

Breaking Tradition: A Couples' Perogative

Its starts with love, then turns into an *Off Broadway Production*. As a wedding photographer, I see this happen time and time against the couples' wishes. In a desire to please everyone else, things just get out of hand.

I work closely with couples to plan their wedding day. Far too often, I see couples (brides especially) suffering from the stress that a wedding can cause, to the point where they really do not enjoy what should be one of the greatest days of their lives.

When photographing a wedding, a photographer should have two main goals: 1) create incredible images that reflect the couple's personalities, and 2) take as much stress away from the couple as humanly possible.

The second goal directly affects the first. When the couple is enjoying themselves, I know that I will be able to create images that they will treasure forever.

One reason why weddings are so stressful is this myth that they have to happen a certain way. It's your wedding, and you want to look back on it in 50 years and say that you enjoyed it. **Plan it the way you want, not to please anyone else.** Here are a few suggestions that will make your wedding far more enjoyable:

- Have only who you really want in your bridal party. This will help keep the number of attendants down. If the number of men and women are uneven, that's fine. You want to be able to look back at your photographs and see the two of you surrounded by people who are close to you, and not someone who was there only to fill a spot.
- Have a late ceremony, and have your photograph create your portraits before the service. The notion of the groom not seeing the bride has been misinterpreted throughout the years, and is the number one reason for couples not enjoying their wedding day. After all, arranged marriages hardly ever take place any more. By scheduling your portraits before the service, several things can happen to remove the stress from your wedding.

Look at the following example of a perfectly timed wedding:

2:30PM The photographer starts with the couple. The flowers are fresh, the hair is perfect, the dress pristine... No one else is around to make you anxious. You're able to spend some time together as a couple without punching a time clock. Your most important memories are created at a relaxed pace, when everything is perfect.

3:15PM The bridal party arrives, and are photographed. They have not become restless while waiting for other photographs to be taken. The flower girl and ring bearer have not been dressed up (and hyper!) for hours, and they still look like you imagined they

would when you asked them to be part of your wedding. After the bridal party has been photographed, there is time for the children to be taken home, fed, and nap to again be fresh for the service. The groomsmen leave for the church to usher the guests, and the ladies get a chance to relax before the ceremony.

3:45PM After spending the morning finishing up the last minute details - the parents (who this way has had time to eat and relax before getting ready) now arrive.

Let's face facts - no family is perfect. The more people in a family, the more anxiety there is when they are all together during a stressful event like a wedding. Babies cry and need to be fed; there is always at *least one person who is late*, older children get restless, etc. All of this causes blood pressures to rise. To reduce stress, have the family portraits photographed on another day. This will allow the portrait to reflect each family's personality and life style far more than anything that can be done on the wedding day.

4:15PM When the portraits are completed, you leave for the service. After arriving, you have plenty of time to relax, freshen up, and possibly have a light snack.

5:00PM The Ceremony takes place. After which everyone proceeds to the reception location.

Planning your wedding in this way will accomplish several things:

- Everyone will be far more relaxed and rested.
- More people are actually able to attend the service, seeing that it is later in the day.
- Out of town guests will not have an uncomfortable period of several hours between the ceremony and the reception.
- Your wedding memories will have everyone looking perfect.

Most importantly, however, planning your wedding day this way will ***remove approximately 80%-90% of the stress and anxiety*** couples feel on their wedding day. After all, you want to enjoy your wedding day, not be wishing for it to finally be over.



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