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BEFORE YOU BEGIN . . .

Bridal Survivor – sounds a bit extreme or exaggerated even, doesn't it? This is the best time of your life. You've found your soul mate, the one that makes your heart skip a beat whenever he is near. You're both adults and agree that this dating stuff just delays the inevitable, and you want to spend the rest of your life together. You both look lovingly into each other's eyes and look forward to the fun process of planning your wedding – where everything will just fall into place – right?

Unfortunately, here's what frequently happens:

- ♦ A couple falls in love.
- ♦ The handsome man asks the beautiful woman to be his Bride in some fantastically romantic way.
- ♦ She and her mom start to plan the wedding of her dreams, the one she has envisioned since she was nine-years old.
- ♦ They buy every bridal magazine known to man, and they visit every store that has the word "bride" or "wedding" in it.
- ♦ This Bride is on it – she has her planner, her folders, and she's feeling pretty good about herself.
- ♦ She follows the charts and lists, but starts to get overwhelmed when her mom and her fiancée's mom start giving her contradictory advice.
- ♦ As time goes on, this Bride, normally a very detailed person, starts missing some important things. She and her mom start to see that things are costing more than they realized, and their budget is already blown. Then they realize that they chose the banquet site without finishing the guest list and they have more people than it will hold. They either have to cut the guest list, or lose the deposit and find a new site.
- ♦ By this time, dad starts to freak out over the amount of money that's being spent, and he either steals the checkbook and hides it or goes into a permanent zombie phase where he hides and only comes out when the word "free" is used.
- ♦ But the worst possibility of this whole situation is the conflict that could arise between the Bride and Groom and their parents who, by the way, at the beginning of this whole process said, "You can have whatever you want; I don't care," but now suddenly have an opinion!
- ♦ This leads the Bride to want to kill the fiancée, elope, or just forget the whole thing!

Would you like to avoid this?

Even in ideal circumstances, where there are no family issues and when the Bride is extremely organized or laid back, a wedding can be overwhelming, disturbing, and downright frustrating. It is our mission to help you survive the planning of your wedding so you can focus on wonderful memories and your future marriage.

FIRST THINGS FIRST . . .

There are many things that cause tension and stress within a wedding. But there's one that is often treated as "classified" information and ignored. That one aspect, if left unaddressed, can leave festering wounds upon the marriage and the relationships between everyone involved. It's not often talked about until after the wedding when nasty letters are written, people aren't talking to each other, and feelings are hurt.

Here it is: *most of the attention is put on the Bride and her family.* There. It's out. No one ever says it, but there it is. The Groom and his family sometimes feel that they are invited just as an afterthought. You have the power to make sure this does not happen.

Yes, typically the wedding revolves around the Bride and her family – that's the way it has been for years. They are considered the hosts of the evening and, in most cases, their family pays for 90% of the wedding. However, this does not mean that the Groom and his family are just around for the ride. It is easy to forget that the parents of the Groom are losing a child too and that they are excited for the special occasion as well. It should not be assumed they don't want to be involved – they just need to be asked how they want to be! There are sometimes new or uncomfortable relationships that make this very hard to do. Remember this: These two people created the love of your life, and they deserve a lot of respect and consideration. Without them, this wedding would not be happening.

Permission or Blessing?

Yes, it is still traditional for the Groom-to-Be to ask for the Father-of-the-Bride's "blessing" before he asks her to marry him. It used to be considered "asking permission," however, that has become very controversial. Because Brides are older and a lot more self-sufficient and independent, many Brides and/or Grooms are offended by the concept of a Father having to give his permission for the marriage.

We all come from different backgrounds and traditions and have different relationships with our parents, so there is no easy answer to this. Being aware of how important your Father feels this tradition is and sharing it with your fiancée is critical. For many, asking the Father-of-the-Bride for his "blessing," however, is a sign of respect and, more importantly, it is also a great way to establish a good relationship with her Father. If the Groom does not do this, it can cause a lot of hard feelings. What I do suggest is if the Groom chooses to ask, be thankful that he respects your parents enough to keep them included. If he didn't and your Father is offended, talk to your Father and let him know that there was no disrespect intended.

Communication with Your Parents

It is always a good idea to start this process by inviting everyone to a meeting to talk over the traditional responsibilities. As the Bride and Groom, you can run this meeting. Use the template for "Initial Meeting with Couple and Parents" found under the "Blank Forms" tab in this Guide to help you discuss who is willing to help with what. It also helps to just go down the list of questions, making this



HOTEL QUOTE FORM
(file under "Quotes")

Hotel #1

Name: Courtyard by Marriott
Address: 1234 West Street
Contact: Melissa

Phone #: 555-5555
E-Mail: _____
Website: _____

- ◆ How Many Rooms: 10 rooms
- ◆ Dates Needed: for Friday & Saturday night
- ◆ Types of Rooms: non-smoking, double beds ◆ Smoking? _____
- ◆ Breakfast Included? Yes ◆ Workout Facility? Yes
- ◆ Check-in Time: 3:00 ◆ Check-out Time: 11:00
- ◆ Pets Allowed? No ◆ QUOTED RATE: \$125
- ◆ Release Date: 3 weeks before wedding ◆ Confirmation #: XT15432

NOTES:

Hotel #2

Name: Super 8 Motel
Address: 1234 West Street
Contact: Don

Phone #: 555-5555
E-Mail: _____
Website: _____

- ◆ How Many Rooms: 10 rooms
- ◆ Dates Needed: for Friday & Saturday night
- ◆ Types of Rooms: non-smoking, double beds ◆ Smoking? _____
- ◆ Breakfast Included? Yes ◆ Workout Facility? No
- ◆ Check-in Time: 2:00 ◆ Check-out Time: Noon
- ◆ Pets Allowed? No ◆ QUOTED RATE: \$89
- ◆ Release Date: 2 weeks before wedd. ◆ Confirmation #: TZC3875