



Going Home Married

How to Plan a Meaningful Wedding
Without Losing Your Mind

Suzyn Jackson Gonzalez

Doorways are interesting things. A house's doorway is like its face to the world. It can tell you a lot about the people who live inside. Are there flowers in pots? Is the door lipstick red or builder's beige? Is the paint peeling? Does the doorbell work? A doorway also colors your experience as you step inside. The high, pointed arch of a gothic cathedral lifts your eyes upwards, to heaven. The low door of a Wabi Sabi teahouse forces even an emperor to bow his head.

Your wedding is a doorway into your marriage. In a world where many milestones have become all but meaningless, and "coming of age" looks a lot like "moseying along," a wedding marks a massive transition from one mode of life to another. It can be either a huge, stressful distraction, or a meaningful foundation for the life you're building together. I wrote this book to help you quell the stress and dig deep to find your own meaning.

DID I SAY STRESS?

Oh, yes.

Let's take a look at some of the thoughts that may be winging their way through your psyche, whether from magazines, your (well intentioned, of course) friends and family, or your own preconceptions.

Your wedding day must be perfect, and [insert expensive item here] will make it perfect.

Can we talk about perfect for a minute? It's an advertiser's mind game. It doesn't exist. That's the whole meaning of perfection: an unattainable ideal. Unattainable. Hear that? You'll never get there.

Here is what I know: the trickster god *loves* weddings. The forces of the universe that cause mischief and mayhem will be present on your big day. Your wedding will not be perfect. I hope it will be wonderful, magical, and deeply meaningful, but I know it will *not* be perfect.

So embrace this idea now: if you go home married, your wedding was a success.

Your wedding day is the most important day of your life.

Um, how about graduation from law school, or the day you met your partner, or having your first kid, or your sixth kid, or getting to the top of Kilimanjaro, or how about getting born yourself? How is any day *the most* important? We're back in advertising gimmick land. Advertisers love superlatives. Just look at car ads: the *best* fuel mileage, the *most* rugged, the *highest* resale value. Any superlative is a big red flag that you're leaving reality and heading for perfectionville. Don't go there.

Everyone you invite—and everyone you don't—is going to judge you.

Yeah, well, this one is true. In fact, everyone is judging you all the time. Ok, not *all the time*—only when they're thinking about you. Which is not much of the time at all, since they're spending most of their time worrying about how everyone else is judging them.

Pssst...

Hi! You're reading an excerpt from my new book. If you are enjoying it, would you please pass this PDF along to your friends?

I will tell you this: when life gets tough and your marriage is tested—when you're sitting in a doctor's office hearing bad news, when you're trying to decide whether to move across the country for an amazing job, when you can't remember whose turn it is to change the 2am diaper—what people thought of your first dance moves is not going to have much bearing. But the memory of dancing with your partner

in joy and celebration might just lift you up.

In short, you've got to decide whether to live your life for them or for you. I know—much easier said than done! If this one is really hard for you (it sure is for me), please go now and google "Brené Brown TED."

Wedding = _____

I want you to write down, quickly, whatever comes to mind when you hear the word "wedding." Here, I'll get you started:

- ❖ Big pouffy white dress
- ❖ Crab canapés
- ❖ Open bar
- ❖ Custom-printed cocktail napkins

Keep going...

Now hear this: your wedding does not have to look like that. Those are preconceptions, and you get to toss the ones you don't like in the garbage. Take a big marker and cross out anything in the list above that doesn't feel right.

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IT'S THE CEREMONY, STUPID!

(Sorry, I didn't mean to call you stupid. It's the ceremony, sweetheart!)

Cut to the chase time: You're getting married. You're going to start using words like "my husband" and "my wife" (and yes, you're allowed to giggle the first 18 times you use them.)

You wouldn't know it from reading a wedding magazine, but the process of getting married is pretty simple. You do some legal paperwork (a whole lot less than when you buy a house). You show up at a certain time and place, and you promise to love and respect each other for the rest of your lives. An official-type person declares you married. Boom.

A wedding is simply an event where you get married. The ceremony is *it*. The ceremony is what the day is about. Everything else is secondary—the pageantry, the flowers, the dress, the trimmings. It's all icing on the cake (as it were). It's there to announce, amplify, and celebrate the ceremony. You're forming a lifelong commitment. It's one of the few times you get to mark a major life event in the style of your choosing.

A wedding also has deep spiritual and emotional implications. It is an affair of the heart, mind, body, and wallet. Only you know what you need to *feel* married, emotionally and spiritually.

HOW THIS BOOK CAN HELP

Fine, I can hear you thinking. That's all very nice but it doesn't help me choose whether to get the bells or the doves printed on my cocktail napkins!

I get it. You've got a gazillion choices in front of you, each one seems monumentally important, and you're feeling overwhelmed. Ok—big deep breath.

Here's the secret: You've already made the two most important choices: you chose your partner, and the two of you chose to get married. You have one more choice to make, something I call the touchstone, which is really just a way of remembering what this whole wedding thing means to you. Once you've made that third

choice, all the rest—the dress and the canapés and the cocktail napkins—will sort of fall into line. You'll make the choices that reflect your touchstone. Easy.

Throughout this book, I try to reduce things to their most basic elements, in order to make them easier to think about. When you can see the skeleton clearly, you are free to think creatively about fleshing it out and adding touches to make the result uniquely your own.

Are you loving it?

The book's available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Or ask your local bookstore to order ISBN 1469937379.

THE LIST

When I was planning my wedding, what I wanted more than anything was a list, a simple list that would tell me, "Here's everything you need to think about, and once you've thought about it all, you're done." I read many wedding books, and they all had a list of some sort. Thing was, every list was a little bit different, and they all, well, they all had stuff that was... a little bit silly, or slightly pretentious, or, at the very least, not necessary. I started to divide the lists into optionals and non-optionals, and once I thought about it that way, I saw that the non-optional list was pretty short. Would you like to see it?

- ❖ A ceremony
- ❖ A place and time for the ceremony
- ❖ An officiant
- ❖ Witnesses
- ❖ Some legal paperwork
- ❖ Something to wear
- ❖ A way to tell everyone what's going on
- ❖ A way to thank everyone who helped or wished you well

Truly, if you've got all that, you've got a wedding.

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Guests and a party are optional. They go together, though. If you're going to have guests, you really ought to feed them—anything else is just rude. And a party without guests—that's not much of a party.

So, if you want a party, there are a few more non-optionals:

- ❖ Guest list
- ❖ A way to invite people
- ❖ A place and time for the party
- ❖ A transition from ceremony to party
- ❖ Food
- ❖ Music
- ❖ Fun, however you define it

It's still a pretty short list!!

This is not to say that you can't have all the rest: the stretch limo, the rose bower, the centerpieces and the professional photographer, the rehearsal dinner and the gift registry and the trillion other things that we've convinced ourselves are necessary. You can have them and the tent too, darling, *if that's what you want*. Just know that they're optional. That you're choosing them. That they're not required. And most importantly, know that if something goes wrong with any of the optionals, you're still going home married.

If you remember nothing else from this book, remember this:

If you go home married, your wedding was a success.

If, a month later, you *feel* married, your wedding was a triumph.



Thanks for reading!

I truly believe that this book is going to help people. And to reach those people, I need your help.

See, there is no giant anonymous “book buying public.” No “media machine.” There are only people, like you and me, talking to each other. So please, if you believe in this book and its message: talk about it. Share it with your friends and neighbors. Tweet it. Post a review. Give it as an engagement gift.

Thank you for helping me share *Going Home Married* with the world!
I'm suzyngonzalez@gmail.com, and I'd love to hear from you!

Suzyn