

How to Calm Wedding Jitters

The work involved with planning a wedding can stress out even the most stable of individuals. Even those brides-to-be who knew all the reasons why they were getting married a few months ago may be facing the prospect of walking down the aisle with anxiety.

Call it cold feet or wedding jitters, the feeling is common among newlyweds-to-be. Stress has a funny way of making mountains out of molehills — little idiosyncracies in a partner can quickly grow into horrible character traits. The key is recognizing when fears are just the result of too much planning and not deep-rooted relationship issues. Usually a person quickly realizes they're more overwhelmed about the wedding details than the thought of making a commitment.

"The What If Guy," by Taylor G. Wilshire has messages of love, forgiveness and affirmation at its roots, which

can offer help at this important time in your life. It also provides an entertaining story that gives you a chance to kick back and escape.

1. Put your thoughts onto paper — Make a list of what is causing the most anxiety. This release technique is something main character Ryley McKenna used in the book to clear her fears and prevent overworrying. Sometimes having all of your racing thoughts organized and on paper can help you rationally address the issues and see that there is no serious cause of the jitters. It can also help you pinpoint a common stress trigger, such as a financial concern or a conflict with a family member. Compare these fears to a list of reasons why you love your partner and want to enter a commitment with this person. This simple task can bring order to jumbled feelings and offer clarity on any nervousness you may have.

2. Learn to relax — Make time for yourself and enjoy activities that are not directly related to wedding planning. For example, some women benefit from a massage or facial treatment. Others find that a relaxing drive or walk along the beach or through another quiet area can help promote calmness. Or take a cue from Ryley and learn to relax by meditating to put your mind at peace: Find a quiet place and focus on deep breathing.

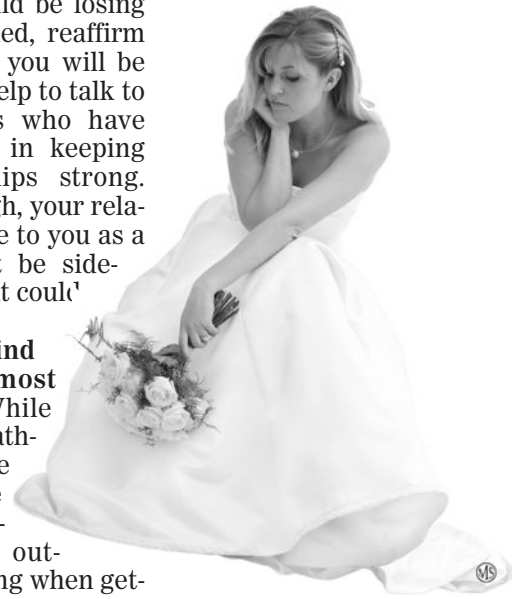
3. Talk to your partner — Open up to your partner about how you are feeling. You just may find that he is experiencing some of the same things as you and that jitters are completely normal. Working through fears to a place of love is one of the underlying concepts of "A Course in Miracles," the inspirational text that helps guide Ryley throughout the book. By expressing your fears and doubts, and work-

ing through them as a team, this can be the first step you take as a married couple to support each other in good times ... and bad.

4. Recognize that changes understandably make people uncomfortable — One of the most life-altering changes a person can make is getting married, particularly if you've both been used to living on your own and making your own decisions. Instead of focusing on what you could be losing by getting married, reaffirm all of the things you will be gaining. It may help to talk to married couples who have been successful in keeping their relationships strong. Remember though, your relationship is unique to you as a couple. So don't be sidetracked over what could or may happen.

5. Keep in mind that love is most important — While you want the weather to cooperate and the day to be flawless, you cannot control the outcome of everything when get-

ting married. There may be some minor (or major) bumps along the way. Being able to recover gracefully and enjoy yourself can help start your relationship off on the right foot. Remember, you'll have many other chances to create winning memories as you grow old together with your partner, so don't put so much emphasis on the wedding details or the most important moments may pass you by.



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