming what you can do without.

2] Never assume that anyone will give you some money or pay for a particular item or service. Ask them, if you feel that is appropriate. Otherwise, plan to cover it yourself.

3] Keep talking to everyone. Even when someone has committed to paying for something, keep in touch. Remember that people's circumstances may change rapidly through an accident, a change in their employment, unexpected medical expenses or just a change in of their priorities. Keep in touch, and try to be as understanding as possible if they cannot fulfill their promise.

4] Some people put conditions on their "help". That might be to add

more people to your already bulging guest list or to sing at the reception. You must decide with your partner how important the financial contribution is to your budget and whether you will accommodate the “request”, and possibly disappoint other people, gently insist that the help is unconditional or decline the gift.

5] You, or your parents, may consider getting a loan to cover some major wedding expenses. This is a personal decision which I can't advise about.

I suggest that whoever is looking at this option, consider the long-term effects:

- 1) Will this extra burden put a strain on your other financial goals?
- 2) Will this debt put a strain on your relationship with each other or your parents as you start married life?.
- 3) Can you comfortably meet the repayments?
- 4) Have you compared loan options, read all the fine print and selected the best terms available?
- 5) How really important is the loan to making your wedding day a happy one?

Stick with Your Plan

It's not unusual for people, especially the bride, to start thinking of alternatives to the previously agreed food, venue and other arrangements just a few weeks before the big day.

Please stick with the original plan unless there really are pressing concerns that make some change necessary.

Otherwise, you'll have extra and probably un-necessary worry for your family and other guests as well as inflated expenses for

yourself.

The service providers won't mind because their contracts will provide for extra charges be added to your bill. They will usually be much more than you expect.

Get Family and Friends to Help

You may have the answer to reducing some major wedding expenses in your own, or a relative's, back yard.

Ask them if they will provide their:

- ✓ Garden for the wedding or home for the reception
- ✓ Catering skill
- ✓ Dressmaking.
- ✓ Printing
- ✓ Transport for the bridal party on the wedding day, or to get fly-in guests to and from the airport.

You might suggest this as their gift for your wedding.

Don't forget to thank them publicly and privately.

Keep in touch with them so you will know if, for any reason, they cannot fulfill the commitment in time for you to make other arrangements.

Your female relatives and, maybe, close friends might have a gathering to produce food or decorations for the reception. That could be a great help for your budget and theirs if you do that instead of having another shower.

Some might be able and willing to provide flowers for the reception, church or bride and bridesmaids.

Some keen gardeners may not want to cut off the flowers and some

of the foliage, especially if they are preparing for a Flower Show or just want to enjoy the flowers later themselves. Then, they might prefer to loan you the plants in pots.

Dollar Saving Decorations

If you and your friends are making some or all of your decorations, the two words to keep in mind are simple and strong. Then, if something is bent but not broken, it can probably be refurbished by willing but unskilled hands on the spot instead of having to be discarded.

Confetti is frowned on or completely banned at many venues because it becomes unsightly and can require serious effort to remove from clothing and the venues. Be sure to enquire before providing it.

Some people provide small bags of rice or seeds. The birds in the area would definitely be better off if you do not use rice. Use birdseed and the birds will happily do most of the clearing away for you.

Don't be afraid to use quality fake plants for decorations, especially when real ones are hard to get or simply too expensive.

Balloons are an easy and inexpensive decoration accessory. Buy them in bulk packs rather than the small supermarket size for big savings.

Match the colors to your theme. Get a couple of plastic pumps – blowing them up by mouth can be exhausting and is now regarded as unhygienic by Doctors.

Warning: balloons should never be given to small children who are not well supervised and no-one should put a balloon near anyone's

face – there are people injured frequently, especially when a balloon breaks and a piece lodges in their eye. If a piece gets into a child’s throat, it can be fatal.

Dress up your simple and inexpensive decorations with a monogram using the bride and groom’s names or initials.

Select the lettering and font on your word processor, choose a large size and just print an outline on thin card. Then, cut out the letters to make your stencil(s).

If you have a lot of items to decorate, put some adhesive plastic, usually used to protect school book covers, over the cardboard before you cut out your stencils so that they will last the whole job.

Also, make some extra stencils so that you have enough without having to set up the computer again.

Surviving the Engagement

From this point, you have to deal with some issues which affect each step in the journey to your actual wedding:

Finances: There is a cost attached to each part of the journey and the wedding itself. On top of everything else you have to contend with, it's very important to keep your available funds in mind.

It would be a bad mistake to splurge on your dream wedding to the extent that you are both consigned to a financial nightmare at the start of your marriage.

Another important financial consideration is to be aware that the other people involved, family and friends, may have limited finances but feel obligated to meet any requests or arrangements you make. Don't put an unreasonable burden on them.

Schedule: Almost everything will take longer than you might anticipate. I'll give you a list of important milestones to plug into your personal calendar. Because everybody's situation and obligations are different, you'll need to adjust it to fit you.

Health: It's obvious that there will be demands on your physical and emotional strength above what you're probably used to. So, it's a good idea to get a full physical check early on and make sure that you eat well and exercise to help you cope with all of it.

Plan for Your Perfect Wedding.

Preparing for your wedding is like taking on another job.

Reduce the impact on your normal life by writing out a schedule of the important things which you must keep aware of.

Keep this list handy and refer to it when needed. You may need to adjust it to fit your situation and perhaps discard or add some items. But, it's fairly comprehensive.

If the list seems overwhelming, don't panic! Almost everything here is covered in the later chapters. When you've read them, you will be well prepared and, I hope, looking forward to the adventure. I've put the list here as a memory aid. That doesn't mean you'll be able to recite the list without looking at the page – that's not required.

If you read through it a couple of times, you will impress it on your subconscious which should help eliminate the possibility that you will overlook any important steps – your subconscious will pop the right items into your conscious mind when needed.

Tell your families. If they're very traditional, then the future husband might ask his prospective father-in-law first.

You also need to work out who will pay for the event, the other associated expenses and whether you will pay or assist with the costs, like accommodation, travel etc., of members of the bridal party or any special relatives who might not have the funds to be able to attend.

Then, tell your friends and announce it through the local newspaper (not compulsory).

Set a date for the wedding.

Decide where you will be married and where you want to have the reception. Popular venues are often booked far in advance.

Contact any relatives and friends who might have to travel a considerable distance to the event as soon as possible after booking the venues.

Decide where you will have your honeymoon and start checking the travel brochures and legal requirements, if any. Find out if you need passports or other documentation and, if so, start the process.

Pack your luggage carefully, including you carry-on luggage, to minimize delays at airports or when embarking on a cruise.

Check well in advance about any import restrictions which might affect you in countries that you plan to visit.

You must sort out between you who you want to have fill the other roles in your wedding party and contact them to see if they accept and are available.

Start planning what the bridal party will wear – six months out is not too early to order your wedding dress.

Let your mothers decide between themselves what they will wear.

If you will have a bridal registry, start visiting those stores which have the items you want and your guests are likely to be able to afford.

Start sorting out your guest list. You'll probably involve your parents but you should have the final say.

Order your wedding stationery; invitations, place cards and whatever else you want.

Decide whether you will hire a wedding planner or organize and supervise all the preparations yourself. Some couples do most of

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