



## What to Plan for When You are Planning

By Mary Dann-McNamee, MA and Wedding Planner

You can probably guess how you will feel when the man you love finally proposes to you—elated. What you may not know is how you will feel throughout your wedding planning process. While the planning process will have enjoyable moments, you can expect to feel many uncomfortable, anxiety-provoking feelings as you prepare for your wedding day celebration. After all, it is the single day of your life where everyone special to you is focused on you and your spouse, and “ex-

pects” to be hosted. It can be your own academy awards night and, generally, you would have no experience of ever doing this before. But don’t despair! By knowing what to expect, you can plan for dealing with these challenges, allowing you to minimize them as you journey towards one of the most extraordinary events in your life.

### Plan to Feel Overwhelmed with Details

Even the most experienced wedding planner or family member cannot shield you from the occasional feelings of being overwhelmed with making decisions, completing the necessary tasks or carving out the time to plan. A detailed wedding checklist can often decrease the anxiety of trying to get everything done at once. I suggest chipping away at a checklist that fits your time frame—aim to complete 3–8 tasks per month. You will make the big decisions in the beginning (such as location, dress, planner, photographer, entertainment, etc.), and then there will be a lull until 2–3 months prior to the wedding when it gets busy again with more decision-making (such as fine tuning the wedding day timeline, stationery, seating assignments, etc.).

### Plan to Go Over Budget

Most families and couples have an amount that they “can” spend and then they hope that their dream day fits into the projected budget. This is a formula that will set one up for disappointment. Once one starts selecting vendors, it is dif-

ficult to keep from the tempting thought of, “I (or they) only get married once so let’s go with the bigger package.” Having a professional planner can protect you from going over budget. It is their leverage and reputation that will give you stronger buying power and higher assurance that everything will turn out even better than you expect. Begin with a realistic budget before key decisions are made so that you can alleviate the potential disappointment of going over budget. Keep in mind, the least expensive vendor is most likely not the best value.

### Plan for Others to Disappoint You

Because your emotions will be involved with planning one of the most memorable days of your life, your expectations of what others should do will increase. For instance, it is common for brides to be disappointed if wedding guests don’t RSVP on time, if family members start to feel like it is “their” wedding, or if wedding party members are not as supportive or loving as they once were. Sometimes a bridal party member can be jealous of all of your attention being focused on planning your beautiful day. Whatever the disappointment or anxiety you are feeling while you plan, voice it as it comes up with a therapist, friend or family member who can listen without judgment and be able to keep an open mind as you work it out. I especially recommend “Wedding Group Therapy” as a non-judgmental space to share with others who are going through the same process.

### Plan to Have a Difficult Time Sleeping the Night before Your Wedding Day

With so much anticipation of how your wedding day will unfold, it is very common to have a restless sleep the night before your wedding day. To avoid a difficult time sleeping the night before, allow at least eight hours of sleep so that you are well rested for your extraordinary day. In addition, I recommend a warm bath, full body massage before you sleep, or at least a foot massage.

### Plan to be Overwhelmed with Emotions

From time to time on your wedding day, as you get ready, you can expect to feel tears of joy. Avoid rushing through your day and filling it up with many tasks. As the tears start to come, don’t forget to breathe and have tissue close by. Remember to “blot,” don’t rub. Many brides have described an unexpected wave of emotion that comes but then goes without notice. After all, you are birthing a new identity, a new title. ❧

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