

10 Ways To Have The Best Wedding Ever! by Jessica Petty

What's the difference between wedding guests saying they had an "okay time" to "That was the best wedding ever!?" In a word - engagement. You want to personalize your wedding as much as possible so that your guests really know that your wedding is all about you. You want them to understand why you and your groom are getting married and how you got to that day. But most importantly, you want everyone to have a fun time! You want to spark your guests' emotions - you want them to laugh, to cry and to hit that emotional peak where they know they're just having FUN! But how do you do all that?

You want to engage your guests on three levels:

- 1) Physically - get them moving!
- 2) Mentally - get them thinking, remembering and imagining!
- 3) Emotionally - trigger their emotions by getting them to laugh or cry

There are a variety of ways to engage your guests on these levels. There's a fine line between making your day all about you, but making it fun for your guests. You want to get them to be active participants in celebrating your wedding. If you engage your guests, you'll hear for years to come, "You had the best wedding ever!"

1) Get Them Dancing! - as soon as possible. After everyone eats you want to get everyone out on the dance floor asap. If you don't, they may fall asleep or worse, leave. It's up to your DJ to make that happen. Get some fun dance music going right away and get people out of their chairs. Play those favorites that everybody knows and can't help but get their toes tapping - Footloose, Macarena, Electric Slide, YMCA. They're super cheesy, but they're effective in getting the juices flowing.

Music is very powerful and there are other ways to use dancing to personalize your wedding. For the daddy/daughter dance if there's a special song the two of you have be sure to play it. These days the dancing skits are so popular too. If you've got the friends, the time and the coordination, you too can go viral with videos like these:

<http://youtu.be/4-94JhLEiNo>

<http://youtu.be/KgZ4ZTTfKO8>

Gosh, I still tear up when I watch those. It doesn't get much more personal than that. :)

2) Have a Photo Booth! - Ok, so maybe we're a little biased because we have a photo booth-like service called Wedsnaps!. But we also speak from experience! The party just comes to life with Wedsnaps! The photos just speak for themselves. Everyone

loves to jump in front of the camera and let their silly sides come out. From babies to grandparents, Wedsnaps! is for everyone. Heck, we even had them at our own wedding...



3) Have a Theme! - I love themed weddings! Think about your hobbies, your talents and your passions. What do you share? A love of the Padres or the Chargers? Old movies? Travel? Pick a theme and find ways to incorporate it into your special day. Name your tables after your theme (ie. for travel it could be countries you want to visit together). Get decorations to help tell your story (I know of an Alice in Wonderland themed wedding where all the guests had a unique teacup at their place setting). Add touches of your clothes to tie in whether it be in color or style. You could really go wild with this one and incorporate a theme into the whole day including the invitations. You may even want to give your guests a heads up so they can dress appropriately.

4) Tell Your Love Story - This is a MUST! Be sure to tell your guests how you all came to be there that day celebrating your nuptials! Everyone loves a good love story and your guests may or may not know yours'. Tell how you met, who introduced you, who said what to who, trips you've taken together, your engagement and any other memorable or funny stories. If you're shy have a friend tell everyone in a toast or have your pastor recount your courtship during the ceremony. You could even write it out and enclose it in the program. Just be sure to be descriptive and of course speak from your heart.

5) Play A Game About You! - Games are a great way to get people thinking and involved. You could have a table ice-breaker game for people to get to know each other, a competition game about how well your guests know you and your fiancé or the always fun and hilarious SHOE GAME (as shown below). Games are a great way to engage your guests.



6) Give People Jobs! - Who wants a job at a wedding? You'd be surprised. Give people responsibilities and be sure to let them know how much you're counting on them and how you appreciate their help. There is so much opportunity here for engagement here! Have your grandmas be the honorary flower girls and walk down the aisle scattering flowers. Have a friend read a poem or sing a song they've written just for you. Think about the talents of your friends and family and let them honor you by assisting with (small) jobs with your wedding (more along the lines of asking your big brother to walk you down the aisle or be your witness on your marriage license - not be your DJ for the evening). Be sure to hire pros for the big stuff.

7) Have Activities Planned! - Find ways to have your guests help celebrate you whether it be crafts (build a picture frame with well wishes) or some other involvement. At my cousin's wedding everyone wore a flower and just before the vows the guests tucked the flowers into a rope and the rope was wound around the couple before the "I Do's". It was very special and meaningful to the couple as well as

the guests.



8) Wedding Video - Show a video of pictures of you and your fiancé growing up and then eventually meeting. These are always special moments. You can create these yourself, ask a savvy friend or hire someone. You'll have to dig through the photo booths but this is a very special way to personalize your wedding and to get people to understand how you met and where you've come from.

Another idea for a fun wedding video is to hire a videographer to do a one-day edit of your ceremony in the morning to show at your evening reception. I've seen this done and you need to hire someone good, but the guests are always amazed when they know the footage they're watching is from the same day.

9) Funny Speeches! - Everyone loves a good toast. The funnier the better (without humiliating anyone or making a scene of course). Have the best man and the maid of honor work on it a bit so they have something they know they want to say. Tell a story from college or how the two of you met online. Get the guests laughing. Another way to engage the guests is to pass the microphone around. Let your guests give you their well wishes with an audience. Of course this would work best for smaller parties.

10) Last but not least - Celebrate Them! Who's birthday did you (accidentally!) plan your wedding day on? Who's been married the longest? The shortest? Who's expecting their first baby? Hand out presents, awards or special wedding favors! Honor your guests and recognize the important events that are happening in their lives. Perhaps mention someone who's passed on and tell everyone the significance of (perhaps) wearing something that once belonged to them.

Another way to honor your guests is to create a family tree with real photos. This will be very significant to your family members that attend your wedding and a wonderful way to show the joining of your two families.



There are so many ways to personalize your wedding and engage your guests. I'm sure you know this but type "wedding" into Pinterest and you will have an absolute wealth of ideas to help make your wedding all about you. Happy planning! We're here to help!

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