

Wedding Plans: Only The Strong Survive

Contributed by Matt Katz
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So I'm totally ready to spend the next year-and-a-half of my life talking non-stop about five hours that aren't going to happen until mid-2008. I'm really fine with this. Seriously.

I always knew wedding planning would be the closest thing to eternal damnation that I'd ever experience. According to a stat I just made up, 82 percent of men branded as "commitment-phobic" are just scared of being involved, in any way, with planning a wedding. I've seen way too many fellow men fall during this experience, and only the bravest among us are willing and able.

By proposing, you're temporarily ceding control of your life. Beforehand, I was in charge. I could decide how, when and where the uber-important proposal would go down.

I was able to choose between proposing in a magazine article (as I did); buying a magic plant that grows a leaf saying "Will you marry me?" (that really exists, check it out here it'll blow your mind); or hiring this company to project the proposal below the Eiffel Tower.

But now that I'm engaged, now that I have a fiaaaaannnnce, I'm no longer in charge. I just spend my time answering questions.

The only things you hear as a newly engaged couple are questions. This is what is asked, in order of popularity: 1) When's the Big Day? 2) Where's the Big Day going to be? 3) My step-cousin's bar mitzvah is____, so the Big Day isn't going to be then, is it?

Then there are questions we ask ourselves: Are we supposed to have an engagement party? Does a shower count as an engagement party? Is a boy/girl shower as inappropriate as it sounds? Is commitment really that important these days that people give us gifts just for making a commitment to make a commitment?

And if Elvis marries us in Vegas next Thursday, will we still get cash from relatives?

The first thing Deb and I decided was we need a registry, because registering is -- no sarcasm here -- good times. It's like Supermarket Sweep with things you can't afford.

But what do you register for? We don't live in a home large enough to accumulate useless stuff -- even if it's nicer than the useless stuff we already own. So why can't we register for something that actually could help our lives, like a down payment on a house? Or a new car? Or a "cat condo" for Shmelvis?

Questions, as you can tell, make me anxious. But nothing -- nothing -- prepared me for The List.

Without The List, wedding planning goes nowhere. The List represents relationships past and future; it can end ties, forge bonds, cause fights and make at least two distant relatives roaring angry beyond reason.

This list will haunt me for the next 600-plus days of my life. That I'm sure of.

I compiled The List by copying all the names out of my cell phone. But part of me just wants our wedding open to the public -- that way we don't have to decide whether people we haven't seen since the '90s should get an invitation.

The rest of me wants to register for a Jet Ski and forget about The List for a year.

But that's impossible. I have to face it now. Just like I have to face something even more formidable: the French question.

The French words fiance and fiancee (one's for the boy, one's for the girl, although I'm not sure which is which) are strange. I'm not sure how your nasal passages handle the words, but when I say them I sound like a 7-year-old trying to order fancy wine in a restaurant. We will only use these words sarcastically -- the fiaaaaaannnce and I already have agreed on this.

The engagement process requires all kinds of such decisions about

whether traditions are meaningful or just extreme forms of peer pressure.

Sometimes, two people are meant to be together simply because they agree it's lame to play "Here Comes The Bride" and they agree weddings can still be beautiful if the bride (gasp!) doesn't wear white.

By the way, if anyone's interested, the one tradition we do support is **SENDING ENVELOPES FILLED WITH HUNDREDS AS ENGAGEMENT GIFTS**. We're all about that one. Certified mail, please. Love, Matt & Deb.

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