

## **The Top Five Steps for Wedding Wellness**

by Kristin M. Carr, M.A., Holistic Health Consultant

Did you know that weddings rank the second most stressful event that a person goes through in their lifetime? The first most stressful, is an unexpected death of a close family member. Do you really want to equate your blessed day to that of a tragedy? Of course you don't. So why go about the pre-wedding days in a terrified, panicked, angry frenzy? There are so many stress busters out there that are beneficial to the bride and groom's physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual health. As a Holistic Health Consultant, and future bride myself, I am happy to share some basic but excellent techniques most people forget about or aren't even aware of. They are sure to help you enjoy the total experience before, during and after the wedding.

The first thing you do is form a mantra for yourselves (yes this is for the grooms too!). A mantra is a statement that you say to yourself repeatedly, sort of like a chant or daily affirmation. "I refuse to suffer!" is a good mantra to start with, and should be said as soon as you wake up. When you say this mantra, you are covering all of your bases- the plans, the fittings, the family, the food, the money and...the in-laws!!! "I refuse to suffer!" is reaffirming your control over **your day** as well as giving yourself permission to let go of things that are going to go wrong.

Number two in your cornucopia of wellness, is accepting that the world is full of imperfections and that your wedding day is no exception. So, expect things to go wrong from time to time. I am not saying to let things go, by all means if the dress gets ruined or the photographer cops out on the final countdown, then express it and handle it as best you can. However there will be little occurrences that will pull your strings and jerk your nerves. Just remember it is your day, no one else's, and "You refuse to suffer".

Third, are you breathing? Yes, seems like a silly question right? Yet, most people do not breathe properly. Since breathing is involuntary, meaning we do it without thinking, we tend to breathe shallow. In order to make your breath really work for you, you have to make time for yourself. Once this is established, find a place where you can sit, preferably somewhere serene and quiet. Sit upright in a chair with your arms at your sides and your feet uncrossed, flat to the floor. Take a deep breath in through your nostrils and out through the mouth. Your breath should be full until you can take in no more air, hold for three seconds and exhale fully. Repeat this for at least three minutes. It is important to remember not to breathe too fast or you may cause hyperventilation. Another way to ensure slow breath intake is to hold one nostril closed on each intake of air. Remember to alternate nostrils on each intake. By breathing properly we let go of tension, frustration, anxiety and clouded thinking. It also helps in centering and grounding ourselves so we can *be fully present*.

The fourth aspect is living in the present moment and being mindful. By living in the present, one does not worry about the past or future, but accepts, deals and understands all things that presently surround them. By practicing this, you will find that your stress and anxiety levels are much lower and that you can breathe better. You learn to appreciate a walk instead of a run from your car to the store or that your meals actually have flavor when your not mindlessly wolfing it down in front of the television . By living presently, you are being mindful of all of your senses. Each time you cultivate this practice, you will be aware of the simple joys you have been missing out on. The same

moments of bliss that have always been there, but you were too frazzled to even notice. These little moments should be cherished because they are sacred times for you and can be very spiritually, emotionally, psychologically and physically healing.

Fifth, *slow down*. Obviously you can't live in the present or be mindful if you are flying around like a balloon whose knot has come undone. Take it from me, if you refuse to pump your brakes, the mighty universe may hand you a mixed blessing. Did you ever notice on the days you've been rushing about that you tend to either trip, slip or get ill? These are life's reminders that we have been running our motors in high gear to much and there goes the transmission. When you are going at full speed, your stress hormones are beating up on your immune system. In short the build up of adrenaline floods the body with cortisol which eventually has a negative effect on your health, both in weight gain as well as lowering immunity. Also, by rushing around, you have a tendency to go head over heels, tripping and falling all over the place and then getting more angry and frustrated. Look at how you're treating people as well as yourself while under heavy amounts of stress. Be both sympathetic to others as well as yourself.

So now that I have given you this challenge, one more time, lets review the five basics of a path to wedding wellness:

1) *Making the Mantra.*

This affirmation reminds you that you are in control of certain situations as well as giving yourself permission to let go of things that you can't control

2) *Acceptance.*

Accept things that will go awry before, during and after your special day. You will get through it, it will happen and you can laugh at all of the amazing memories after you get back from the honeymoon.

3) *Breathe!*

Taking slow, deep, full breaths aids in calming and grounding oneself in times of stress. It is a wonderful practice that also relaxes the chest and jaw muscles, as well as slowing down the production of stress hormones.

4) *Live in the Present & Be Mindful.*

Living in the present and being mindful of all your actions can make you feel like a child again, where a butterfly landing on a flower was exciting and eating astronaut ice-cream for the first time was amazing. You have senses use them!

5) *Slow Down.*

By slowing down you are saving yourself from crashing both literally and figuratively.

These five basic steps seem simple, but they are vital to your start on the path to the health of yourself and the wedding. Once you have mastered the steps, you will find it much easier to reach your check points on your journey to your new life as a satisfied married couple. Always remember that to take care of others and "things", you have to take care of yourself first. You are a beautiful source of energy weaved in the universal web of life. Take time to be kind to yourself so that you can fully enjoy all you have. Until our next time together, stay well, be patient and know that Healing Is Possible.

By:

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