

Wedding day bliss

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and Julie Houghton

PLANNING a wedding requires superhuman effort and a good survival plan to help you get the most out of one of the biggest events of your life.

Anyone who thinks a big wedding can be organised with no frustration, cross words or feelings of being overwhelmed needs a reality check.

There are bound to be hiccups. The bride's mother fancies the big white wedding with six bridesmaids; the groom's people want to book St Paul's Cathedral and have 300 guests, but the couple wants a simple wedding for 50 in Auntie Flo's gorgeous cottage garden.

How can a bride and groom minimise the hassles?

Parents' feelings need to be considered because a wedding is a symbol for parents that their job of parenting has had a successful conclusion — they are handing over the bride and groom to each other's care in the presence of friends and family.

There will be different opinions about what sort of wedding they should have, which relatives should be invited, how many of the couple's friends can be included and how many will be in the wedding party.

The key to managing these obstacles is to allow everyone to express an opinion and to listen to them all. This isn't the same as agreeing with their points of view, but family members will feel less aggrieved if their views have been considered and changes explained.

Work out a list of nearest and dearest who will attend the wedding, and a list of those you are unable to accommodate. Tell the latter you would love to have them at the official reception, but finances and numbers make it impossible.

Consider asking them to join you at a different celebratory function, such as a barbecue before the big day. Usually they'll understand and you can celebrate with everyone who wishes to be there.

Of course, if you are unlucky enough to belong to family whose members refuse to listen to anything other than their own opinions, you will just have to try your best, then plan what you both want.

Thankfully, most couples arrive at the wedding day with everyone wanting it to be a success for the most important people: the bride and groom.

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Survival tips

- Allow everyone to express an opinion, so they know their ideas have been taken into account.
- Listening to people's opinions is not the same as agreeing with them. You won't be able to please everybody and in the end will have to make your own decisions.
- If you can't have everyone to the wedding, plan an additional function to celebrate it.