

FEELING LIKE A *RUNAWAY* BRIDE?

How to Reduce Stress While Preparing for Your Big Day

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Getting married is a major life step and a wonderful time in your life. Planning your wedding is fun, exciting, time-consuming, and *stressful*.

Of course you want your wedding day to be memorable and meaningful. Wanting your wedding day to be special is fine. But expecting or demanding your wedding to be *perfect* will create a lot of stress and tension for everyone involved. Stress and anxiety are created by holding onto unrealistic expectations about how you think things should be as opposed to how they really can be. Some stress and anxiety is normal and healthy. This is a big event and there is so much involved. The key is to learn how to manage the stress, prioritize, and keep focused on what really matters.

Here are positive ways you can reduce the stress and enjoy yourself more:

- Plan thoroughly.
- Talk with recently married friends about their wedding planning experiences.
- Go to reputable websites for ideas and to learn from other brides. Do your research.
- Enlist as much reliable help as possible. Don't try to control everything.
- Delegate. Involve family and friends in your planning and in getting things done.
- Have a realistic budget and stick to it. Worries about rising costs and growing guest lists can be minimized when you choose to have the wedding you can afford.
- Accept that things don't always turn out the way you envision them. You can't make everything go perfectly. People make mistakes.

But then again isn't that sort of like life? Despite your best intentions, things don't always go according to plan. When you accept that you can't control everything, you might find some beautiful, unexpected surprises along the way.

It's natural to worry and be concerned that everything looks great and everyone has a great time at your wedding. Just don't sacrifice form for content. Don't compromise substance for appearances.

Family and friends can disappoint you. Goods and services from your wedding vendors can fail to meet your expectations. Bear in mind that people, as a general rule, are doing the best they can do at any given moment in time. Clearly communicate your *realistic* expectations and needs to others and accept that, despite the best intentions, things will sometimes fall short. So prioritize, communicate, spend wisely and make your wedding day as beautiful as possible. Stay focused on what really matters the most. You are marrying the person you love.

It's the "why" you are celebrating that's more important than the "what" is happening that day. Remain focused on what really matters.

Do the best you can do. Let the rest go and have fun.