



Whose Wedding Is It ANYWAY?

By *Elena Brouwer*

JIM PROPOSED THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY, getting down on his knee. Irene said yes. They had so many things in common and were so in love. Everybody knew the match was made in heaven. They set the wedding date, and that's when the trouble started.

Parents from both sides decided to get in the act. After all, they thought the "children" needed help planning the wedding, reception, even the honeymoon! Does this sound familiar?

Given the vast amount of work a wedding entails, some couples may want the extra help offered by family. Planning a wedding can turn into a full time job. Some of the important decisions the bride and groom need to make are the following:

- What wedding ceremony do they want: religious or civil?
- What kind of budget and who is paying for what?
- What time of year? This is exceptionally important because it will determine the dress theme or location for the wedding.
- What venue will they choose for the reception? Fancy or casual?
- How many guests should be invited: an informal or intimate group (up to 75 people), semi-formal/medium size group (75 to 200 people) or formal group (200 people or more)?
- Who will be invited from both sides of the family and are children allowed?
- What food should be served at the reception: Brunch; Buffet Lunch; or Formal sit down Dinner?
- Who should be in the wedding party?

This list gets longer as the date approaches. A growing trend is for both sides to contribute equally to the expenses. If you go by the traditional wedding protocol, it calls for the bride and/or her family to pay for the following: invitation, wedding dress; groom's ring; event/wedding planner; reception fees, including food and drinks; all flowers for the ceremony and reception; photographs; videos; and transportation.

The expenses for the groom and/or his family usually include: marriage license; personal attire or clothing rental; bride's

engagement and wedding rings; rehearsal dinner; corsages for mothers and boutonnieres for groomsmen; and honeymoon trip.

Luckily, our couple decided to present a united front in their quest to navigate the treacherous terrain that is the relationship with their mothers-in-law. They came up with the following solutions:

Rule # 1

Set up boundaries. Then determine which boundaries you don't want crossed.

Rule # 2

Communicate your expectations to the mothers-in-law. Let them know in a gentle, kind, but firm way that the final decisions are yours to be made.

Rule # 3

Make sure your future husband or wife takes a hefty share of the responsibility of dealing with mom. Brides, don't fall into the common trap of being the one who has to deal with all family turmoil! Your future husband is a big boy, and he can deal with his own family.

Rule # 4

Get your mothers-in-law involved in some of the wedding planning tasks. They may just be feeling left out and lacking attention.

Rule# 5

Allow for minor misunderstandings. No relationship is perfect. Using kindness and tact will go a long way.

Our couple decided to hire a wedding planner, who was worth every penny. She had the expertise and contacts to make everything run smoothly. She stuck to their budget, and they had more time to spend planning the rest of their lives together.

I can happily report that I attended Irene and Jim's wedding. Everything went beautifully and without a hitch. As I was leaving, I overheard the bride's mother-in-law say to a friend "Irene is one tough cookie. She didn't let herself get pushed around. We are going to get along just fine." SA