



# 6 STEPS TO MAKE A BEST DECISION

I'm sorry life started throwing lemons and that your special day has been so negatively impacted by the coronavirus social distancing orders. It can feel heartbreaking right now because you were so looking forward to marrying your best friend soon and all the fun you would have celebrating your new marriage with your family and friends. Don't lose heart; you will still get married! No matter what alternative wedding plans you decide to make, it will be wonderful!

This guide was created to offer you clarity on how to move foward right now, not tell you what to do. Here are five steps you can take to make a best decision for your wedding day in the midst of COVID-19 protection policies currently in place:

## 1. Double-check your wedding vendor contracts.

Carefully re-read your contracts that you've signed with each of your wedding vendors—caterer, venue, photographer, florist, DJ, officiant, day-of coordinator. Pay especial attention to the details about refund policies and what financial expectations there may be. Understand the financial investment you've made in each vendor and the possible losses of refunds in the event you're unable to host your wedding as originally planned.

# 2. Talk to your wedding vendors.

Call your vendors to talk with them on the phone if you have their cell numbers. It's the quickest way to get the answers you need, and during this time when hundreds of other brides will be booking the same services, timeliness is important. Make sure you follow up your phone call with your vendor in an email to confirm in writing of anything you discussed or decided over the phone. If a cell number isn't available to you, email is effective, too.

### 3. Talk to your fiancee & family.

Whomever's feedback is most important to you, be sure you consult them about your decision to postpone or cancel your wedding. If they've helped you through challenging situations in life before, their advice may continue to guide you successfully through the effects of the pandemic.

#### 4. Remember what's most important to you.

Getting married is a true once in a lifetime event, so give yourself permission to prioritize what's most important to you, whether you've always dreamed of getting married at a certain venue or work



with a specific photograher. These will be the services you prioritize to maintain as you reschedule for a new date.

### 5. Stay up-to-date.

Because health guidelines may change rapidly, stay up-to-date with health policies as they evolve by tuning in to credible local, state and national news sources.

### 6. Make the decision with your fiancee.

Take into consideration all of the feedback and information you've gathered. Consider any financial obligations of rescheduling or cancelling your wedding date and which vendors you will be able to keep for your rescheduled date. Ultimately, make sure you and your fiancee are on the same page and agree on what's best for your special day moving forward. If you have family members who are helping to pay for your wedding day, it may be courteous to include them in the decision-making.

# OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

### Abide by your local, state and national laws & orders.

In times like these, the guidelines and policies put into place are to help and protect everyone. With Stay at Home orders declared, don't risk legal consequences of pushing forward with your existing wedding plans and putting your health as well as the health of others in jeopardy. Stay up-to-date with your local, state and national health policies as they evolve by tuning in to a trusted news source.

# Respect the safety of your family, friends & wedding vendors.

Your wedding vendors and friends are also people with families and networks, and everyone's level of fear for the health of their loved ones and for themselves may be different than your own. If they decide to not participate in your wedding day celebration, they are just making the best decision they can given the circumstances.

#### Over-communicate

During times of an emergency response such as these, no news is bad news. It is beneficial to you, your family and friends, and your vendors to communicate often. Specifically for the vendors you want to retain while rescheduling your wedding date, it may be good to check in weekly to communicate any change of plans on your end and to ask about any changes in availability for your vendors.



# YOUR DECISION-MAKING TIMELINE

Right now, you're facing the decision to reschedule your wedding date, cancel and elope, keep the formal ceremony and ditch the expense of the reception, or elope soon with a separate reception later. You can adapt your wedding plans based on what's important to you.

In lieu of the options before you, the number one question right now is "when should I make a decision about changing my wedding plans?"

The best answer is "it depends" because your wedding plans are unique to you. Your gathering of family members, friends and vendors is truly unique to your wedding day, each traveling in from different areas, and there will be no other like it. With that in mind, the best timing of your decision depends on your specific wedding.

#### 3 TIMELINE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. If you already know you plan to forego your original wedding plans, notify your vendors, family and friends as soon as possible, so each can plan accordingly. You do not need to have your alternative plans set before notifying everyone.
- 2. As a courtesy to your vendors and invited guests, setting a deadline to make your decision no less than 30 days before your wedding date may allow everyone to reorient their schedules and budgets for that month. This recommendation also depends on how much advanced notice your vendors require in order to avoid deep financial penalties on your part. Some vendors may require a 60 to 90 days notice, so double-check your contracts.
- 3. Before your 30-day mark, be sure to follow the first five parts of the 6 Steps to Make a Best Decision. That way, you are equipped with all the information and feedback you need to make your decision.

Whatever decision you make to postpone, cancel and elope or something in between, it will be the right one. Take heart, my dear—Your wedding day is so important and it will be beautiful!