



*Southern Weddings*  
FRUITFUL SUMMER

*embracing awkward while*

# PLANNING YOUR WEDDING

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# DEAR ENGAGED READER

Congratulations on your engagement!! We couldn't be more thrilled for you as you experience this short, but hopefully very sweet, season of life. While this time sure is fun, we have a little secret for you: this is only the beginning of the good stuff!

As you know well by now, your engagement comes with buckets of decisions. While most of those decisions are hopefully nothing but joyful to make (dresses, cakes, and flowers, oh my!), chances are, others may be more challenging. Possibly for the first time as a couple, y'all are facing finances, family dynamics, strong opinions coming from left and right, and more potentially sticky situations together, so this week, we want to encourage you to embrace even the most awkward conversations and grow closer because of them.

This week, you'll hear from two gals in our office who have extra special places in their hearts for you and your time as a bride. From the minute you say "yes" to that handsome gent on one knee, right through to your sparkler exit, they're on your side cheering you on, and we hope their words encourage you this week!

Thanks so much for joining us for Fruitful Summer! Whether you're a few days or a few years away from your big day, we hope this week helps equip you to make the coming months extra special!

Love,

*Ja*   *emily*   *nicole*   *Marissa*  
*Kristin*   *Lisa*   *Amber*   *Jess*

Got your Berry Tea ready?  
Make a glass and sip along  
with us as we chat about  
embracing awkward during  
your engagement!



**FIND THE  
RECIPE HERE!**

**STAY AWHILE!** Chat with  
us on any of our accounts.



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*how to*

EMBRACE AWKWARD WHILE

# PLANNING YOUR WEDDING



*Hi friend! We're tickled pink to weigh in on this week's Fruitful Summer guide to embracing awkward during your engagement. We've learned a lot over the years while chatting with thousands of brides just like you, and hope we can offer some encouragement. We're cheering you on!*

*Love, Lisa and Kristin*

*a reminder*

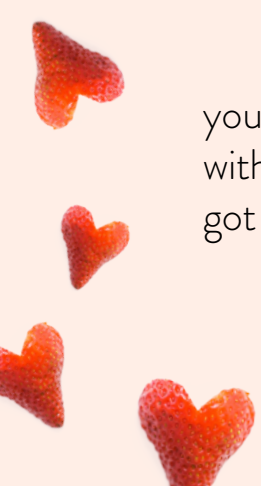
# WHAT REALLY MATTERS



Weddings can come with buckets of expectations—from yourselves, from your family, from your friends, and even from acquaintances who don't hesitate to share their opinions on social media. We're all for Southern manners and soaking in the great advice that people have to offer, but if we can give you one piece of encouragement for the months ahead, it's this: your wedding is about the two of you becoming husband and wife. That's it, y'all.

There are SO many other wonderful benefits of a wedding that we certainly don't want to downplay, but when it all comes down to it, the start of your marriage is where we want your main focus to be, at all times. It's easier said than done, but try to keep that in mind when you're torn between reception chairs, you and your mama can't agree on a tricky seating chart, or your future in-laws are insisting on a traditional cake when you and your beau really want to serve pie instead. This is *your* day, and as soon as it starts to feel like it's more for someone else than the two of you, it's time to put the train brakes on and make some tweaks. Not even the desire to have a meaningful and hospitable wedding is more important than the simple and glorious fact that you're getting married!

We can't promise focusing on your marriage will make talking about your wedding budget easy, but it will help you enter into each conversation with a more balanced perspective and your heart in the right place. You've got this!





## EMBRACING AWKWARD

# TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF A TOUGH CONVERSATION

While hard conversations are never fun, we promise that sitting down, getting on the same page, and finding a solution or compromise is well worth embracing the awkward for. Here are a few of our tips for making sure your conversation is productive, fair, and as comfortable as possible. And the best part? After you're done, you'll be able to move to the next task on your wedding planning to do list with a clear head!

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### SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS.

Instead of ambushing your parents/fiancé/future in-laws/whoever with a potentially sticky conversation, give them a little bit of notice so they can start thinking about that topic too. Choose a comfy space to chat, bring a snack to share, and kick off the conversation with one of our “break the ice” questions on page 13.

### CHOOSE YOUR TOPIC!

If you're talking about finances or the budget, go to **PAGE 7**

If you're talking about wedding priorities, go to **PAGE 10**

If you're talking about the guest list, go to **PAGE 8**

If you're talking about who to include in your wedding party, go to **PAGE 11**

If you're talking about difficult family dynamics, go to **PAGE 9**

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IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT

# FINANCES AND THE BUDGET

**HAVE AN IDEA AHEAD OF TIME OF HOW MUCH YOU EXPECT YOUR WEDDING MIGHT COST AND WHY** (this will require some research about how much your venue and any must-have vendors charge, as well as your estimated guest count). Being prepared will make your conversation much more productive!

**GO INTO THE CONVERSATION WITH A GRATEFUL HEART.** Be ready to accept whatever someone may want to contribute, no matter what the dollar amount is.

**AVOID THE COMPARISON GAME.** Few things will sour this conversation more than bringing up what parents contributed to sibling weddings, how much friends paid for their weddings, etc.



Ready to end the conversation on a high note? Go to **PAGE 12**

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IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT  
**THE GUEST LIST**

**TALK WITH YOUR FIANCÉ AHEAD OF TIME** about the size of your ideal wedding, and be aware of how many guests your ideal venue(s) hold.

**TRY TO STICK TO “ALL OR NOTHING” TERMS** when deciding on questions like kids, plus ones, etc. Being clear about something like an “adults only” reception is generally fairer and easier to communicate than trying to take situations on a case-by-case basis.

**BE RESPECTFUL AND LISTEN** to the reasons someone may want a certain person invited, but don't be afraid to be firm if you have a legitimate reason for not wanting that person at your wedding



Ready to end the conversation on a high note? Go to **PAGE 12**

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IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT

# DIFFICULT FAMILY DYNAMICS

**BE PROACTIVE.** If you're trying to manage people who don't get along, it's often best to be as accommodating as possible. It's better to tweak your seating chart now than have to worry about diffusing tension on the big day.

**SEEK COUNSEL FROM PEOPLE** (perhaps your parents or grandparents) who may understand different family dynamics better than you do, and heed any advice they have to offer.



Ready to end the conversation on a high note? Go to **PAGE 12**

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IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT  
**WEDDING  
PRIORITIES**

**CHOOSE YOUR BATTLES.** If you can let someone else have their way on a detail you don't care as much about, they may be more willing to support you about a decision that matters more to you.

**STAND UP FOR YOURSELVES.** If you and your fiancé agree that something or someone is particularly important to include, don't be afraid to (very gently!) put your foot down. This day is about the two of you, and it's important to make sure you end up with a celebration you're both truly happy with.

If you and your fiancé are having a hard time agreeing on priorities, remember, **IT'S HIS DAY, TOO**. He needs to feel just as comfortable with your vendors, decor, etc. as you do, and the more places you can find to represent him well, the better. See it as an opportunity to creatively combine your two unique styles into something even more special!



Ready to end the conversation on a high note? Go to **PAGE 12**

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IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT

# WHO TO INCLUDE IN YOUR WEDDING PARTY

Remember, **THERE ARE NO RULES** that say you have to invite someone into your wedding party just because you were part of theirs. Decide what is best for you and your beau and trust that the people who love you will understand.

**BRAINSTORM OTHER ROLES** special people can play in your wedding. How about readers, greeters, or ushers? A house party, one of our favorite Southern traditions, is one particularly sweet way to include lots of your favorite ladies in your big day.

In some cases, **IT MAY BE WORTH IT TO INCLUDE SOMEONE** than to exclude them and risk hurting your relationship long-term. This is especially the case if your fiancé wants you to include someone like his sister in your wedding party—look at it as the perfect opportunity to bond with her!

**WHEN IN DOUBT, KEEP IT SMALL.** Sticking to siblings-only wedding parties is a gentle and graceful way to avoid hurt feelings or confusion.



Ready to end the conversation on a high note? Go to **PAGE 12**

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### **END THE CONVERSATION WELL.**

Reiterate your love and the joyful reason for all these decisions (you're getting married!). Hug it out, and make plans for any follow-up conversations or action steps that need to happen next.

# CONVERSATIONS TO BREAK THE ICE

If the idea of sitting down with your future in-laws to talk about your wedding budget makes you squirm, why not start with one of these topics instead? These would also make great talking points with your parents, grandparents, and relatives.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO  
ABOUT OUR WEDDING?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM YOUR WEDDING DAY?

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE WEDDING  
YOU'VE EVER BEEN TO.

WHAT'S THE FUNNIEST THING THAT HAS EVER  
HAPPENED TO YOU AT A WEDDING?

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEEN IN A WEDDING?  
HAVE YOU WORN ANY PARTICULARLY MEMORABLE OUTFITS?


WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WEDDING TRADITION?


**BONUS!** Did any of these conversations spark ideas for your wedding? Including a detail or tradition someone mentioned may be a meaningful addition to your own special day, as well as a sweet way to honor that person.

# BUILD YOUR TEAM

*go, team, go!*

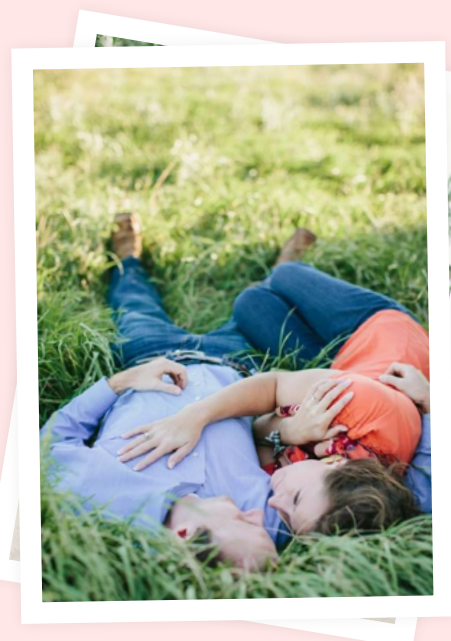
The best thing about embracing awkward conversations while you're engaged is that you don't have to have them alone—you and your fiancé are in it together! The time to really prioritize putting one another first starts now, and standing up for each other and having each other's backs in tricky situations can be a great help in preparing for marriage. To remind you that you're on the same team, fill out your answers to the questions on the next page together—everything from your team name to your team huddle—to remind you that you're on the same team!

 Our Huddle Activity? When we've had a rough day, nothing feels better to Dave and me than ordering a pizza and snuggling up on our couch to dig in together, funny sitcom rerun on TV optional. It's amazing how a few slices of pepperoni can melt the stress of the day away!

 KPW and I are big believers in the pinky promise—we use it when making both fun and not-so-fun decisions. Everyone knows you can't fib when you make a pinky promise! It stands firm as our "secret handshake" and reminds us that we are both on #TeamWinchester.

## DATING OR MARRIED?

You don't have to be engaged to fill out this page! Have fun with it if you're dating or married, too.



**OUR TEAM NAME**

.....

**OUR MANTRA OR SLOGAN**

**OUR  
COLORS**

**OUR  
MASCOT**

**OUR  
PUMP-UP SONG**

**OUR HANDSHAKE**

.....

**OUR CODE WORD**

(a word to use to break the tension during a tough moment—the sillier, the better!)

**OUR HUDDLE ACTIVITY**

(an easy activity the two of you can do to reconnect)

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*next week:*

KEEP GOING IN

# NEWLYWED LIFE

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