

WORST WEDDING FAUX PAS

Every bride has her share of stories about things that went wrong, either during the planning or at the ceremony or reception. Here are some samples of really difficult scenarios area brides have faced:

MISSING RSVPS

The number one complaint concerns RSVP problems. “Why can’t people just fill out that little card to say how many are coming and what their meal selection is?” laments one bride. “It is just common sense and decent manners to do that.” But many prospective wedding guests these days “forget” to mail back that little card, and force the bride, her family, or members of her wedding party to make frantic calls in the days before the wedding.

Not returning the reply card causes untold problems for an already-nervous bride. “I couldn’t do the seating charts because I was missing no less than 20 responses,” another bride complains. “And the reception hall was pressuring me for a final food count. This was one week before the wedding!”

NO SHOWS

Still another problem involves guests who do not show up after sending in a response. “There is always the possibility of somebody becoming ill or having a true emergency in the family,” says one expert. “But short of serious illness or death, or a missed plane connection, there is no excuse not to show up at a wedding.” Since many weddings cost from \$50 and up per person, a no-show couple accounts for an significant financial loss.

UNINVITED GUESTS

Even worse than people who do not reply or show up for a wedding are those who show up with an uninvited guest in tow. “It is never, ever permissible to bring somebody to a wedding reception who has not been invited. It does not matter if a relative has dropped into town or you could not get a babysitter. Trying to seat an extra guest or two creates nightmares for the catering staff and is just plain rude to the bridal couple who have planned so carefully,” the expert explains.

NO GIFT?

What about guests who do not give a gift? “There is absolutely nothing you can do about this,” the expert says. “You cannot call and ask somebody if they have given a gift, because if they have not, it is embarrassing all the way around.” And, while it would seem basic good manners to give a gift to the bridal couple, there is no etiquette law that a guest must do so. It is considered unseemly to expect a wedding gift, but the reality is that couples

feel that a gift is expected from guests who have been dined and entertained.

NOISY CHILDREN

Badly-behaved children are another exasperation to brides and grooms. “No kidding, my cousin’s kid carried on through the entire church ceremony and they never took him out,” one bride reveals. “You can hear him on my video. Their excuse later was that they did not want to miss the ceremony. Never mind that it was my once-in-a-lifetime experience!” Some couples choose not to include children at the reception, but anybody can attend the church service, even without an invitation.

INAPPROPRIATE ATTIRE

Attire is another faux pas that has brides pulling out their carefully-coiffed hair. “If you are having an evening wedding at a fancy venue, you would think guests would know it was a dressy affair,” says one recent bride. “But I had people show up in cargo shorts and Hawaiian shirts!” More and more brides are being forced to mention a dress code on their invitations or web page.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU

For all the faux pas committed by inconsiderate guests, the bride and groom can be guilty as well. Too many neglect the very basic task of writing thank you notes to anyone who has sent a gift, performed a service (yes, you should write to your florist and baker to tell them how lovely their creations were), or participated in any way (drivers, readers). You have a year to accomplish this, but the sooner, the better.