



*Your
Big Day*

Top Ten Wedding Photography Tips

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WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY is one of the most important aspects of your wedding day and yet so many people continue to get it wrong. Photographs will be treasured for years to come, passed down and enjoyed over many generations so it's worth taking the time now to plan a little and help achieve the results YOU want.

Over the next few pages I will share with you a few tips which I believe will significantly improve the photographic memories you are left with after your big day. Not only this but it will also help you to have more fun on the day itself for although photographs are important - posing for them should not be detrimental to your enjoyment of the day. What follows is my top ten tips from choosing a photographer to working with them on your wedding day.

Top Tip One - Choosing a Photographer.

Choosing a photographer can be a daunting task and yet it is the most important decision you will make when it comes to wedding photography. Choosing the right photographer will leave you with beautiful and well crafted memories that you can treasure for always - choosing wisely can also help make your day a pleasure not a chore.

It may sound absurd but when choosing a photographer I would recommend using the same tactics as when choosing a partner. What is your immediate reaction? Is it love at first site or is the magic not quite there? It is not just their portfolio you should be scrutinizing but also their personality and character. Do you feel comfortable with them? Do they put you at ease and do you have confidence in them? Remember they are going to be a BIG part of your special day - you wouldn't invite a guest you didn't like if you didn't have to ■

Top Tip Two - Choosing the right package.

There's a lot more to choose from than just prints these days. With many photographers offering Photobooks, CD's of digital images and canvas enlargements, it can seem like you've



ABOVE It's good to capture every part of the day from the nervous anticipation of getting ready to the party afterwards.

just been handed an impossible menu - although even being vegetarian doesn't help slim down the choice when selecting a photography package.

Photobooks are now very popular for these are individually designed and digitally printed meaning there's no glue or photo-corners clogging their pages up. This may be appealing to some, but if you have an artistic eye and a penchant for crafts you just might want to create your own album, the good old fashioned way.

Most important of all - know what you are paying for. Does your package include a book and/or prints or do you have to pay extra for these? If your photographer seems cheap it's worth double checking because they may be charging for just their time. Buying prints and Photobooks after the big day can be a very costly expense. Buying a CD of all the images might be an option worth considering. This way you can print out your own photos whenever you want. This could save you heaps of money in the long run ■

Top Tip Three - What are you paying for?

Check how long your photographer is with you on the day. Some photographers cover just the ceremony and the reception while others spend so long with you it's like they woke up with you and then fell asleep next to you at the end of the day! Most photographers charge for the amount of time they are with you, although some prefer to dedicate their whole day to you for one set price. Again it's a personal thing. Do you want the whole day captured for posterity, from the early morning eye-bags to the final drunken stagger, or would you find this too intrusive? If you dislike being photographed then having a camera in your face all day could be quite stressful whereas an outgoing and extravagant bride will most likely revel in the attention.

When you hand over your money it's also worth checking that the photographer you booked is the photographer you get on the day. It may sound ridiculous, but some photographers pass jobs onto their assistants or to other photographers and let's face it if you arrange a date with someone only for his best friend to turn up on the night you're not going to be happy ■



Top Tip Four - Get to know your Photographer

Arrange to meet your photographer before the big day. I tend to invite my clients round for coffee and a good old natter! In these days of virtual communication there's a lot to be said for actually spending time with somebody. Getting to know your photographer will put you at ease on the day which will, in turn, produce much better photographs ■

ABOVE Bridesmaid in car.

BELOW Bride and groom share an intimate moment.



*Top Tip Five -
What are you paying for?*

It's likely that if you are getting a photographer for the whole day then some reportage style photography will be included in your package. Other buzzwords which pretty much mean the same thing are lifestyle, candid, photojournalism and contemporary. I call it backstage but that's because I've spent the past years photographing rock stars! Don't be confused. They all mean the same thing. Some photographers are more traditional which normally means they tend to stick to the well established posed shots and rigidly follow a set of guidelines. Others are more experimental and spend more time capturing the little moments rather than directing groups of people to huddle together for group portraits.

Which ever you decide you want it's worth having a good look at their work to decipher which category your photographer fits into. Personally I feel it's important to choose a photographer with a good balance of the two. I find that my clients usually want some posed and traditional shots but they'd rather not stand around all day posing for them. Once the posed shots are over I tend to blend quietly into the background so as to capture the unobtrusive candid moments leaving the bride, groom and their guests to enjoy their day. Interestingly it's often the shots they never saw you take which they love the most ■

*Top Tip Six -
Plan the day well.*

You can't plan for some things - like the weather for example - but you might be glad to know there are steps you can take to make sure things run as smoothly as possible. When planning the photography, location is very important. Does your chosen church or registry office allow photographs during or only after the service? Where is the reception? Does it boast a plethora of good photographic backdrops or is there always a blot on the landscape? Where will you go if it rains? Is there an area indoors which would work as well as a setting? You might know exactly where you want your photographs staged or you may be happy for your photographer to take full responsibility for artistic direction. One thing's for sure - it's better to consider every eventuality so that there's no unwanted surprises on the day ■



ABOVE Alternate views and angles.
TOP Girl in red dress with shoes
MIDDLE Group portrait taken through ornate stonework.
BOTTOM Candid shot of the older guests waiting for the ceremony.

Top Tip Seven - Talk to your Photographer.

If you want a photograph of Great Aunt Enid with Cousin Billy let the photographer know. He or she is not a psychic and if you'd have wanted a psychic you'd have booked Derek Acorah!

The photographer will spend a lot of the day directing you and your guests and it can be a welcome change to have some input into this process. Don't get me wrong, bossing your photographer from noon to night is not the way forward - as a professional they generally know what shots to be getting and how their time is best spent - however it's your day and if there are shots you specifically want then don't be afraid to ask your photographer if they'll capture the shot when they have a free moment ■

BELOW A bride's adopted daughter makes a beautiful subject. I love this shot for it's simplicity and for the wonderful contrast of the girls skin against her dress and the flowers she holds.

Top Tip Eight - Help assist your Photographer.

Trying to convince fifty guests to pose for a photo when they'd rather be drinking bubbly and chatting to friends, can be a tall order. Here are some sure fire ways to make this task much less of an ordeal for your photographer and more importantly for your guests.

- Inform everyone *before* the event that a photographer will be present and that their cooperation will be appreciated for a short period of time.
- Let them know when the group photographs will take place (for example - straight after the service or on arrival at the reception) this will help to keep people from wondering.
- Why not delegate the job of organising guests to the best man or usher. Remember your photographer does not know all your family and friends so why not give the responsibility to someone who does? They can make sure the right guests are present whilst keeping the rest of the crowd in order leaving your photographer to concentrate on taking the portraits ■



Top Tip Nine - Hospitality and Payment.

Are you feeding your photographer on the day and, if they are travelling a long distance to get to you, are you providing them with accommodation? These are all things which should be made clear before the wedding day so as to save embarrassment on the day. It's amazing how many people overlook the photographer when it comes to seating plans. If your photographer is with you for the day chances are they'll need some sustenance too.

It's also worth noting that if your photographer's fee isn't settled in advance, they may require the outstanding balance to be paid on the day. If this is the case why not allocate the task to a family member so that you don't have to worry about money on your special day ■



TOP Bride with bouquet.
MIDDLE At the service.
BOTTOM Just married.

Top Tip Ten Post Processing of Images.

Does your photographer include general digital-enhancement of images in their price? Do you get a choice of colour or sepia prints or both if you so wish? Do they add special effects if required? What about blemish removal and general touching up?

One of my bride's was unfortunate enough to have a huge weeping cold sore on the day of her wedding which was stressful enough without having to relive it over and over again through the photographs. Assuring her that the cold sore would be digitally removed from all images gave her great peace of mind.

I want my clients to look as beautiful as my photographs so I work on each photo individually and don't charge extra for this service. It's worth checking that your photographer takes the time to do this before booking them ■



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Book with me now and remember your big day forever with a set of outstanding images.

contact Sarahphotogirl by emailing weddings@sarahphotogirl.com