

*“The Resources You Need
To Have The Wedding Of
Your Dreams...”*

**21 Essential
Tools For Your
Dream Wedding**

Essential Tools For Your Dream Wedding

In This Booklet You Will Learn:

How to create an easy organizer and customize it for your wedding.

The custom Wedding Budget Calculator.

The Wedding Checklist Tool.

The essential Dream Wedding Websites.

How to set up your list of favorite resources.

How to find time in your busy schedule for wedding planning.

When you get engaged, nobody hands you the owner's manual, "Everything You Need To Do, Say, Beg, Borrow and Steal To Plan Your Dream Wedding." It would be awfully nice if they did.

Most brides are on their own, fumbling in the dark for the tools and resources they need to make it happen. Even with your married friends and family helping, it's still a struggle.

I believe there are very few "essentials" necessary to plan a wedding. In my opinion, you can plan your wedding any way you please, whether that's traditional or downright weird is up to you.

Just about all you *need* is a couple who wants to get hitched, a marriage license, and somebody to make it official.

That said, there are a few tools that make planning your Dream Wedding much, much easier. Having these resources and tools in your back pocket makes planning a cinch.

Your Dream Wedding Organizer

You're about to start collecting ideas, business cards, price lists, brochures and magazine tears outs for your wedding. It follows that you need somewhere to *put everything*. DON'T waste money on an over-priced "wedding" binder.

Here's what you need:

1) **A 3 Ring Binder.** You can buy this at any office supply store, in any color that suits your fancy, for only a few dollars.

2) **A 3 Ring Hole Punch.** You'll need this to punch holes into flyers and papers to keep in your binder.

3) **20 Dividers for Your Binder With Colored Tabs.** Use these to create a section for each area of planning your wedding: Budget, Timelines & Checklists, Location, Catering, Attire, Invitations & Programs, Favors, Transportation, Music, Photo & Video, Ceremony, Registry, Guest List, Flowers, and Miscellaneous. (Add any additional categories that apply to you and skip those that don't.)

That's it! If someone bought you a fancy wedding binder, feel free to use it. Just tear out everything you don't need and add anything that might be missing.

This Binder will be your faithful friend through every step of planning your wedding. **Keep everything wedding-related inside that binder.** With all your information in one place it will be easy to stay on top of the details.

Dream Wedding Exercise:

- 1) Create your own Wedding Binder using one of the options described above.
- 2) Get yourself a notebook to write down all your Dream Wedding plans. If you like, just add some blank sheets of paper to the back of your Wedding Binder.

Organizer or Creative?

"There are two kinds of people in the world..."

(Don't you just hate when people say that? As if every person on the entire planet can be reduced to these two things.)

Of course, when I say it, it's true.

There are two kinds of people: *ORGANIZERS* and *CREATIVES*.

Organizers are people who prefer structure. They are constantly thinking about what happens next. Organizers need a *schedule* and a *plan* to feel comfortable. They like to make check lists and To Do lists. They like *systems* and *rules* for getting things done. Organizers like to be early or on time for appointments, or they get really cranky.

Creatives prefer a spontaneous, unstructured approach. They feel confined by systems and rules. Creatives don't like to plan things; they'd rather just let them happen. They tend to be really good at "going with the flow" and improvising. Creatives are often late for Appointments, and they might not even notice.

Have you identified yourself yet?

I am an Organizer. I was practically born with a schedule in my hand. My first question upon waking in the morning is, "What's the plan?"

But I have lots of experience with Creatives. My father and brother are Creatives. Most of my friends are, too. And so is my husband.

While my husband is groggily slurping his coffee in the morning, I ask what he wants for dinner tonight. And he looks at me like I have two heads.

"How can I possibly know what I'll want to eat for dinner? I haven't even had breakfast yet."

Organizers like to know what's coming next, while Creatives are totally immersed in the present moment.

Organizers and Creatives have been battling forever. Organizers think Creatives are unreliable and completely disorganized; they've been trying to force their systems, structures, rules and schedules on them for decades.

Creatives think Organizers never have any fun because they are too busy planning every moment of their lives; they've been trying to convince Organizers to just *chill*.

I used to think my husband was doing it on purpose, until I learned about these two personalities from the Time Line Theory of Wyatt Woodsmall, an expert performance coach and Neuro-Linguistic Programming trainer.

It turns out the Organizer or Creative personality is determined by the way a person orients herself in time. Neither one is right or wrong; both have advantages and disadvantages.

Why am I bringing this up?

Well, we've already discussed how essential it is to be organized if you want your dream wedding. You'll need to set up a system to help you do that.

If you're an Organizer, using a system will be natural and easy for you. But if you're a Creative, it might feel a little uncomfortable.

I'd love to teach you a single organizational system that will work for everyone, but I can't. Organizers and Creatives are just too different for a one-size-fits-all approach. I refuse

to force you into a system created by an Organizer that may not work for you.

But the bottom line is: if you don't have an organizational system working for you already, **you need one to plan your wedding**. Without one, you'll forget something critical that could ruin your wedding day. You'll be overwhelmed, rushed and frustrated, which makes it impossible to enjoy being a bride.

When you have an organizational system, you can relax. You'll know that you've got everything under control and you'll be reminded to do things when you need them. Your dream wedding can unfold naturally and you can enjoy the ride.

I've identified the best, simple organizational systems you can use to plan your wedding. If you're a Creative, you don't have to force yourself into an rigid Organizer structure, but you will have to find some way to keep yourself on track.

A few things to keep in mind planning your wedding with any system:

- 1) **Customize Your Checklists and Timelines.** Most of the wedding checklists you find out there are *ridiculously* detailed and much of it won't apply to you. If it doesn't fit your dream wedding, CHUCK IT. Make it your own.
- 2) **Put Everything In One Place.** An organized binder is easiest to manage, but it can be a drawer or a file folder or a big cardboard box labeled "Wedding." If you have contracts in one spot and your contact information in another, *you'll forget something important*.
- 3) **Use What Works For You.** You may already have a way to stay organized, whether it's a wall calendar, day planner, or computer program. Adopt that system for your wedding.

Easy Organizing

One of our brides had a particularly unpleasant experience because she didn't have an organizational system to keep her on track.

Amanda was not only a bride, she was a professional photographer who got married in June. Not only did she have her own wedding to worry about, she had a slew of other weddings she was photographing right in prime season.

Of all people, Amanda should have known how important it was to stay organized. But she forgot.

Amanda had to guarantee a minimum of 100 guests at her wedding. She sent out the

invitations three months before her wedding date. As the big day got closer, it started to look like they wouldn't make the minimum.

She had planned to send invitations out to her B list, but because she didn't have a system to keep her on track, she forgot. There wasn't enough time.

Amanda ending up paying for 20 plates of food, over \$1,600, that didn't even get eaten.

It was a \$1,600 mistake that could have been easily avoided with a simple system to keep her organized.

Now that we've established how absolutely *essential* being organized is when it comes to your wedding, let's talk about options.

For Creative types, the idea of having an "organizational system" might feel like being in a cage. Confining. Restrictive. *Boring*.

But in reality, having an organizational system gives you the freedom to go where you want to go. Your organizational system is like the rules of the road when you're driving.

Because you have traffic lights, signs and driving rules to guide you, you can enjoy a ride in relative safety and confidence pretty much anywhere you want. You can trust that the traffic lights and stop signs will let you know when you need to take action.

In a similar way, your organizational system acts as a guide to remind you of actions you need to take so that you can totally lose yourself in the moment, trusting your system to keep you on track.

Here are 5 simple ways to keep yourself organized:

- 1) **A Day Planner** - A day planner includes a monthly calendar as well as daily inserts for To Do lists and scheduling appointments. I swear by the Franklin Covey day planner I've been using for years. It's simple, easy to use and portable.



- 2) **A Wall Calendar** - It doesn't get simpler than this. Just write your appointments on the boxes for each day. If you choose this method, you'll also need to fix a piece of paper to it so you can record your monthly wedding tasks and to do lists.
- 3) **Calendar Software** - Organizing software can integrate your calendar, email and contact information with your computer and telephone. ACT! Contact Manager,

Outlook Express or MobileMe for Mac are great options. If you're a Google girl, check out [Google Calendar](#). [Remember the Milk](#) is another easy, free calendar software you can use.

4) **Blackberry or iPhone** - If you already use one of these babies, just integrate your system into the calendars and daily reminders you've already got.

5) **The Everywhere Notebook** - This is a totally "non-system" system. Buy a notebook, lined or unlined, and bring it *everywhere*. Each page represents one day. Record your appointments and to do tasks on that page. Write down any thoughts or reminders at the bottom and transfer them to an appropriate date for future action.

Once you pick a system, commit to using it. If you don't *use it*, it doesn't work. No matter what method you choose, using it *every day* is the only way it can keep you on track.

If you only check in with your system once in a while, it won't do its job. You'll forget what you were supposed to remember and you'll end up disorganized and overwhelmed.

This means using your organizational system must become a *habit*.

You need to be able to trust your system to remind you of what you need to remember when you need to remember it. Then you can dump all your worries and anxieties about how much you have to do because you know everything is written on your calendar/software/day planner/notebook.

Do this exercise **NOW**. Don't wait another moment in your planning. A little bit of effort now will prevent hours of worry, nightmares, wasted time and wasted money.

Dream Wedding Exercise:

1) **Choose an organizational system that works for you.** What have you used in the past to keep you on track? If you have a system that works already, use that for your wedding To Dos and appointments. If not, choose something that seems simple and easy. Don't try to tackle a complicated software program if technology is not your thing.

2) **Once you choose your system, commit to using it for at least 30 days.** Tell your fiancé about it. Make a commitment to your friends.

3) **Pick a time when you will check your organizational system at the same time each day.** It can be first thing in the morning or when you turn on your computer. Just make sure you create a

habit of looking at it every day.

4) **Use your chosen system to track your appointments and wedding to do lists every day.** Set it up in a spot where you literally trip over it or stare at it automatically, so that you don't have to remember to pull it out.

Your Budget

The most important essential for planning your dream wedding is a solid wedding budget.

Budget. ICK.

When I started planning my wedding I had only a vague idea of what a budget was. I just knew *everybody* says you need one.

Did your parents ever tell you that you couldn't have something because it "wasn't in the budget?"

My mom told me that all the time. I thought a budget was an excuse she used so she didn't have to buy me what I wanted.

It's no wonder "budget" is a dirty word. For most of us, it represents all the things we **CANT** have.

The word "budget" actually has several meanings:

The estimate of income and expense for the future.

The plan based on that estimate.

The total money needed to complete the entire project.

The process of planning and allocating funds.

The budget I'm talking about here is simply the total amount of money you have to spend on your wedding and a plan for spending it.

I've already explained **WHY** you must commit to your budget if you want to have your dream wedding. But it bears repeating because it's just that darn important.

If you don't have a budget, it's like taking a road trip without any idea of where you're going, how you'll get there or how much it will cost.

You need a *plan* when you want to get somewhere. Without a plan, your trip won't end up *anything* like what you expected.

Your budget provides the money part of your plan for a dream wedding. It lets you achieve that goal because you'll know what you have to work with and what to do to get there.

Not having a budget prevents your dream wedding because you end up spending without knowing what you have to work with. Without a budget you will overspend and end up in debt.

A wedding budget allows you to create a wedding day that totally fits you and your budget that will also impress your guests.

On the other hand, without a budget you end up settling for what you can afford, even if it's not what you want. Your guests won't have as much fun and they probably won't even remember your wedding day.

A wedding budget helps you take control of planning your wedding, so that you can feel confident and secure in your choices.

But if you don't have a budget, your expenses quickly get out of control, leaving you worried about going broke.

That's where this next essential tool comes in.

Wedding Budget Calculator

Your wedding budget consists of three parts:

- 1) *How much total money you have to spend.*
- 2) *The categories you will spend money on.*
- 3) *How much you'll be spending in each of those categories.*

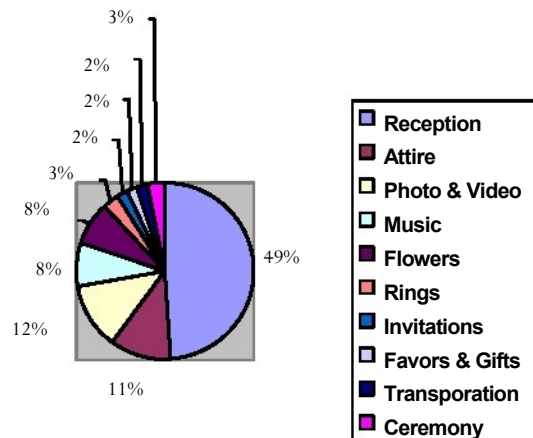
The average cost of a wedding is \$21,800. But that does NOT mean that half of brides spend more than that amount and half spend less. In fact, according to The Wedding Report,



80% of couples spend LESS than \$21,800 on their weddings.

The real "average" cost of a wedding is closer to \$15,000.

Wedding Budget Categories and Approximate Percentage of Overall Budget include:



Some of these categories may not apply to you. You also need to budget for tips, miscellaneous expenses and a honeymoon.

All of which means the budget numbers proposed by this chart, and in every magazine and wedding website, are going to be *way off* when it comes to your wedding.

So how are you supposed to figure out your budget?

That's where the [Wedding Budget Calculator](#) comes in. It lets you plug in your total budget number, then fiddle with the individual categories so that you can spend more on some and less on others without blowing your overall budget.

Your budget for each category is an *estimate*.

It's important to remember this so that you don't get stressed out if the numbers don't add up the first time around. It's just an *estimated plan*, meant to be adjusted as you gather information on actual costs.

This budget tool is essential for planning your dream wedding because it lets you shift your budget in seconds. There's no need to freak out if your budget won't work because you can move things around until it does.

Then you can print out your customized wedding budget and put it in your Wedding Binder.

Ultra Cool Features of The Wedding Budget Calculator

- You plug in your overall budget, size of your bridal party, and number of guests and, Voila! It spits out approximate budgets for each of your major wedding expenses.
- You can click on the 'plus' sign to the left of each category and get an approximate breakdown for each expense, such as gown, tuxedo, favors, and bridesmaids gifts.
- Once you have your budget looking like you want it, you can easily print a copy (or copies) to add to your wedding binder.
- You can add and remove categories to fit your wedding, including adding blank areas for any unforeseen expenses.

Do this next exercise to familiarize yourself with this essential tool of the dream wedding.

Dream Wedding Exercise:

- 1) Take a few moments to familiarize yourself with the [Wedding Budget Calculator](#). Play around with the features, move the amounts around, and print off a few different budgets.
- 2) Add the Wedding Budget Calculator to your favorites on your internet browser.

Wedding Checklist Tool

Have you ever had such a big task to plan, like writing a 100 page report or finding a new job, that seemed so big and overwhelming that you wanted to give up before you started?

Planning a wedding can feel like that.

When you did have that huge task, did you write down what you needed to do and when you needed to complete it? If you did, you probably noticed how much *better* you felt afterward.

That's the importance of getting things down on paper. It gets all that stuff out of your head so that you can stop worrying and DO something about it.

When you get out of the worry and into action, the worry disappears.

When you're focused on your worry and anxiety, it's all you can feel, see and imagine. But once you get into ACTION, you'll be busy doing what you need to do, instead of *worrying* about it.

A wedding checklist is essential to plan your dream wedding. It lets you get things done in a timely manner so that you don't have to settle.

If you don't have a checklist you might wander aimlessly and you won't be able to get everything you need for the wedding of your dreams.

The problem is that you haven't planned a wedding before. How are you supposed to know what to do?

There are some great websites out there with planning checklists of all the things you need to do to plan your wedding and when to do them.

There is a great [Wedding Checklist Tool](#) that you can use for your wedding based on exactly how long you have until your wedding date.

Ultra Cool Features of The Wedding Checklist Tool

- The Checklist is broken down by months, starting 9-12 months before the wedding.
- The Checklist is easy to print, and can be used regardless of whether you are actually taking a full year to plan for your wedding. Just check off the items as you complete them.
- The coolest thing about this [Wedding Checklist Tool](#) is that all the common wedding items are included. If something does not apply to you, skip it.
- Do this exercise now to get comfortable with the Wedding Checklist tool so you'll know exactly what to do and when to get your dream wedding.

Dream Wedding Exercise:

- 1) Go to the [Wedding Checklist Tool](#) and print the list of tasks. Cross off any that don't apply to you. Add any other tasks you need to do. Check off any tasks you have completed.
- 2) Integrate your To Do Tasks with the calendar of your preferred organization tool.

Essential Websites

The internet itself is an essential tool for planning your dream wedding. One quick Google search gives you pages of resources and information.

We live in an information age where things change by the day. You'll need to keep your eyes and ears open for the latest trends and deals so that you can take advantage of them.

There are a few websites and blogs that are particularly valuable. They give you access to incredible information that will empower you to take advantage of discounts, deals and tips to plan a phenomenal wedding at a bargain.

If you don't use the resources available on these websites, you miss out on the savings. You won't be hip to the latest trends or the scams to avoid. You'll have to fumble around figuring things out for yourself.

[The Knot](#) - You can't go far as a bride without stumbling across The Knot. My favorites are the [Chat Rooms](#) where you can learn advice and ideas from other brides and the [Planning Guides](#). Warning: you'll encounter lots of advertising and the timelines and budgets will not exactly fit you.

[Wedding Channel](#) - Sort of like The Knot, Part 2, without as much chat room action. In fact, they're owned by the same company.

[Wedding Wire](#) - Set yourself up with a free account and use the awesome tools in the "My Planner" section. The tool in "My Seating" is my favorite.

Again, beware of advertising everywhere.

[Bride To Bride Boutique](#) - The ultimate website to connect with other brides to buy, sell and trade wedding items. Bringing brides together for maximum savings.

[Wedding Bee](#) - This blog is hoppin' with information, with new posts every hour around the clock. From wedding inspiration and real bride stories, vendor reviews and casual bride chat, there's always something going on.

[DIY Bride](#) - An outstanding resource for all things DIY from the beginner to the advanced crafty bride.

[Etsy](#) - Like Ebay for handmade goods and crafts, you'll find oodles of wedding inspiration and inexpensive accessories here.

[Ebay](#) - Once you know what you want, Ebay can be your best friend when it comes to snagging wedding stuff at bargain prices.

[Style Me Pretty](#) - A blog "for the style obsessed bride." Aren't we all?

[Ritzy Bee](#) - A wedding inspiration smorgasbord for details and accessories.

[The Bridal Wishlist](#) - Sifting through some of the coolest and best stuff to buy for your wedding.

[A Practical Wedding](#) - The best of what's hot for the thrifty bride.

[Offbeat Bride](#) - Not just for non-traditional brides, this blog often features ideas that will save you a bundle of cash.

[Meetup](#) - Use this website to find or start a Meetup group to plan your wedding. Connect with brides to network and share savings.

[Top 100 Wedding Planning Blogs](#) - In case you didn't find what you're looking for on *my* list, check out this comprehensive list of the 100 best wedding planning blogs.

Since you're creating the habit of action, do this quick exercise to set up the website tools you'll need for your dream wedding.

Dream Wedding Exercise:

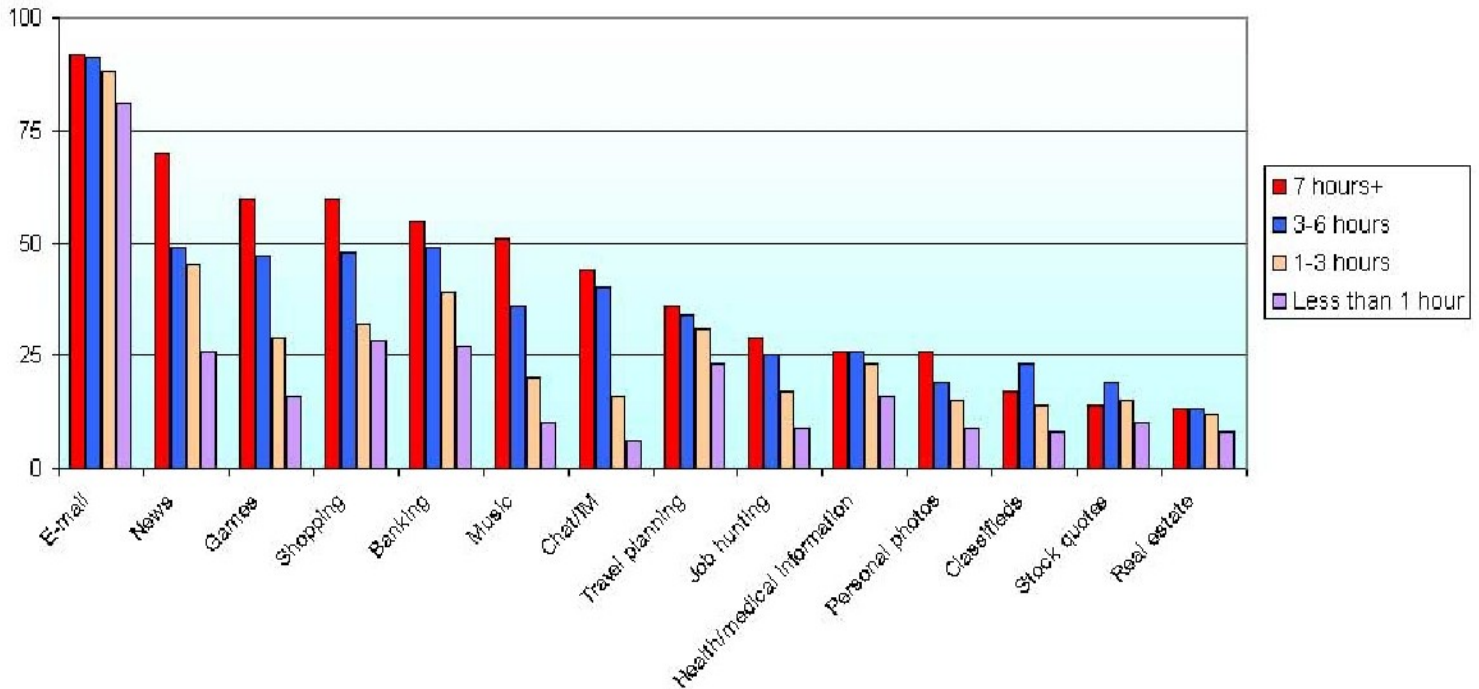
- 1) Quickly browse through these websites. If you see something useful or find a site you'd like to revisit, add them to your Favorites. Ignore the rest.
- 2) For any of the sites you find essential to planning your dream wedding, pick a time every week when you'll visit them and write it on your schedule. You can set up a free account on [Bloglines](#) to track the new posts on your favorite blogs all in one place.

Finding Time

Everyone is so *busy* these days.

Every second is filled up with work, school, phone calls, emails, text messages. There is *al-*ways something calling for your attention.

Internet Activities by Daily Time Spent



According to a survey conducted by America Online and Salary.com, the average worker admits to frittering away 2.09 hours per day, not counting lunch. That's what he *admits* to.

Any of these time wasting activities sound familiar?

Email - The average person spends 49 minutes per day managing email.

Text Messages - The average user sends 188 text messages per month.

Surfing the Internet - 78% of us spend at least 1-3 hours each day on the internet.

Television - The average American watches 28 hours of television per week...that's 4 hours a day.

There are so many activities being demanded of us, so many interruptions and distractions, that we just drift from one thing to the next and our day is gone before we know it.

How are you supposed to find the time to plan your wedding?

In order to plan your dream wedding you need to find the time to do it. And since you can't manufacture more time, you need to identify the activities you can stop doing so you can plan your wedding instead.

There are 3 main categories of activities that are stealing your time. These things are responsible for most of the stress and overwhelm brides usually feel when planning a wedding.

1) Time Wasters

2) Distraction and Interruption

3) Procrastination

If you don't reduce or eliminate these "time thieves," you won't find the time to make your wedding happen. Which means you won't end up with your dream wedding.

When you eliminate your time wasters it frees up extra time you didn't even know you had. You can take your time so that you feel relaxed and really enjoy being a bride.

Time Wasters

One of my biggest time wasters was EMAIL.

I was completely addicted to checking my email first thing in the morning. Once I read the emails in my inbox, I had to *respond* to them. And then I started reading my email newsletter subscriptions and pretty soon I was surfing the net.

Before I knew it, hours had passed.

Once I reduced the time I was wasting with email and surfing the internet, I ending up with 1-2 hours of **found time** I didn't even know I had.

Distraction & Interruption

Distraction happens when your attention is drawn away from your task, maybe by the sounds outside, the objects on your desk, or your thoughts about the argument you had with your mother.

Interruption happens when someone or something breaks in on the work you are doing and causes you to stop. This could be a telephone call or someone walking into the room with a question.

Every time you are *interrupted* or *distracted* from your task, it takes you an average of 20 minutes to get back into what you were doing.

That's 20 MINUTES of wasted time for each interruption.

Have you ever had a task that should have taken only a short amount of time to complete, but it took you two hours?

That's because you weren't working on *just* that task; your sister walked in with a question and stopped you mid-way, the telephone rang and you answered it, then you had to send an email to them and once you sent the email you *had* to open the rest of your mail.

Distraction and interruption steal your time without you even knowing it because you were "busy" the whole time.

Procrastination

The number one regret of brides after their weddings is Procrastination.

"If only I hadn't waited so long to order my dress, I might have been able to get my first choice."

"I wish I hadn't waited to find my photographer! I would have had time to find a better deal."

There are a lot of reasons we procrastinate. Fear. Uncertainty. Overwhelm. We just plain don't want to do it. Sometimes we have really good excuses we like to call "reasons."

Here's my wedding procrastination story:

I had this great idea to write 365 Reasons Why I Love My Husband and present them as a wedding gift. So I started jotting down my reasons. Very, very slowly.

A week before our wedding I only had 165 reasons. Yep, I was a little short.

Fast forward to our wedding day. I had my 165 reasons printed in a nice font, but I couldn't just give him *that*. As I was getting into my dress and doing my makeup at my

mother-in-law's house on my wedding day, my sister-in-law suggested that I cut each reason into a square of paper, poke a hole in it, and tie them together with ribbon.

We quickly started to do it, but when it was time to leave for the ceremony, and I wasn't even half done. I was forced to give it up.

I had no gift for my husband on our wedding day.

Procrastination drains your energy so that you get less done. It wastes your time.

So how do you fight Procrastination when it strikes?

The cure for procrastination is ACTION. Once you start acting the dread of doing the task disappears and you just do it. So how do you get yourself off your lazy butt and into action?

You've got to be *motivated*.

Imagine you have a stubborn donkey who doesn't want to move. You need to get that ass in gear. You can either dangle a carrot over its nose (the reward it gets for moving) or beat its behind with a stick (the punishment for not moving.)

We're just like that donkey. We can motivate ourselves by putting the reward out front, or reminding ourselves of the bad things that will happen if we don't get moving.

People are motivated by getting something they want, or by avoiding or by something they don't want.

Do this exercise now to reduce or eliminate your Time Wasters, Distraction and Interruption, and Procrastination. It will give you the "found time" you need to take your time planning your wedding.

Dream Wedding Exercise:

- 1) Print out this [worksheet](#). Circle any of the activities you do each day. Add any extras that aren't on the list.
- 2) Cross the activities that do not bring you any value. These are the things that don't add money to your life; they don't build your relationships, they don't keep you healthy, they don't support your emotional health. Many of these activities actually drain your energy.
- 3) Next, think about your day and write down all the things that interrupt and distract

you. Cell phones, email, pagers and instant messengers are the biggest culprits.

- 4) How could you limit or eliminate these distractions and interruptions? Write your ideas down.
- 5) Write down the things you've been procrastinating about.
- 6) For each thing you've been procrastinating about, come up with a way to use a reward and a penalty to get yourself to act. Can you create pressure by setting a deadline? Make a bet with a friend to hold you accountable? Can you bribe yourself with a massage or a bowl of your favorite ice cream when you complete it?
- 7) Pick at least two time wasting activities to eliminate or reduce, at least while you are planning your wedding. Pick out two ways to limit your distraction and interruption.
DO THEM.
- 8) Pick out one activity you've been procrastinating about and motivate yourself to do it by creating a reward when you complete it and a penalty if you do not. Commit to it and put it on your calendar.

First Things First

How important is it to have your dream wedding?

Really think about it. Think about all the time, money and energy you are pouring into your day.

It sounds pretty important to me.

If you want to get something important done, you have to do it **FIRST**.

Why? Because if you don't you'll end up doing *other* things and that will take up all your time. The important task never gets done.

But if you do the important things first, you guarantee they get done. All the "little stuff" can get squeezed in later.

Here's a story based on a metaphor by Stephen Covey.

A teacher stood before his class with a large empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks, right up to the top. He turned to the students and asked, "Is this jar full?"

Everyone agreed that it was. So the teacher picked up a box of pebbles and poured them in to the jar. He shook the jar lightly and the pebbles settled into the open spaces between the rocks. The students laughed. The teacher turned to the students again. "Is this jar full?"

Again, everyone agreed that it was. The teacher picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. The sand filled up all the tiny spaces around the rocks and pebbles.

The teacher turned to his students again.

"This jar is your life. The rocks are the important things, your family, your loved ones, your health, anything that is so important that if you lost it, you would be nearly destroyed.

"The pebbles are the other things in life that matter on a smaller scale, like your job, your house, and your car.

"The sand is everything else. The little stuff. If you put the sand or the pebbles into the jar first, you won't have any room for the rocks. The same goes for your life.

If you spend all your energy and time on the little stuff, you will never have room for the truly important things. Take care of the rocks first. The things that really matter. Everything else is just pebbles and sand."

If you want to fit in time for an important task like planning your dream wedding, you need to do it *first*.

You have to work on planning your wedding first or it just won't happen. There are too many other responsibilities and details clamoring for your attention and it *won't get done*.

It's essential to set aside the time to work on your wedding on a regular basis. Find a time, preferably at the beginning of your day. Do this exercise.

Dream Wedding Exercise:

- 1) Take out your Dream Wedding Journal. Write down some ideas for when and where you can work on planning your wedding. Can you find 30 minutes at the start of your work day? An hour twice a week? Brainstorm as many possibilities as you can.
- 2) Pick the best time and location you came up with. Commit to working on your wedding at this time every day. **Write it on your calendar.**