

Suggestion for weddings...

GROOMSMEN

POCKETS: Take everything out of your pants pockets! Keys, wallets, phones, and other items will be really obvious in your pocket. Put any necessary items in your back pocket or jacket pockets instead, or give them to someone that has a pocketbook.

HOT WEATHER: Carry a handkerchief that you can actually use to wipe your sweating brow in summer. The pretty one in your front jacket pocket isn't meant for actual use! You will have several layers of clothes on for the ceremony AND group photos, then into introductions. It's gonna be hot with all the layers.

BOUTONNIERES: These apparently require an advanced degree to put on properly, who knew?!? :) I can do it, as can many wedding planners, but it does have its challenges. The trick is to go from behind the (left side) jacket lapel, making an "X" with both pins...top of pin at TOP, sharp end at bottom. Ideally, this holds firmly, cannot be seen, and won't stab anyone that hugs you.

BRIDESMAIDS

SHOES: Shoes on grass need careful consideration. I highly suggest wedges or flats instead of heels. Seriously. You may be able to teeter down the grassy aisle in heels, but try standing through the whole ceremony and then group photos balancing on your toes. Not comfortable. Heel helpers actually don't work...I see them split and go right up the heel all the time.

BOUQUETS: Walking into the ceremony, hold your bouquet with both hands, with your hands at your bellybutton. When nervous, your tendency will be to bring them UP...blocking your face/dress.

WALK SLOWLY: Walking into the wedding is nervewracking for most bridesmaids. Remember to smile, look straight ahead at me, and walk slowly. Not molasses slow...but slow enough that you appear cool and collected...PLUS, I appreciate the slower speed when I am constantly re-focussing on you as you come towards me. And they will appreciate a photo of them smiling, instead of looking like a nervous wreck.

TAGS: Take dresses out of bags and take the tags off of your dresses before I arrive. Have your shoes available, too, to be added into the dress shot. Doing this for 5 to 7 dresses can take me 10 to 15 minutes, and will keep me from other moments between everyone there that I'd like to capture. You might also consider removing the dress "hanging pieces" under your arms...they will work their way out of your dress and be visible otherwise. I guarantee it. Also with regards to the "dress shot" consider your hangers carefully. They should all match and look nice. The personalized hangers (with your

names on them) are great, but make sure that your dress can stay on it. Often they are polished wood (slippery) and don't have an indent for straps to cling to.

ITEMS TO BRING: Scissors, extra hair pins, a sewing kit, safety pins, static guard, a Tide pen, and a crochet hook if the bridal gown has elastic (that needs to be put over each button) is super helpful!

CHURCHES/CEREMONY:

AISLE RUNNERS: These are a BAD IDEA. Trust me. The rolled white cloth/paper runners that are laid down right before the bride walks down the aisle are a disaster. I've seen many people get caught in them, slip and fall (hard!!), and are a general visual distraction because of not being straight or getting kinked. Especially no runners on SLICK FLOORING!!! These things should be banished.

RULES: If the church has rules about where I can and cannot stand, this will influence my angles. I will never go up onto an altar for photos. If flash isn't allowed during ceremony then I use it only for your entrance and recessional.

RING EXCHANGE: I prefer to get a photo of your ring exchange that actually shows the ring being placed on your finger(s). This takes some planning, and if you want it included visually, we need to discuss the logistics in person. I'll give you a demonstration to explain what I'm trying to get!

GUM CHEWING: It may seem like this would go without saying, but I can't tell you how many ceremonies I've seen where members of the bridal party are actively chewing gum. Yup. It's true. Sometimes even the bride and groom! Tell everyone to ditch the gum. It makes your mouth do terrible things in still photos. :)

RECEPTION:

TABLE SHOTS: If table shots have been requested, please understand that a variety of factors may influence it. The biggest factor is that as soon as guests are seated (and the 1st dance and toasts have been done) the waitstaff immediately bring food out. If there's food on the table, I won't take photos. Why? Because no one wants to be photographed eating, and because it interrupts their meal. If I can time it for between salad and dinner, then I will do this. If my bridal couple wants to go from table to table and pose with the guests for this shot, you have a slightly better chance of success. Everyone sees you coming and knows to pause the eating (usually). BUT...the downside to this is that you probably won't get to eat YOUR dinner.

PARENT DANCES: If it's important to your parents to have a photo of both of you looking AT THE CAMERA during the parent dances, then this needs to be discussed in advance. If we don't talk about it, what will happen is that the two of you will talk, laugh, and between those things, you will be looking in

opposite directions. It actually takes a bit of coordination and planning to get you both turned and looking at the camera for at least one shot.

ANNIVERSARY DANCE: A lot of couples will have the DJ organize an "Anniversary Dance". The idea is that every married couple comes to the dance floor at the start, and by the end of the song it's down to the last (longest married) couple. It's nice to have a present for this couple at the finale of the song (wine or flowers?), and then pose for a photo with them. The DJ may hand them the microphone to ask for a few words of advice for a happy marriage.

SUNSET and LATE DUSK: If the weather and timing work out right, I will come to you at some point around/after sunset and ask you to come outside with me for 5 minutes. The correct response is "YES!" :) This is when the sky has some color in it, or is a beautiful navy blue...gorgeous! However, at this time of the night you will probably be sweaty from dancing, and perhaps not feeling like you look perfect. Never fear! Most of these shots end up being wide environmental portraits...not close ups. Follow me (even if you're having the time of your life dancing) and be prepared for an incredible photo opportunity.