

*It's all in the details*



*Decor*

## How to Create the Wedding of Your Dreams Without it Turning Into a Nightmare

A wedding preparation guide by Kathy Ford



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A beautiful bride, Alyssa wrote me, “After over a year of planning my wedding, I was so nervous that everything wouldn’t come together smoothly and flow very well. As we all set up, I instantly realized, it all fit like a perfect glove! It was everything I had dreamed of! It was so beautiful! Almost every guest commented on how beautiful it all was. The fabric and lights on the posts really was the cherry on top! It completely transformed the building from a wood barn, to an elegant dreamy rustic wedding venue. I had scoped out the venue for such a long time, and would “wedding crash” quite often to see how other people decorated. I can honestly say, I think how it was decorated on my wedding day, is by far the most beautiful event ever held there!!!! It left me, my husband, family and friends all speechless! It will forever be a dreamy day to remember!!”

I’ve had many other responses that tell the same story and there must be some reason you are reading this book.

Ask yourself, am I...

- Nervous it will not turn out as the wedding you envisioned?
- Feeling as though too much of your precious time is required to make sure your wedding will turn out?
- Worried it will take too much family time to prepare and execute your big day?
- Wanting to make sure the wonderful memories will last a lifetime?

The order of this book is the order of the steps I use. I prefer to set a path or direction for the entire event from entrance to exit. Of course, you can vary them, but this order is the one I have found to be the most effective. I have tried to present this in the simplest way but if you need to skip around it’s fine.

This is your day! Now is the time for you to dream and decide. Record your decisions along the way. You will do great!

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# Introduction



Kathy and Joe Ford, owners of Event Masters

Hi, I'm Kathy,

Several years ago, my husband and I owned a business that we had worked on for many years. Suddenly after a tragedy, our income was slashed and we no longer had a way to provide for ourselves or our remaining child. At that time we only one left at home.

Because of the tragedy, I had to find something that was fun, happy, and beautiful to take my mind off the incidents that happened. I had to

find something that would bring joy to people and find myself in a happy place.

Joe and I had 6 children and because I had been involved in events before, I thought I should plan and implement each of my children's weddings. I can tell you horror stories about many of these events! My oldest daughter had her wedding in her grandmother's back yard with a wind coming up just before the reception and everyone hustling to hold the gazebo down and rebuild the backdrop in a 15 minute timeframe.

Another child experienced a remodel of the restaurant which delayed the serving 3 hours. We had a retina begin to detach between the ceremony and the reception for another. So what have I learned from this? Events happen! When my youngest became engaged, she said "Mom, love what you do. Don't do my wedding!" She was to be married two years after our tragedy. I then realized that this was a time I would not be able to ever have again.

My daughter helped me see that sometimes you only have a “one time shot” to get it. This was one of those. My mindset shifted from having to do everything myself, to making sure whatever I had to do was done in plenty of time before that big day so that my focus could be on the celebration, and it was beautiful.

We started an event business specializing in weddings. Now after more than 4,000 events, I have compiled some suggestions that are designed to help you avoid some of the pitfalls we have seen over the years.



Without the décor, what is there to take a picture of?

Too often, the decorations are overlooked and saved for last. Make sure you decide how you want this to be. If yours is in a beautiful yard setting, you may not need as much, but don't forget the lighting. It may require a bit more to transform your space.

Many brides are extremely concerned and willing to pay large sums for a photographer that will capture that amazing moment. This is important, but without decorations that focus on you, your pictures may not be everything they could be. This is YOUR day.



# Dreams do come true!



As we take all your dreams of your perfect wedding day and turn them into reality, this book will help you to:

1. Prioritize the things that need to take place.
2. Take time to evaluate the things that you really want to do and can do ahead of time (or assign things that may be best left for someone else to do ).
3. Focus on your child or you.
4. Try to make sure someone else is in charge of the day at hand.
5. Make this a memory that will withstand the test of time.
6. Reduce worries and stress.
7. Give you the chance to fully enjoy this wonderful day!

50 years from now, this day will stand as one of the best memories of your life. We are excited to help make it happen. Now let's go ahead and start narrowing it down starting with style.

# Style

One of the first steps to planning your dream wedding is to decide what style you want to have this event to be. Do you prefer a garden style, BoHo style, roaring 20s, formal, informal? Do you like tailored or a little more casual? Each bride is uniquely different! You are not like anyone else and this should reflect your style. You decide. Once you have selected a style, try to stick with it for your entire event and will feel more organized and provide a feeling of continuity.

Choose the style that speaks to you!

Beach



Themed





# What's Your Wedding Style?

Country



Bohemian



## Formal



## Outdoor



## Pillars





# Cultural Styles

## Polynesian



## Indian



## Spanish



# Your Day, Your Style!

## Garden



## Mountain



# Choose a Color Palette

**Choose a foundation color** - Choose something that will not be too bright, but a foundation for everything else to sit on. For example, a sandy beach might call for a taupe linen and basics in a neutral color. This will be 80% of what you have.

**Next choose a principle color** - This color will give a pop, but not too much to overpower so that you see only that. One example may be a dusty blue with shades of slate etc. This will be 15% of what you have.

**Add an accent color** - This accent or finishing color will add all the bling you need. Maybe it's a touch of gold or some sparkling silver? This will be 5% of what you have.

Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



Example 5



Example 6



Example 7



Example 8



Example 9





# Now Let's Begin Planning the Layout

## Entry Ideas: Am I at the right place?

Place items which let your guests know they are at the right location. Doing this helps them to know where to go when they arrive knowing which door or what direction around a building is important.

Often, addresses or specific directions are hard when it comes to finding a specific road or driveway. Have something visible from the road that indicates they are some place special. Whether your fall or winter wedding need lights to guide the way or your spring or summer wedding need some splashes of color you can find something that speaks to you and help direct your guests. Examples of Entry Ideas:

- Signs
- Balloons
- Flower Balls
- Shepherd hooks
- Lanterns
- Lamp Posts



# The Flow of Traffic

Which direction do you want me to go?

Be sure signs and decor are placed intentionally so when guests arrive their questions can be answered naturally without confusion. If you are in a yard, which side of the house do you want them to go around? If going inside a building, which door should they enter? Again, indicating direction is important.



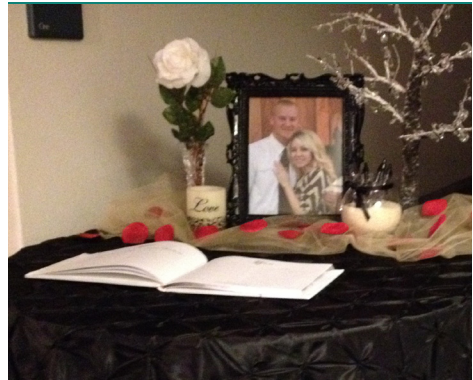
A timeline of your meeting, engagements, and fun times together is also a great way to have as an entrance. Showcase those pictures for your guests to see as they proceed along the way. These can be attached on a shepard hook or can stand by themselves.

# Signing Something

Most people would like to sign something to let you know they have been there and that they care about you. What do you have that might help make this memorable for you?

- A book filled with pictures of engagements or other fun times
- A large picture you can frame
- A table your fiancé made that will be in your home
- A bench for your yard
- A formal guest book

Try to make this something that you will be able to enjoy for years to come. Other ideas might include a photo booth, advice for the bride and groom, date ideas, funny memories guests want to share with the couple, post cards, best wishes, etc.



# Gifts

A table with a linen is one option but something that might be more fun would be to provide a bench, cart, outside furniture, something that will allow a little more décor for your event. Around Christmas time, we even set a large tree inside the room where guests can place their gift for the new couple.



## Be Careful with Cards

Money needs to be kept in a safe place. I had one bride tell me that her family had given her \$2500.00 that was missing from gift cards. Keep these in an area inside the reception area.

I love bird cages because people can put something in without taking anything else out.

Remember, this gift was meant for you not others. Try to avoid open baskets, trunks, etc., where things can be removed easily.





# The Guests Want to See You

After your guests know they are at the right place, signed, left their gift, now it is time to see YOU! Be sure to have something that speaks to you. Something that frames you and your companion.

## Backdrops



There are so many wonderful options that you can choose from. Something that is uniquely you or something that you have seen that you love.



# Personalized Backdrops



# Let's Eat!

The time of day of your event will determine the majority of what your menu will be. Is it lunch or dinnertime? If so, your guests will probably want a little more than finger foods. If your budget requires that you or your family do much of the preparation, keep it simple.

I would have girls tell me that Aunt Suzie was flying in and wanted to help! We have done a lot of catering and through the years i've found Aunt Suzie was helpful for about 20 minutes and then she wanted to be a part of the party! This is family time. Try to make sure family is not involved in a lot of the work. If they need to be, assign 45 minute shifts so that they don't feel like they worked the entire night. The same holds true for friends. Try shifts.

Some traditions call for extended family members to prepare a feast. If this is your tradition, try to provide as much help to them as they would like. Be sure to set a beautiful table. We have more about that in our catering book! Presentation is everything. Adding levels for food can make a much more interesting display than having items flat on the table. You can add some greenery, candles, etc. for more!



# Linens

I know there are many linens on line that you can purchase. Make sure this is something you really want to do. Sometimes in an effort to save money, I have had girls or their moms order linens and not realize that they can spend about 3 hrs. a linen to iron all of the wrinkles out! Or they call the neighborhood (the militia) in to help them. Is that worth your time? If not, consider renting.





# The Celebration

## Consider a DJ

A professional DJ will know just how to involve your whole wedding party... including the guests.. They have a way of including many people in the evening and letting all of your guests know when the festivities of cutting cake, garter, bridal bouquet toss, first dance, etc.

## Save the Last Dance for Me

Some of the sweetest moments I have ever witnessed at the celebration of a marriage come at the end of the evening. Fathers have a chance to dance with their daughters and mothers with their sons. Just before the couple have their first dance together as husband and wife. We did an event for a beautiful young woman that had a handicapped brother. He danced his heart out as his way of celebrating this wonderful day in his sister's life. There a few things that he could have done to show more excitement! Don't let the last dance fade away without you becoming a part of it ... just the beginning of a perfect marriage!



## Chairs

There is nothing that will pull the eye away from your beauty more than if the chairs are rusted, unsightly condition or just ugly.

This is the guest area and you want them to know that they are special too.



# Lighting

Whether inside or out, lighting can create some of the most magical moments. Twinkle lights are pretty, but do not provide as much light as bistro lighting. Edison lights are fun, but very heavy and sometimes a little tricky to hang. There are people that can come in and hang those for you and probably save your sanity. Keep in mind, once it is dark, your party is over. Make sure you have provided the atmosphere so that your event can last as long as you want. Lighting is a great way to do this.





# Ceilings

You can transform almost any building into an elegant party by installing a ceiling drape. However, **BIG CAUTION!** You may want to hire a professional for this. We have done **MANY** ceilings and we generally plan on 16 man hours to do a standard small basketball court, along with 150 yards of fabric and 500 ft. bistro lighting.

A larger cultural hall is about 25 man hours, 200 yards of fabric and 700 ft. of bistro lighting. I did rent my ceiling out to one family once that spent 17 hours with 14 people and scaffolding to produce a ceiling....Try to decide if this is where you want to spend your time. Another factor maybe the time you are allowed in a building to do that transformation.



# Young Children

If you will have a lot of young children attending, try to find a room or space where they can be involved in children's activities. Disney movies, etc, are always great.

Provide snacks, but nothing that will spike their blood sugar and send them skyrocketing, playing tag or running all over. Cheese and crackers are always a good choice. Have some of the parents of these young ones take turns checking on them.

# Wedding Cake

The origins of the wedding cake dates back to ancient Rome, when weddings concluded with the groom breaking a loaf of barley bread over the bride's head, symbolizing fertility. Guests would scramble to pick up the crumbs in order to take home some of that good luck.

In medieval England, small spiced buns were organized into a huge pile, with the bride and groom expected to share a kiss over the towering bread pile. If they could kiss without knocking the tower over, the belief was that they'd enjoy a lifetime of prosperity together.

The wedding cake continues to be part of our celebration today. It can be a pie, rice Krispie treats, cupcakes, donuts, or anything of your choosing. Make it special for you and your love!

My biggest piece of advice is to NOT forget the cake knife.

I love to have the cake displayed where everyone can see it. When places on a higher table, it allows those behind to have a glimpse of the couple feeding each other.

I generally like to leave a space in the center of the celebration where theres room for the cake to be cut, the garter toss, first dance etc. Enjoy these moments.



# The Send Off

Once the party has gone on for a while it is time for the couple to make their exit. This is the perfect moment for the photographer to capture some lovely pictures and celebrate the start of a new beginning. If you use sparklers be sure to have buckets for the burned sparklers so no one steps on them and they don't create a fire hazard.

I once made a rice bag tree for my oldest daughters wedding thinking this would be the perfect sendoff. Instead of untying the bags, they threw the entire bag at them. Not a good idea! Here are some ideas which may work better:

- Bubbles
- Flower peddles
- Streamers
- Glowsticks



# The Cleanup

Once the couple has left who is going to clean up? Here are some important things to remember:

- Who will be taking the gifts out, where are they going?
- Is there a kitchen which needs cleaned?
- What is to be done with the flowers?
- Return Tuxedo
- Return Other Rentals
- How will the decor be cleaned up?

It has been such a pleasure to help you in the design process of your spectacular wedding which is to come. We can't wait for your happily ever after to being. Don't forget to enjoy this process, this is your special day and the thing that will make all the difference is simply all in the details. Let us know how things turn out by emailing us at: [eventmastersdecor@gmail.com](mailto:eventmastersdecor@gmail.com). Best of luck to you!

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