



## MOST IMPORTANT, A FEW WORDS ON THE RINGS ...

The wedding bands are the most important symbols of the marriage.

By the time that the organization of the wedding starts, a delighted and happy lady will be wearing an engagement ring on the fourth finger of her left hand. A lucky man proposed and “reserved” the lady by putting the ring there ...

However, it is the wedding bands that the bride and bridegroom exchange when saying the vows at the ceremony that symbolizes their eternal devotion to each other.

The budget that follows does not include the wedding bands, because

- the engagement ring often can be bought in sets which include the wedding bands,
- sometimes family heirlooms are used,
- often couples decide on other ways of symbolizing their union other than rings.

However, the decision should be finalized by the time that the next step towards the wedding day is taken, so that the financial implications, which can be substantial, is sorted out by the time that the budget for the wedding is determined.

It is important that a Jewellery Consultant with a good reputation and the necessary qualifications assist in this LONGTERM INVESTMENT. This consultant has the necessary information concerning the grading of the components of the rings, and also experience in practicality of design and style.

- Traditionally the engagement ring and the wedding band are worn on the fourth finger of the left hand. During the ceremony the engagement ring will be removed, the wedding band will be placed, and then the engagement ring will be replaced.
- The bridegroom will also wear his wedding band on the fourth finger of his left hand.

- Some ladies prefer to wear the wedding band on the fourth finger of the left hand and the engagement ring on the fourth finger of the right hand.
- Other ladies prefer to wear the wedding band only, and lock that amazing diamond ring away for security reasons, only to take it out for special occasions.
- If the design of the engagement ring as well as the two wedding bands is done at the same time, it can be more cost efficient as well as convenient.
- The engagement ring and wedding band for the bride-to-be is paid for by the husband-to-be. The wedding band for the husband-to-be is paid for by the bride-to-be.
- If there is any thought of using family heirlooms as rings, consider the following:
  - Ensure that the diamonds, or any other precious stones are in perfect condition, if any restoration work is to be done, do it in time!
  - The mounting of the stones should be secure, especially the “claws”. Make sure that they are not damaged in any way.
  - Follow up on insurance on items.
  - Make sure that the rings suit the style and taste of the receiver. Later on this can become a sensitive family issue, so never surprise the lady with this choice of ring as a surprise unless it is a certain match!
- The design of bands should be finalized before the planning of the wedding day starts. The precise costing should be determined and the person responsible for the payment informed.
- Inscriptions can individualize the wedding band, but take note that too many fine engraved words can be expensive, and most of the time not clearly legible after all.
  - The width of the wedding band will have an effect on the readability of the words – the wider the better.
  - The wedding date as well as the initials of the bride and groom is popular as an engraving.
  - Words like “we are ours now” (Edward VII and Wallace Simpson – 1936) are meaningful and romantic.
- The rings will be supplied with a certificate of Valuation which is important as it is crucial for the insurance.

- Do not forget to insure the rings as soon as they are paid for – this is very important, as theft of jewellery is quite common at honeymoon destinations.
- Most of the time these items are the most expensive ever bought up to this stage and it is a great temptation to show it around and tell everybody their monetary value – this is not a good idea. Quietly lock them away until the important moment is due.
- Refrain from giving any information to anybody who cannot keep a secret, especially people who enjoy playing practical jokes!

*Diamonds are cut into different shapes – for example round, princess, oval, marquis pear shape and many more. It is therefore important to make sure that the shape of the diamond complements the shape of the finger where it will dazzle for years to come.*

*Diamonds are not necessarily every girls best friend, and there are many reasons why some other stone e.g. a topaz, sapphire or tourmaline will be chosen. The girls' birthstone is an ever popular choice. It is important to know the specific characteristics of stones when it come to shaping and setting them – so make sure that an informed choice is made!*

... and now, welcome to notes on organizing your wedding!

## INTRODUCTION

With the engagement and the elation of a dream come true, the adventure of planning a wedding lies ahead, and while the thought of it may be overwhelming, it is possible to pull everything together and enjoy a very special day!

Always remember that the essence of the wedding day is about two people who join their lives together with a sacred commitment. Everything that happens around this moment is a celebration and should be regarded as such...

To realize this celebration takes a lot of planning and money, and there is much to be done, but eventually everything comes together and the joy of the day will be so intense that the wedded couple will have warm memories to cherish for ever after...

The reason for the following wedding notes is to give an oversight of the general components of the planning process. When one starts any process with some knowledge of what to expect, the process becomes easier.

Wedding Notes contains the following:

- A THE BASIC ORGANIZATION  
Directions for compiling a folder and how to use it, and also the use of a diary and notebook.
- B THE BUDGET  
Hints on saving money, the choice of day and time, the preliminary guest list, and the calculation of the total budget.
- C ORDER OF IMPORTANCE
- D SERVICE PROVIDERS

In between you will find useful hints and food for thought printed in cursive. Hopefully these will help you to make informed decisions...

These wedding notes will play a meaningful part in the adventure of planning your wedding! Enjoy!



A  
DIRECTIONS FOR COMPILING A FOLDER FOR  
ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSES

- 1 One large ring binder
- 2 13 Clear plastic sleeves

Each of the plastic sleeves to be identified with a sticker for each of the following:

- Preliminary guest list with contact details
- The Wedding dress
- Ceremony – venue and marriage officer
- Reception – venue, catering/menu/drinks/cash bar
- Photographer and Videographer
- Music at the reception/dj/band – music at ceremony
- Flowers and Décor
- The Wedding Cake and bonbonnières
- Hair and make-up
- Printing of invitations etc.
- Antenuptial Contract
- Transport
- Rentals

Initially these plastic sleeves are to be used for pictures, photos or ideas, informational pamphlets and contact details of the service providers. As soon as the final choice is made, only the details of the specific vendor, the contract and proof of payment of the deposit are to be kept.

It is important to get rid of any useless content.

**AT THIS STAGE IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO REALISE THAT NO BOOKING IS EVER FINALIZED WITHOUT PAYMENT OF A DEPOSIT!**

- 3 Divider pages, marked according to the preceding months up to the date of the wedding. Mark these pages with a tab on the right hand side indicating each month.



- 4 On the front of the divider page, affix an a-line-a-day calendar page of that specific month. The timeline for appointments in order of priority (as indicated in C) can be indicated in red pen. Any other tentative phone calls and appointments can be written in pencil, and will be removed as soon as the necessary information is gathered. Keep these pages uncluttered, and filled with only relevant information.
- 5 The use of post-its come in handy for any possible questions and also information gathered. It can be used anywhere and taken off as needed. The yellow post-it in the larger size is more practical because the yellow shows off any color pen clearly and the size can contain more information.
- 6 As soon as the preliminary guest list is finalized, and the chosen service providers appointed, the contact details are to be listed. This contact database is very important. Make sure that the names, addresses and numbers are correct. In case of the unthinkable, if the wedding is called off, or for some reason needs to be postponed, this list is crucial for last minute emergency communication.
- 7 A diary can be kept by the bride-to-be to communicate effectively with her helpers.
- 8 The notebook can be handy for the bride-and-groom-to-be to write down any ideas and details regarding what to say and do on the day of the wedding. Both can refer to these notes in their speeches.

It is of vital importance that the parents of the bride and bridegroom set them free to make their own choices regarding their wedding day. Even if their decisions do not accord with the parents' ideas, it is now the time for them to do things their way...

The bride and groom on the other hand should use this time as an opportunity to show appreciation to their parents...

The engaged couple must now choose the style and theme of their wedding – classic or contemporary, formal or informal.



## B THE BUDGET

### 1 SUGGESTIONS TO CUT COSTS

- Think about opening a short term bank account for the purpose of the wedding only. It is easier to manage the budget separate from the everyday expenses.
- The number of guests on the guest list has a direct impact on the budget. The cost per head at the reception, the printing of invitations, postal fees, programs and menus, rentals, sparkling wine and other detail all contribute to the final amount.
- Remember that a neat and well kept venue (for the ceremony and reception) will need less decor and flowers.
- If the ceremony and reception can be held at the same venue and the photos can also be taken in the same area, more than an hour can be saved. Remember that time costs money in some or other way.
- Should the choice fall on a marquis tent for the reception, it is of vital importance to do the planning and costing in advance to make sure that it is definitely cost-effective.
- The season, the day of the week and the time of the day all have an influence on the budget. While summer is a peak season for weddings and popular venues are fully booked from early on, winter is a slower time and many specials are available. Many service providers are willing to offer a discount in less busy times.
- A wedding in the evening can last up to eight hours, and every hour adds to the total cost in some way.
- The cost of flowers will be more than double on Christmas, Easter, Valentine's day and Mothers day, especially red roses and lilies.
- Consider having the centerpieces for the tables at the reception done in such a way that it can be given as thank you gifts.

### 2 THE BEST CHOICES REGARDING THE TIME AND DAY

- Not only are flowers very expensive on Christmas, Easter, Valentine's day and Mothers day, but the service providers are fully booked in advance and the most popular ones are normally swamped with orders.
- An evening three course meal at the reception is generally more expensive than a buffet brunch. An afternoon tea (with or without

- sparkling wine) can be suitable for a spring or summer reception.
- The most popular season for weddings is summer. In South Africa the average temperature is 25 to 30°C and can easily reach a high level of discomfort.
  - In the of winter months the average temperature is between 15°C with beautiful sunny days in most parts of the country.

#### Suggestions for a morning wedding

9h30 – 10h00	Ceremony
11h00 -13h00	Hot brunch - Winter Cold buffet - Summer

#### Suggestions for an afternoon wedding

14h00 – 15h00	Ceremony
16h00 – 18h00	Tea/coffee and sparkling wine with cake in Summer Cheese and wine in front of a fireplace in Winter

### 3 INVITATIONS:

- Make a list of the parents, brothers and sisters of the bride-, remember to add her name
- Make a list of the parents, brothers and sisters of the groom-, remember to add his name.
- Add the closest family and friends of the bride
- Add the closest family and friends of the groom
- Add the names of friends they share
- Now add important business contacts
- Remember to add the photographer and his assistant and the musicians to the number of guests for the reception.

The invitations can also be divided as follows:

Bride and bridegroom	60/100		40/100
Parents of the bride	20/100	or	30/100
Parents of the groom	20/100		30/100



or

the invitations can be divided in proportion to the contributions, if an agreement was reached that all parties involved (the bride, groom, her and his parents) will deposit an agreed amount of money in a special bank account for the purpose of the wedding.

If the relationship between the future in-laws is comfortable, it is quite acceptable to reach an agreement on sharing the costs. It can become a valuable means to bring the two families together.

4.1 The number of “heads” (guests) can now be counted and multiplied by one of the following amounts

\_\_\_\_\_ x R1 000 (depending on the flair of the everything involved)  
\_\_\_\_\_ x R 800 or  
\_\_\_\_\_ x R 500

This equal the total budget needed.

4.2 Should the total budget already be known and available, then the fund are to be divided as in 5.

It is important to bear in mind that the full amount does not have to be spent... the breakdown of this amount will give a clear indication at what price category to look ... and it is possible to have some funds remaining afterwards.

The essence of a successful wedding is a happy bride and bridegroom and the cost of the wedding, is not important at all.

Do not take it for granted that the most expensive is necessarily the best. It may be true sometimes, but often the best comes as a bonus!

This time of preparation can be a wonderful opportunity for the two families to get to know each other...



5 THE AMOUNT CALCULATED AT no 4, CAN BE DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS

GRAND TOTAL

R  .

		-	+
Reception	35%		
Photographer	7%		
Videographer	6%		
Outfits	10%		
Flowers	10%		
Weddingcake	2%		
Bonbonniers	1%		
ANC/Will	2%		
Marriage Officer	2%		
Hair and make-up	1%		
Transport	1%		
Printing (Invitations)	3%		
Music	10%		
Reserve	10%		



- Calculate the amounts of all the service providers and write it in the first column. Complete the first column.
- It is better to write the amounts in pencil so that it can be erased. Some of the amounts are going to change according to priority.
- Do not leave out the amount for reserve.
- Should it happen that some of the services are going to be free, like videographer and transport, move the amount to the middle column(-) and add to the amount to reserve.
- Should the amount needed to pay for a service is less than the budget, write the remaining amount in the (-) column and add to the reserve.
- If there is a shortage for any of the other services, the money in the reserve can be added in the (+) column.

Usually everybody pays for his/her outfit. If anybody in of the bridal following cannot pay for clothing, the money can be taken from the amount, otherwise this money can be added to reserve or to the payment of the wedding dress.

In the event of the total budget being R80 000 and higher, there will be a surplus on your budget for the wedding cake, ANC, marriage officer and music.

The reception and drinks may absorb extra funds from reserve.

Be careful and disciplined with the spending of money – by doing so the amount of stress will be reduced dramatically.

Any remaining money can be a bonus gift for the newly wedded couple.

## C THE ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

Following a certain order while finding service providers and finalizing contracts with them, ensures continuity.

The number of guests and the budget need to be established before the venues for the ceremony and reception can be finalized. Together with that, the date and time must be decided before the invitations can be printed.

The photographer is one of the most important service providers and if the one of your choice is popular, he needs to be booked in advance. Remember that the photographer can only be booked for one wedding per day whereas a floral decorator may be able to accommodate more.

### FIRST

- Venue for ceremony and marriage officer
- Venue for reception and catering
- Photographer
- DJ/band for reception

### SECOND

- Videographer (Optional)
- The Wedding Cake
- The Antenuptial Contract
- Flowers and Decor
- Hairstylist
- Invitations

### THIRD

- Transport
- Music at ceremony
- Make up
- Rentals

The priorities need to be diarized:

1. Put the monthly divider pages (with the calendar fixed on the front) on a table in the right order from left to right.
2. Divide the months in three terms.
3. Diarize and finalize the first priorities during the first term.
4. Diarize and finalize the second and third priorities during the second term.
5. For the third term
  - Count 6 to 8 weeks before the wedding day and make sure that the invitations are posted on that day
  - Mark the day on which the RSVP card/sms must be returned (normally 3 weeks before the wedding)
  - Mark the day when the caterer needs the final number of guests at the reception.
  - Make sure that the flowers and décor are finalized 6 weeks before the wedding. Mark another day, 10 days before the reception, to contact the floral designer to make sure everything is in order.
  - The wedding cake needs to be finalized at least a month before the wedding. In case of peak season, two months. Diarize a phone call ten days before the wedding day to make sure that everything is in order
  - Mark the days for fitting the wedding dress.
  - Make sure that the trial appointments for the hairstylist is made, as well as the final appointment on the morning of the wedding.
  - Remember to phone ten days before the wedding day to ensure that the transport is in order.

It is a good idea to complete all tasks a week before the wedding. The last few days before the big day should be relaxed, not rushed. **IF A BRIDE IS OVERSTRESSED ON HER WEDDING DAY, THE MEMORIES OF THAT DAY WILL BE BLURRED, OR EVEN TOTALLY NON-EXISTENT!**

*Remember to make appointments with service providers on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays if possible. These days are generally not so busy and best for undivided attention.*

## D SERVICE PROVIDERS/VENDORS

### 1. VENUES FOR THE CEREMONY AND RECEPTION

- The ceremony can be conducted in a church by the local minister or priest or anywhere else legally appointed by an independent marriage official.
- If the ceremony is to be held at the same venue as the reception, it is important to find out whether an extra fee needs to be paid.
- Sometimes the reception venue is equipped to host the ceremony. If not, remember to put a gazebo, chairs and a red carpet on your list of items to be hired.
- Remember that the reception venue is to be chosen in accordance with the budget.
- If the garden and surrounding areas at the reception venue are suitable, it can be used by the photographer.
- Should the music at the reception be provided by a band equipped with electronic sound equipment, ensure that the watt output complies with the electrical needs.
- If the bride-to-be plans to wear a full and wide dress, inspect the size of the toilet cubicles, as well as the space available when opening and closing the door.
- In the case of booking a restaurant for the reception, enquire about the availability of flowers as centerpieces. It may cost less than having them specially made.
- If the venue for the reception is situated in an residential area, there may be a cut-off time for loud music.
- Should there be another function next to or near the venue at the same time, make sure that there will be adequate parking.
- Remember to enquire about a “cutting” fee if the wedding cake is served as dessert after the main course.

- Will the venue provide a table for the gifts?
- How long in advance does the caterer or chef need to know the final number of guests that will attend the reception?
- Agree with the caterer/chef on a starting time for dinner. This time must be printed on the program/menu later. If the time is settled, **DO NOT CHANGE IT WITHOUT DISCUSSING IT WITH THE CATERER/CHEF.** The photographer also needs to be informed of this time when planning his schedule!
- In some cases an extra “venue” fee is charged together with the fee “per head”.
- Make sure if a 10% service fee is included in the final invoice or not.
- If you provide the liquor and/or wine or if you have a cash bar, a “corkage” fee may be charged.
- Remember to include the photographer and his assistant and the dj/bandmembers in the “head” count for the caterer/chef.
- Book the venue by signing a contract. Most professional venues will have such a contract available – make sure you read and understand everything in on the agreement, including the fine print. It is very important to finalize the booking by paying a deposit and to file a receipt in the plastic sleeve marked “reception” venue. Remember to get rid of any paperwork that is not needed anymore.
- The date, time and venues have been finalized. The necessary information is available for preparing to print the invitations.

It is sensible to draw up your own contract/agreement if there is no contract provided by the venue.

The agreement must include the name of the service provider, client, date and time of occupation as well as the services and the expected full cost. State the deposit as well as the balance still to be paid.

It is important that this agreement is signed by an authorized person.

## 2. PHOTOGRAPHER AND VIDEOGRAPHER

- A photographer with experience and professional standing is more expensive, but remember that these photographic memories remain long after everything else is forgotten. Ensure that recording this important part of your personal history is done in such a way that it can be relived time and again in the future.
- It is important to make this booking well in advance.
- It is important to feel comfortable with the person behind the camera, however, always remember that he is doing a job that needs to be focused and creative and he does not necessarily have to be pleasing and entertaining.
- It is important that he can be trusted. Normally he will state in his contract that if, for any unforeseen reason he fails to fulfill his obligation, the deposit will be returned to the client. Ask specifically if he will take the responsibility to appoint some one else in his place, otherwise the client can be left without a photographer at the last moment.
- If a professional photographer is not available or unaffordable, do not despair. There are amateur photographers that are well worth their salt.
- It is safe to make your choice based on positive recommendation.
- Make time and put in the effort to examine photographs that were taken by the person you are considering:
  - Look at the quality of the colours and sharpness of the images.
  - Is the background well chosen or are there any unsightly objects in the picture (telegraph poles and wires) that are irrelevant to the subject?
  - Look for creative detail
  - Are the group photos interesting and balanced

- Make sure that there are no shadows covering parts of the faces, e.g., the nose over the cheek or eyebrows making dark shadows over the eyes.
- Are there red spots in the eyes?
- Compile a list of special people that you would like to be photographed and appoint somebody to point them out, if necessary.
- The group photos of the bride, bridesmaids and her parents can be taken beforehand where they get dressed as it will save time later.
- It is very important to supply the photographer beforehand with a contact number and full directions to all the different places where he is expected to avoid a crisis. Remember that he might not be familiar with the area and he might get lost or caught up in traffic.
- Read the contract with attention and understanding and make sure that the deposit is paid. Place the agreement and receipt inside the plastic sleeve in the ring binder.

A good photographer will appreciate it if there are no interferences while he works. When he is busy with group photos, it is important that other enthusiasts wait until he is done.

### 3. THE MUSIC MAKERS

- The in house organist of any church is available at a fee, however, any other appropriate instrument like a harp, flute, violin or trumpet or a combination of such can add to the sacredness of the ceremony.
- A romantic poem, a passage from the Bible, or as song is normally performed after the exchange of the rings.
- Some denominations prefer the register to be signed as witnessed by all the guests. During this, soft background music can be played.
- If an outdoors ceremony is planned and an electronic organ or recording is going to be used, ensure that a working electric connection is available. It is wise to test the instrument or equipment shortly before the starting time. It will be embarrassing if the bride is standing there, ready to walk down the red carpet and there is no music.

- During a morning or afternoon reception a piano recital in the background will have an uplifting effect.
- When the newly-weds enter the reception, the wedding march or a favourite piece of music is played. The first dance is also done to a romantic song or tune. It is very important to make sure that the band/DJ has the specific recording available. Never take it for granted and it is best to provide those responsible for the music with a list beforehand.
- Music is important in creating the right atmosphere at the reception and it is a good idea to choose the band/DJ by positive recommendation or at best, personal experience.
- Book them early to prevent disappointment.
- Sign an agreement and pay the deposit and remember to file the paperwork in the plastic sleeve allocated to music.

*If the music is very loud and the speakers are placed too close to the tables, conversation among the guests will be impossible and older people may find it very tiring.*

*It is important to discuss the order of the program with the bandleader/DJ beforehand.*

#### 4. FLOWERS AND DÉCOR

- It is important that the floral designer understands the theme and style of the wedding. It will be helpful to supply the designer with pictures, photos, ribbon and lace to help with the creative process.
- Choose from different styles e.g. formal, romantic, tuscan, cottage, whimsical and creative free style.
- The following floral work is normally done for a wedding
  - the bridal bouquet
  - the bridesmaids' bouquets
  - corsages for the female vip's
  - boutonnières for the male vip's
  - arrangements in the foyer
  - arrangements in front of the church
  - aisle decorations

- table centerpieces and a table arrangement for the bridal table
  - the arrangements made for the church can be re-used at the reception as well
  - note that candles are prohibited in some old churches that were awarded National Monuments, and also some buildings with thatched roofs.
- Keep in mind that the availability of flowers are seasonal. Out of season flowers are imported and more costly.
  - Design and order the flowers and décor at least one month before the wedding. If the wedding takes place in the peak season, finalize the order two months before the date.
  - Remember to attach photos, pictures or drawings of the work to be done to the contract to avoid confusion.
  - If any specific colour or flower is not to be used, indicate it clearly on the contract.
  - The date, time and places of delivery must be indicated on the contract very clearly
    - The flowers for the bride, bridesmaids, the corsage for the mother of the bride and the boutonniere for the father of the bride will be delivered where the bride and bridesmaids get dressed. The photographer should already be there for a photograph of the bride receiving her bouquet.
    - All the other corsages and boutonniers are delivered at the venue of the ceremony and the time of delivery should be coordinated with the arrival of the groom and his following.

*Be careful of choosing bouquets which are too pale or mainly white, especially on a cloudy day or in the evening. The absence of natural light may lead to uninteresting photographs.*

*Be careful not to set the lights too low at an evening reception. The flowers (and the food) may take on different shades of grey and red roses may look black!*

*The boutonniere and corsages are to be pinned on the left side*

- *the corsages on the left shoulder to prevent them from being squashed when hugging and*
- *the boutonniere where a buttonhole is sewn on the left lapel. In case of a satin lapel on a very formal tuxedo, refrain from pinning the boutonniere as it may cause damage. Use a silk handkerchief in the front pocket instead!*

*The use of confetti that consists of polystyrene or fine pieces of coloured tissue paper are prohibited at some churches, the polystyrene is also not beneficial to the environment anyway!*

- *a mixture of herbs (lavender, rosemary, oregano and thyme) send out a wonderful aroma. Be careful not to cut it too finely as it can give off oils that can cause stains,*
- *fresh and dried rose leaves mixed in with the herbs, or on its own are also very popular*
- *wedding bubbles come in tiny bottles that are very practical and easy to present as they do not take up much space*
- *paper ribbon is a well known way of welcoming the wedded couple, however, be careful in wet weather the colouring may smudge...*
- *starlight sparklers are popular, especially if the wedding is in the evening.*

## 5. THE INVITATIONS AND OTHER PRINTING WORK

- *The style of invitation cards have changed from the classical formal to numerous creative design ideas. The formal RSVP card has in many cases also been replaced by RSVP sms.*
- *The “save the date” notice can be sent by sms or email instead of a card. The invitation however, must be sent by card.*
- *Make sure that the style of the invitation is in line with that of the wedding, for example formal/classic or informal/retro.*

- A combination of format, paper, colour, font and detail shape the design of the invitation card.
- Remember that the format also determines the postal fee, and that the postage on a standard card and envelope will be more economical.
- The correct formal wording on the card will be supplied by the printers. There are many creative ways of extending an invitation and the choices of letter types, paper and colours are vast, however:
- **GIVE ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOWING**
  - All initials, names and surnames must be accurate and correctly spelt,
  - That the time and date are correct,
  - That the venues are correctly named and spelt,
  - That the dress code is indicated
  - That the cell numbers are correct if RSVP cards are not used
  - If a RSVP card is used, make sure that the return address is correct,
  - It is not etiquette to indicate on the card if cash is preferred as a wedding gift. Remember that the guests are invited to act as witnesses of the marriage in the first place!
  - Should there be problems to accommodate children at the reception, the wording should be, “we apologize for not being able to accommodate children” and not “no children allowed”.
  - The guests need to be informed if there is a cash bar, otherwise they may not have money on them.
- It is a good idea to order all printing to be done at the same time,
  - the invitations and reply cards (optional)
  - the program of the ceremony
  - the program / menu of the reception
  - place cards – names to be filled in by hand
  - thank you cards with envelopes to be sent off no later than a month after the wedding.
  - The list of tables and guests can only be finalized after the RSVP date, and therefore cannot be printed. This can be handwritten by a calligraphy artist.

- The number of invitations that need to be printed is determined by households, couples and individuals invited to the wedding. It is wise to order up to 5 extra in case of an emergency or 10 in case of a “B” list. About 20 extra envelopes should be sufficient in case of “mishaps” with addresses.
- Traditionally the parents of the bride are the hosts of the wedding, and therefore they do not receive an invitation, but the parents of the groom do. If it so happens that the parents of the groom also become part of the hosting team, because of a 50% financial contribution, then it will be appropriate to acknowledge this, and invite them by way of a handwritten card.
- The following of the bride and bridegroom also gets individual invitations, as do all young people over the age of 18.
- If the bride and bridegroom organize their own wedding and also take responsibility for the payment thereof, then both the bride’s and the groom’s parents must be invited. It can be a good idea to send handwritten invitations.
- The invitations should be mailed 6 to 8 weeks before the wedding date. When inviting guests from overseas and during peak season, the cards must be sent off two months before the time to allow enough time for their arrangements.
- ANOTHER WORD ON ACCURACY AND SPELLING ON THE INVITATION CARDS...
  - It is important that at least two proofreaders scrutinize the information that is written and printed beforehand.
  - Any mistake can lead to the reprint of the entire batch and if the mistake is not due to the printer, it will have to be paid for.
  - Remember that Carl, Charl and Carel are three different individuals. If they attend the reception, it can cause inconvenience if their names are placed with the wrong partner or their names misspelt.
  - If the RSVP date is indicated three weeks before the wedding, there will be enough time to follow up on any invitees that did not reply, bonbonniers can be made,

- name cards can be written, and arrangements with the chef can be confirmed. There will be plenty of time to sort out the drinks and liquor, finalize the seating etc. **ALLOW ENOUGH TIME BETWEEN THE RSVP DATE AND THE WEDDING DATE.**

*Sometimes decisions around the invitations can become a serious problem, especially if the budget is tight. In such cases it is important to focus on people who are important to the bridal couple.*

#### 6. THE WEDDING CAKE AND BONBONNIERS/FAVOURS

- Bonbonniers originated in Italy where each of the guests receive 5 or 7 pink and white almonds to symbolize the sweet and bitter of married life.
- The variations of wedding favours are many, however, the idea is that there should be a symbolic meaning behind the gift, e.g.
  - dark chocolate to symbolize that love is bittersweet
  - a small candle to symbolize light
  - a packet of seed to symbolize new life
  - a feather fixed to a card to symbolize lightness
- Take care that the favour does not take up too much space.
- The traditional “cutting of the cake” is sometimes left out to cut costs, however, the cake can be used as dessert.
- Originally the wedding cake was a fruit cake covered with almond paste and white sugar frosting. The top cake, which is the smallest, is supposed to be kept until the first wedding anniversary or the baptism of the first child, whichever happens first.
- Chocolate cake with chocolate mousse filling, vanilla sponge cake with strawberry filling, and cupcakes are all possible choices.
- If a professional is creating the cake, order well in advance.
- The latest on the list of possibilities is a chocolate fountain.

- The symbolism behind the cutting of the wedding cake is the wish for a sweet life together as husband and wife. Traditionally they feed each other a mouthful to emphasize this.
- If it can be afforded, a professional can bake the wedding cake, however, there is talent available to create a dream cake without a necessarily expensive tag.
- Give attention to the following when ordering a wedding cake:
  - Make a sketch or supply a picture that shows the design of the cake clearly.
  - Describe in words whether it must be a chocolate, vanilla, caramel or fruit cake, and also what filling is to be used. Then decide on the topping and decorations. Everything should be written down.
  - A wedding cake consists of three or more cakes of different sizes on top of each other,
  - each of the cakes can be divided into one, two or three layers with filling in between,
  - therefore, be careful when describing the cake not to mix up the terminology.
  - If fresh flowers are needed for decorating the cake, it will be ordered from the floral designer as part of the flowers and décor,
  - therefore it may be a good thing to decide on the wedding cake before ordering the flowers.
- If the wedding cake is to be as dessert, the maker of the cake will advise on how to divide the cake. It is important that he/she knows more or less how many slices are needed.
- When finalizing the agreement, make sure of the following:
  - the date, place and time of delivery
  - a drawing/description of the cake should be fixed to the delivery note to make sure that the right cake arrive at the reception venue
  - The cost of the cake as well as the amount paid as deposit and the final amount that is still payable should appear on the contract.
- The bride and bridegroom cut the cake after the main course.

- If the reception is in the afternoon, and the cake will be served as dessert, it will be removed to the kitchen for slicing and serving on plates after the cutting ceremony. During this time a speech can be made.
- If the reception is in the evening, and the cake will be served as dessert, it will be removed to the kitchen for slicing and serving on plates after the cutting ceremony. During this the opening of the dance floor usually takes place.
- If the reception is an afternoon tea/coffee and cake affair, the cutting of the cake ceremony takes place first, before the coffee/tea is served. The cake will then be taken to the kitchen to be sliced and served on large platters.
- The cutting of the cake ceremony proceeds as follows:
  - The bride takes the knife (decorated with a bow) in her hand
  - the bridegroom place his hand over the bride's
  - together they cut a slice from the bottom cake.
  - With a fork, or by hand, each takes a piece and feeds the other.
  - Sometimes the cake is followed by a sip of sparkling wine with arms entwined.

*Make sure that the wedding cake is received by somebody reliable to ensure that the correct cake is delivered and that the cake is in good condition.*

*Take note that it is a risk to order a chocolate mousse cake as it can melt down easily in hot or even warm weather!*

*The bride and groom must refrain from smearing each other with the cake as often happens. It is in bad taste and the beautiful wedding dress will be damaged and spoiled for the rest of the evening if chocolate or strawberry filling ends up getting lodged into the delicate material.*

*If a chocolate fountain is chosen, remember that it will not function properly outdoors or in a draught.*

## 7. HAIR AND MAKE UP

- Health and beauty start with a balanced diet and lifestyle.
- Exercise and 6 glasses of water per day is the key to a glowing skin on the wedding day.
- Keep away from a hunger strike or fad diet before the wedding – the result is dizziness and a dull complexion.
- If the bride considers changing her hair colour and/or hairstyle for the wedding, it is wise to do so two months beforehand. The colouring and trimming should be repeated two weeks before the day and on the morning of the wedding the final wash and blow dry and finishing touches. Be careful of drastic changes in appearance close to the day, as it may be quite a shock for the groom and the guests to see an unfamiliar person walking down the aisle.
- Do not forget to make an appointment with the stylist for the final touches on the wedding day. Do not take it for granted that they will remember you ... most of the time the schedule at stylists is fully booked for Saturday mornings. If the stylist needs to come to where the bride is getting dressed, this appointment should be made at least two months in advance. Most probably the stylist can do the make up as well... remember to secure a contract and pay the deposit!
- Be careful of fake tan or bronzing for the following reasons:
  - Some bronzers or fake tan preparations may contain ingredients that cause an allergic reaction
  - Some of these preparations contain carotene which can make the colour of the skin appear yellow
  - and if the wedding dress have a blue undertone in addition to that, the colour of the complexion is heading for disaster
  - THEREFORE, should the bride decide to apply a fake tan or bronzing, it is very important to have it done by an expert
  - and a trial application should be done at least two months before the wedding.
- Unless the bride and her style is known to the make up artist, a trial session is recommended before the big day. It is important that the bride feel comfortable with her make up.

## 8. THE WEDDING DRESS AND OTHER OUTFITS

- This is the dress that the bride dreamt about since she was a little girl, and therefore it is very important that she chooses the dress herself and that the style reflects her personality.
- Not only must the dress look beautiful, it must also be comfortable to wear
  - if the dress is shoulderless with a corset, the corset should not be too tight and uncomfortable
  - if the dress is shoulderless and needs to be pulled up all the time, it does not only look uncomfortable, it will cause frustration ...
  - the bride must be able to walk and dance effortlessly
  - the bride must be able to sit comfortably at a table
- If the wedding dress is designed and made by a designer, keep in mind that the designer is working on more than one dress at a time with a busy schedule. Appointments need to be made and strictly kept or postponed well in advance. Usually there is a final fitting about a month before the wedding to make sure that the dress fits perfectly! **WHEN USING A DESIGNER, START WORKING ON THE DRESS AT LEAST 7 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING!**
- If the dress is bought or rented, consider the following:
  - keep the season as well as the style of the wedding in mind
  - if the groom is short, a big wide dress will make him appear even shorter
  - decide on a budget beforehand, and stick to it
  - when choosing shoes, remember that the bride will probably be on her feet for up to 8 hours, and she is going to dance as well – so think about long term comfort.
  - decide on the bridal boutiques before the time and make appointments in advance
  - during the fittings the bride should not wear **A TRACE OF MAKE UP**. If the dress becomes smudged and marked she can be held responsible

- the support and opinion of at the most two companions is invaluable. However, this is not the place for childish behaviour
- there are many different styles of dresses available and it is wise to try on a wide variety of styles
- if the bride is a private introvert, she must prepare herself to appear in front of shop assistants in her underwear. These assistants are very professional and will make compromises if required
- while looking for the dress, remember to stick to the budget. The assistants are experienced and will share valuable experience if asked for.
- it is a question of seek and find – the bride immediately knows when the right dress is there! Once the right dress is discovered, stop looking!
- fitting and finding the right dress is an emotional journey – it is natural, enjoy every moment
- When the bride has found the gown of her dreams and wants to hire it
  - book the dress
  - make sure that the agreement is understood before signing it, especially regarding whether the rented dress should be dry cleaned before returning etc.
  - if the dress is to be delivered, make sure that the day of delivery, address and time is correct
  - fix a drawing of the chosen dress to the delivery note
  - if the gown needs alterations, a special appointment must to be made with the person responsible for this.
- A final fitting must be scheduled one month to two weeks before the wedding;
  - the bride must wear no bronzing cream or make up
  - the bridesmaid who will help the bride to get dressed must be there to give attention to the following, if necessary
    - to find the best way to help the bride into the gown
    - how to tie a corset

- how to bustle the dress (if the dress has a train that is not detachable, bustling is the technique of binding it up with hooks, loops or buttons on the inside so that the back of the dress comes away from the floor)
- it is very important to wear the right shoes at this fitting and to make sure that it is comfortable to walk in the dress without stepping on it ...THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT
- also fit the veil (and tiara, if used) and jewelry at this stage to get a full picture of everything together
- make sure that the bridesmaid knows how the veil is to be fixed. Remember that the short tier must be on top for covering the bride's face when she walks down the aisle
- it is a good idea to do a trial session at the hair stylist beforehand.

*If the bride wears a tiara it is very important that the embellishments on the tiara is the same as on the dress, for example, if the dress is decorated with pearls, the decorations on the tiara must be pearls, if the dress is decorated with diamante the same should be on the tiara – make sure that ear rings or ear studs also fit in...*

*The following tells you whether a dress is well made*

- *there are no bulging seams – they are pressed flat*
- *beads, sequins, diamante and pearls are stitched on, not glued on*
- *the dress does not scratch the bride, especially under the arms*
- *zippers glide smoothly and cannot be seen*
- *make sure that small buttons can be easily handled and are properly sewn, and the buttonholes neatly finished*
- *be careful of inexpensive shiny lace, it can bring down the overall quality of the dress.*

- The following of the wedding couple
  - normally pay for their own outfits
  - the bridesmaids' dresses should not compete with the bride's
  - the maid-of-honour can wear an outfit slightly different from the rest of the bridesmaids.
- The mother and mother-in-law of the bride should discuss their outfits with the bride and it is important to note that only the bride is allowed to wear white or cream.
- The groom's outfit should complement the style of the bride as they are appearing as a unit.
- The groom, his men and the fathers of the bride and bridegroom wear the same outfits. The groom can differentiate himself by wearing a bowtie or cravat if he thinks it necessary.

*There is a wide selection of outfits available at suit hire companies. The rental fees are also affordable and the assistants are trained to give invaluable advice on style and colour.*

*The men should all wear the same colour socks and shoes.*

*The groom and his men should have their hair cut about two weeks before the wedding day, to prevent the white skin of their heads show on the photographs.*

## 9. TRANSPORT

- There are many interesting options for transport on the wedding day; vintage cars, horse carriages, limo's and other shiny white, black or luxury automobiles
- Hot air balloons and helicopters as well as boats can also play an interesting role depending on the venue

- How romantic is a bride arriving on a donkey for a wedding on a farm!
- Transport can be borrowed or rented at affordable fees – and many options are available
- Take note of the following
  - If the transport is rented with a driver included, make sure that he is supplied with accurate directions if the area is unknown to him
  - If the transport is without a roof, the bride will be exposed to hot sunlight or windy conditions that can cause havoc with her hair and veil
  - Take care, if the transport is very slow that the timing is such that the bride will be on time for her wedding
- Make sure that the driver receives a map and directions, the time when the bride must be picked up and the time she is expected to arrive at the ceremony.
- Find out about the traffic situation in the area surrounding the venues for the ceremony and/or reception.
- Supply the driver with a cell phone number in case of emergency
- It is wise to keep a car on standby to limit delays to the minimum in case of a breakdown, especially when using a vintage car.
- Remember to sign an agreement and pay a deposit when renting a car
  - supply the date, time and address where the bride will be waiting
  - ensure that the chosen transport is indicated on the contract
  - usually the company supply a driver, otherwise an extra fee for insurance may be added
  - the fee will be determined per hour or per kilometer
  - assure that they have a standby vehicle available in case of an emergency.
- There is always a possibility of a change in the weather, therefore be prepared with umbrellas etc.

*For some reason it has been taken for granted that the bride must be late for her wedding – it is not true, in fact, it is bad manners for the following reasons*

- *friends and family were invited and they accepted an invitation to act as witnesses to the marriage. To let them sit and wait is inhospitable and especially inconsiderate towards the aged among the guests*
- *the organist prepared the sheet music in advance according to a certain timeframe. If she/he is not equipped to entertain the guests, it can be embarrassing*
- *the man who put that expensive engagement ring on the bride's finger is treated without consideration ...*
- *in case of the possibility of another wedding following, a floral designer with a schedule will have to wait outside because of the previous wedding going over time*
- *the photo hour before the reception will now disrupt the agreement made with the chef for the starting time of the meal that was after all printed on the program in the first place!*

## 10. THE HIRING OF EQUIPMENT

- It is quite an amazing selection of equipment and items that can be rented at mostly affordable prices.
- If the wedding is taking place in a marquis tent, hall or garden and everything from chairs to crockery must be supplied, or even if only a few chairs or a red carpet is needed, the rental company will be at your service!
- Tables, round and trestle, tableware, cutlery, tablecloths and serviettes, drapings and fairy lights and much more can be hired.
- There are companies which specialise in candles of all different shapes and sizes.
- Some companies supply luxury ware while others supply budget ware.
- If the wedding celebration is planned to take place in a marquis tent it is very important to plan in detail – also consider that the caterers may need a separate tent with an equipped kitchen with electricity.
- Make sure that the order to rent is filled in accurately stating the date, time and place and whether the equipment needs to be delivered.

- Pay the deposit and sign the contract.
- ENSURE THAT THE TIME OF DELIVERY IS ACCURATE, it can cause a serious delay in preparations if the delivery is late!
- On the day of delivery every item and piece of equipment must be counted before the delivery note is signed. Mistakes can happen, and missing items are to be paid for.
- Make sure if the items must be washed before collection – some companies prefer cleaning the items themselves, others will do it for a fee and others want the items cleaned, packed and counted on collection day.
- Most of the time these companies are professional and their advice is trustworthy.

*It is important to think of the service providers as a team that is working together, each with a passion for his own contribution, to ensure that the wedding is a success! Friendliness, consideration and respect are to the benefit of a successful wedding day...*

#### 11. THE BRIDE AND GROOM'S FOLLOWING – THE CHOICE

- It is acceptable for the bride and groom to stand in front of the marriage official on their own.
- If the bride and groom agree to select bridesmaids and groomsmen, it should be kept in mind that they must be able and willing to offer support and to perform certain duties, as well as pay for the kitchen tea, bachelors party and their own outfits.
- There are many reasons why friends become best friends, but bear in mind that when duties need to be performed, reliability is more important than a joking attitude.

*There is nothing to laugh about when funny Gary pretends that the ring is lost when the solemn moment has arrived for the exchanging of the rings and start looking through all his pockets while everybody is waiting ...*

*The bride comes walking down the aisle with her father while the organ plays the magnificent wedding march, and as she steps up, standing with her back to the guests, the last 10 of the 50 small buttons are still unbuttoned...*

*There is a vast difference between a light hearted attitude and a sense of humour that is out of place...*

- The maid-of-honour accompanies the bride to the final fitting of the dress. She makes the final appointments for hair and make up and see to it that the bride arrives on time.
- The maid-of-honour organizes the kitchen-tea.
- She oversees the neatness of the bridesmaids, flower girls and confetti girls as well as the page boy(optional).
- On the day of the wedding:
  - she helps the bride getting dressed
  - if necessary, she keeps the bride calm
  - she makes sure that the bride is ready on time to be picked up by the driver
  - she attends to refreshing the brides hair and make up during the celebration.
- The groomsman attends to
  - organizing the bachelors party
  - the suits and accessories of the bridegroom and the rest of the groomsmen
  - delegates duties and helps organizing the cash bar or sparkling wine and wine if necessary
  - sees to the groomsmen being dressed on time
  - sees to it that the bridegroom gets to the church on time
  - keeps the rings safe and has it ready when needed
  - normally makes the first speech at the reception
  - sees to it that the transport is ready when the bride and bridegroom leave the reception
  - finalises all necessary payments after the bridegroom has left.

- The master of ceremonies takes responsibility for inviting all the guests into the reception area when the photo hour is over so that everybody is seated when the bridal couple arrives.
  - he also announces the program and introduces the speechmakers
  - the master of ceremonies liaises with the bandleader/DJ as the program of the evening unfolds.

*Often the bandleader or DJ are equipped to stand as master of ceremonies...*

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PROGRAM AT THE RECEPTION

- The guests enjoy a cocktail hour while the photos are taken
- The guests are invited inside by the master of ceremonies
- The bridal couple enters while music of their choice is playing
- The first course is served, on time as agreed with the chef
- The speeches and toasts are made
- The main course is served
- The cutting of the wedding cake takes place, and will be removed to the kitchen if served as dessert
- The first dance by the bride and groom takes place, joined by the parents and then bridesmaids and groomsmen.
- The bouquet and garter are thrown as a sign that the evening is now coming to a close.

*LOVE IS THAT, WHICH, WHEN EVERYTHING ELSE  
DISSAPEARS, REMAINS...*

*cgo 2010*

## NOTES ON POSTPONING A WEDDING

Organizing a wedding is a huge process that can start up to 18 months before the time. The financial and emotional investment of the bride-and-groom-to-be and all those who surround them is enormous.

And yet, sometimes the unthinkable happens:

- a natural disaster strike shortly before the wedding
- one of either the bride-or bridegroom-to-be falls ill
- one of the parents falls seriously ill
- or any other serious emergency takes place.

Whatever the reason for the emergency is, it may cause trauma, and therefore the following is important:

- isolate all those mostly affected by the trauma from reorganizing the event
- the situation must be taken over by a person less affected by the situation and this person must take control and organize a group of at least four helpers
- the guest list with all the names, numbers and email addresses as well as the contact details of all the service providers must now be obtained (refer to A6)
- divide the guest list under the four helpers who must get the message of the postponement out as soon as possible:
  - it is important to state that there is a postponement
  - let the guests know that a new card with details will be mailed as soon as the new details is available
  - the first guests to be contacted are those who booked seats on planes and in hotels
  - make sure that there is an acknowledgement of every message.
- the person in control must now let the service providers know as following
  - contact the reception venue first and in alliance with the couple, set the next suitable date

- contact the place of ceremony and the marriage official next to determine if any new choices need to be made
  - the new announcement can now be printed with a new RSVP if needed,
  - the rest of the service providers can be contacted now with the new details ... however
  - it can happen that the photographer, DJ/band or floral decorator are unavailable because of other booking on the new date, if so, ask for recommendations, which is then given to the bride and groom to reconsider
- Keep the following in mind when contacting the service providers:
    - depending on the time of the postponement it may happen that some of the deposits can be retained, if the photographer gets a new booking on the cancelled day, and if the flowers was not ordered or the wedding cake not baked, it may happen that the deposits can be saved
    - if the postponement is untimely the deposits will be lost as per agreement, unless the provider is sympathetic, however,
    - make every effort to approach them in an professional manner and do not play the victim to gain from the situation as they are people running a business in the first place.

*TAKE NOTE that if the wedding date remains the same, but one of or both venues change, it is only necessary to mail (if there is sufficient time) or email a notice as soon as possible, with directions included. Remember to notify the photographer and transport of the new venues – and also the floral decorator and wedding cake maker.*

*To make sure that the new notice will be opened and read, mark the envelope “IMPORTANT NOTICE” in the left hand corner. It can happen that the receiver mistakenly think that two invitations was accidentally mailed.*

## CANCELING A WEDDING

It does sometimes happen that soon after the wedding invitations are mailed, doubts begin to surface in the mind of either the bride- or groom-to-be whether this marriage is the right step to take, and yes, certainly, a certain amount of restlessness about the huge step to be taken is up to a point normal.

It also sometimes happen that towards the day of finality the couple become lost in the stress surrounding the organization of the wedding and a feeling of estrangement settles in when differences of opinion often causes verbal unrest, and yes, this is also up to a certain level normal.

Often the in laws with their different ways causes uncertainty, and although the couple has the potential to build their own value system, towards the end of all the wedding “commotions”, one or both of them feel like running away ... this is also to an extent normal.

However, if it happens that these negative feelings endure and overcome the positive ones, it is of the utmost importance that the couple should go for professional counseling, either to get help getting the relationship back on track or to make the decision to go their separate ways.

It does happen that couples decide not to get married after all, and if this decision is taken after the organization is in full swing, it is a traumatic (and brave) step to take.

If the cancelation takes place before the invitations were mailed, get the help of close family and friends to help spreading the word by email or sms.

*It is important to know that it is not necessary to explain the details of the situation! Remember, it is a private matter! Refrain from making this painful situation the centre of discussion ... rather aim to work towards keeping a feeling of goodwill, after all, this kind of situation is difficult for everybody.*

If the cancelation take place after the invitations were mailed:

- Find somebody that is not too closely involved with the situation to take control of the following:

- letting all the invited guests know about the cancellation
  - canceling the agreements with all the service providers that has already been settled
  - this person need to be supplied with the data list (A6) of all the guests and their contact details as well as the details of all the service providers involved.
- It is a good idea to gather a small group of helpers to do the phone work as soon as possible
    - starting with those guests who made travel arrangements so that they can make cancelations of plane tickets and hotel reservations
    - then contact those guests who made arrangements to arrive earlier to help with preparations etc.
    - make sure everyone get the message, without explaining the details
    - if the messages were forwarded by email or sms, it is very important to get acknowledgement of receipt.
- Do not discuss the situation! It is only necessary to say “The wedding has been called off, further notice will be mailed.”*
- A formal announcement that the wedding will not take place must be mailed as soon as possible, again, without explaining the situation:

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Smit hereby announce that  
the marriage between their daughter,  
Cindy Smit to Jake Howard  
will not take place.

- The service providers must now be contacted, and do this as soon as possible, so that they can be available for a booking by somebody else! If the cancellation is early enough, some or all the monies can be retained, depending on the contract.
  - the venues for the ceremony/official and reception/ caterer are the first priority! This is very important because depending of the time of cancelation, if nothing has been prepared yet, only the deposits may be lost ... if the preparations of the food and flowers has already started, the full payment is due

- the photographer is next
- the DJ/band follows, etc.

*It is important to remember that while dealing with the service providers, to be businesslike, there are instances where the situation is of such that a new booking is made and the provider is willing to return the deposit, however, do not expect that, and if it happens, be grateful for the bonus! Never engage in a victimizing or manipulating situation with them, because they are under no obligation to return the deposit unless the agreement states otherwise.*

It can happen that the wedding is canceled the day before or on the day of the wedding!

- cancel the transport of the bride and her following only
- contact the wedding official and notify him of the situation – most probably he/she will be able to give an encouraging or inspiring talk to the parents and guests
- afterwards, instead of having a wedding reception with all the traditional happenings, it can be turned into a get together with family and friends
- ask the photographer to take the lead in being creative to take photos of the reunion of family and friends
- the wedding cake can still be cut into slices and served with coffee ...

*Remember that creating a fun situation out of a painful one make things better.*

*The amount of money “lost” by the cancelation will be nothing compared to the unhappiness of a future marriage that should not have happened!*

#### WHAT TO DO WITH

- the wedding dress  
it depends on the bride’s line of thought –  
this is the dress that she chose to wear at her wedding, if she feels that she will keep it for “one day”, why not, she will be saving a lot of money some time in future BUT

if the dress is now the bearer of unhappy memories, she can consider the following

- she can sell the dress to a rental boutique
- she can sell it on the internet, to a lucky bride
- she can donate it to a charity shop.
- the engagement ring
  - if he and she agree, she should return the ring, especially if it is a family heirloom
  - otherwise, if he ended the engagement, the bride keeps the ring
  - if she ended the engagement, she give the ring back to the groom
  - if he insists, she can keep the ring.
- all gifts should be returned to the giver together with a thank you note.
- monies contributed by family and friends
  - if financial contributions were made by family and friends, at least some of it should be returned, if it is not possible, write an note of apology and gratitude.
- the antenuptial contract
  - only become valid when the marriage is registered.

