

Your Big Day

By Susan Metcalf

Every time I talk or meet with a newly engaged bride, I ask, “What kind of experience do you want your family and guests to have? and “What is your biggest “stressor” about planning and hosting your wedding?”

The answers are always the same. They want their family and guests to have the best time ever, not have to help out, and not have to work during the event. As for stressors, they want everything to go smoothly. They don't want to worry about the timeline or the details, and they want to actually enjoy their day-the whole day!

I was married for 25 years and had the big wedding. Then, in 2014, I married my high school sweetheart, and our wedding was just the two of us, the preacher, and his wife, the photographer. We got married, staring into each other's eyes, in Gatlinburg.

When I look back and think about my first wedding, it didn't go well. I didn't have a wedding planner. I now wonder who did everything because I didn't and my parents were from out of town and had to take care of my 90-year-old grandmother.

My fiancé wanted to be married at the top of his family's mountain property under an oak tree. I guess his family did all the work, setting up chairs and refreshments, lining the aisle with potted white Chrysanthemums, placing the table



décor. The list goes on.

Apparently, the guitar player we hired thought we were ready to march down the aisle, so he began playing the processional song. Two of my bridesmaids, the flower girl and the ring bearer all walked and got into position. The preacher was in place as were the groom and his groomsmen. I was nowhere to be found.

My maid of honor and I were in a car, driven by my dad, and we were stuck behind guests who didn't follow the parking directions and blocked the gravel road. Our ceremony guests waited another ten minutes for me to show up. Meanwhile, the groom and his groomsmen were behind the trees drinking champagne.

I was embarrassed when I heard.

A wedding planner or day-of wedding coordinator never would have let any of that happen. She/he would have ensured my vision for the outdoor venue was executed as per my wishes. She would have kept everything on time and not have that giant faux pas in the middle. She would have orchestrated the event so the guests knew when to head down to the reception. My groom's family would have gotten to enjoy the wedding and not work it. My groom would have behaved properly.

A wedding planner or day-of wedding coordinator is not for everyone and may not be in everyone's budget, but there is a good argument for having one. Not only do you eliminate stress, enjoy your day, and ensure that your family and friends have a wonderful time, but you might also save some money, get a few upgrades and know that you are, absolutely, the star of the show!

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