



Avoiding Wedding Disasters

The process of planning a wedding can often damage friendships, lead to arguments with in-laws, shatter hopes and cause huge power struggles. Dr. Phil says that when you're preparing for your special day, don't forget what it's really all about. Below is his advice on avoiding wedding disasters.

Don't give others too much power.

Sometimes brides-to-be feel the need to please others to ensure that their special day is a success. Often, giving in to the whims of family and friends can lead to disaster. "If you give someone enough power to ruin your day, isn't that your choice?" Dr. Phil asks. Don't say, "I do," just to please someone else. Remember that it's your day to shine.

Don't become "Bridezilla."

If you're obsessing over every little tiny detail, thinking about it all day and having nightmares about it at night, you can lose sight of what really matters. Focus on the fact that it's a day about the two of you creating a bond and a union.

Learn to ask for and accept help from loved ones.

Don't be afraid to invite your closest friends and family to help with some of the planning. To allow others to be a part of it can add to the joy of the occasion.

Don't be a 'money bully' or the victim of one.

Mom and Dad may feel that since they're footing the bill for the ceremony, that they have a lot of say in the planning. This can result in a power struggle if the bride-to-be has conflicting ideas. Dr. Phil tells one mother of the bride, "If you're going to give the wedding, give it. Don't ransom it." He tells the bride-to-be, "I would get married in a gunny sack under a tree before I would let somebody blackmail me with the money for a wedding."

Start with a budget.

The average cost of a wedding in America is \$22,000. Come up with a budget for the wedding and do your best to stick to it. It's important not to burden your union together by starting out completely broke or in debt.

Focus on the bride.

Upcoming nuptials can be a critical time, and sometimes misunderstandings arise when friends and family get too emotional about the wedding planning process. Dr. Phil says, "When somebody's getting married, everybody needs to say, 'It's their day, and if I need to step to the side and give them this day, then it's a gift that I'm going to give.'"

View your wedding as a rite of passage.

In societies and cultures throughout the world, weddings are not only celebrations, they also symbolize rites of passage from childhood to adulthood. Dr. Phil advises couples who are about to walk down the aisle to be more independent and to take control of their lives. "There's a point where you have to say, 'It's my wedding. It's the beginning of my life, and I'm going to do what feels good and right to me,'" says Dr. Phil.

Love every idea for 15 minutes!

Don't get so dead set on having things your way that you refuse to listen to outside advice on planning your wedding. Dr. Phil urges brides-to-be to love every idea for 15 minutes. "If at the end of that time, it's just full of holes, then OK," he says. "But at least give it a chance and really get excited about it for 15 minutes." If the other person has good intentions, weigh carefully what they have to say.

Take a break.

Declare some days wedding free, where discussing the wedding is off limits. Go out and have some fun, decompress, and remember why you fell in love with your partner to begin with. If you don't take some time off from the planning, you may not even enjoy the big day once it gets there.

Have a sense of humor about it.

Don't go into this with the expectation of perfection or you're guaranteed to be disappointed. Things may go wrong, and probably will. Remember to laugh about it. These are the memories and stories you will tell your grandchildren someday.

Plan the marriage too.

Don't forget that the wedding lasts one day, while the marriage lasts the rest of your life. Spend at least an equal amount of time planning the union that you and your partner hope to have for years to come. Discuss religion, children, careers, division of labor, in-laws and geography with your partner.

Shift your focus.

If your big day already occurred and it was a less-than-perfect event, Dr. Phil gives advice on letting go of the past. "Refocus on what did go right that day," he says. "You did stand up in church. You did make a covenant before God to be life partners. A lot of wonderful things flowed from that." So if your bridesmaid was a no show or your wedding cake was stale, try to concentrate more on the good things.