

# Brides reflect: Careful planning can prevent regrets

By ALINA DAIN SHARON  
JointMedia News Service

**O**n my wedding day last fall, I was very nervous. My husband and I planned our celebration, to be held in Chicago, entirely on our own and all the way from Boston. We were also combining a Russian-Jewish family with a Sabra-Israeli family, and members of each took long flights to the U.S. for the wedding.

Needless to say, there were cultural and logistical difficulties from the start. Add to that the typical “Murphy’s Law” of weddings (our rabbi’s computer broke on the day, deleting all the notes he made for our ceremony) – and it was a stressful prologue to the big day.

Everything ultimately came together into the most beautiful day of our lives. The rabbi somehow ad-libbed a wonderful *chuppah* ceremony, my parents got over “losing” their only daughter and I married my best friend.

While the actual wedding was ultimately a happy occasion, looking back, there were things I wish I had known or done differently to ease my stress during the planning stages.

JointMedia News Service decided to collect advice from a few brides to save future ones unnecessary angst. Follow their advice, and aside from potential technological glitches, your wedding day should be stress-free and extra special.

## Make friends, family more than spectators

Nurit Friedberg, a social worker from Cincinnati, got married in June of last year. She said it’s important to involve both families in the celebration. “We accomplished this by inviting both of our rabbis to co-officiate...They were able to give us great advice on how to incorporate special details in the ceremony, such as my husband’s Zaidy’s *tallit* or my great-grandmother’s candlesticks.” For Friedberg’s ceremony, her grandmother wove the *chuppah*, her aunt created the *ketubah*, and family friends were involved in other as-



Photo by GETTY IMAGES

**Remember, your wedding day is about you and your spouse. Don’t worry about catering to everyone’s needs as much as your own.**

pects, such as playing the music. “Everything was more meaningful because it was created by someone we love,” she said.

Yael Mazor-Garfinkle married her husband in July 2011 in Lawrence, MA, and asked a close friend from cantorial school to officiate their wedding. “She took our vision for our ceremony and transformed it into a communal celebration.” The wedding processional was sung by the bride’s sister, the groom’s aunt, and the officiator, and was accompanied by the groom’s uncle on guitar. The couple also asked seven sets of loved ones to read personally written blessings.

## Be prepared for difficulties

Still, sometimes incorporating different families into one celebration, and ultimately one life, can be difficult. Amy Beth Green Sayegh, from Chicago, got married in August 2010. Sayegh’s husband is Sephardic and a son of immigrant parents from Syria and Egypt. Initially her in-laws were worried about losing their son and it took time for everyone to establish a good relationship. “One thing my mother kept repeating, starting very early on in the process, was that weddings bring out the worst in people...be prepared for that,” she said.

## Make it a day you & your beloved will love

Alexander Polatsky and Inna Yalovetskaya from Phoenix, AZ, got married in May 2010 in an Orthodox ceremony, despite the fact that neither is Orthodox and their families were mostly secular. “It was so hard to plan an Orthodox ceremony with parents who were so not into it. They knew nothing about it, (they had) never even seen one,” Yalovetskaya said. The bride’s mother found the experience especially stressful and weird, and had a minor emotional breakdown before the ceremony.

“We had a difficult time picking a rabbi who would want to do an Orthodox ceremony but would understand that the people would

not be Orthodox and that the entire party thereafter would be held at La Mirage, which is a non-kosher restaurant,” Polatsky said. They also struggled to find an affordable kosher caterer to supply food just for those guests who required it.

At the end of the ceremony, the bride’s mother relaxed and decided she actually liked the wedding. “Make the wedding that you want to have for yourself and the one you want to remember. It’s OK if it’s the wedding that everyone else wants as long as it’s the wedding that you want.” At the same time “try to be nice and accommodating as possible because it supposed to be for the whole family,” Yalovetskaya said.

## What I wish I’d known: Important wedding tips from brides

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- ◆ A ketubah can take nearly six weeks to be ready, so order early.
- ◆ Order flower girl dresses with the wedding dress because they can take up to 6 months to be ready. Alternatively, buy dresses directly from a store. Quinceañera stores are a good option.
- ◆ Hire a driver. It’s a lot easier to have someone who knows where to go.
- ◆ A rented tuxedo can be cut differently from a purchased one. Research the options.
- ◆ Delegate tasks to different people.
- ◆ Consider an afternoon wedding to avoid exhaustion. If it’s a Sunday wedding, this will give out of town guests enough time to fly back and make it to work on Monday.
- ◆ Leave enough time for pictures and have a photo list so you don’t forget important family pictures.
- ◆ Money saver: Include do-it-yourself

projects, with the clothes, bouquets, or other decorations. These can be a great bonding experience with your bridal party or family, add a personal touch to the day, and are a good way to keep within the budget if you’re having difficulty.

◆ Pictures are all you have to remember your wedding day by, so pick a good photographer and be willing to invest more money in a great one. A bad photographer, even if cheap, is not worth the headache you’ll experience after the wedding.

◆ Money saver: Hire a videographer to shoot only raw footage and then edit the video yourself. This can also make for a fun activity, as well as a way to relive the wedding, with your new spouse.

◆ READ all of your vendor contracts. Negotiate the details and don’t pay the whole sum to vendors until the work is completed in a satisfactory manner. It seems like a hassle, but arguing with bad vendors over bad contracts is a lot worse.



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4200 Jim Walter Blvd  
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t: 813.877.9200

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