



**THE FIRST DANCE**

[www.TheFirstDance.com](http://www.TheFirstDance.com)

## **Couple Principles**

1. **It's your day, but not only your day.**
2. **Be a team.**

If you are a good team, you can handle almost anything—but you have to know what kind of team you are. We have observed three general kinds of teams:

  - **The bride is in charge.** She is the planner and decision maker. She keeps the groom informed and may assign him certain tasks.
  - **Leader/Supporter.** The bride is the clear leader but the groom helps make decisions and may have his own areas of responsibility, such as dealing with his parents and the men in the wedding party.
  - **Co-Leaders:** They make all major decisions together. They divide responsibility for gathering information prior to make joint decisions, and they may also have some separate areas of responsibility.
3. **It's about values, not just activities or things.**

Stay focused on your values—about marriage, family, tradition, religion, friends, money—and let decisions flow mostly from these values rather than from comparisons with what other couples are doing.
4. **Know what's a big deal—and not a big deal.**

Let each other know what's most important to you about the wedding--and what the values are behind it—as well as what's not so important because there are no major values behind it.
5. **Know your emotional limits.**

Be honest about how you handle the stress of making decisions and following through, and what you need from each other when you are not coping well. Here are some examples of how people get off track when they are stressed:

▪ <b>Worry wart</b>	▪ <b>Temper outbursts</b>
▪ <b>Procrastinator</b>	▪ <b>Don't ask for help</b>
▪ <b>Nagger</b>	▪ <b>Act helpless</b>
▪ <b>Avoider</b>	
▪ <b>Silent martyr</b>	
▪ <b>Complainer</b>	



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### **Family Principles**

- 1. Make decisions tentatively until you find out who else in the family expects to be involved.**
- 2. Know when you are just talking and when you have decided something. If you are not sitting down and discussing the matter, it's probably not a decision.**
- 3. When there is conflict, blood talks to blood.**
- 4. Prepare your fiancé and each others families for the quirks and odd customs of the other family.**
- 5. Do not mock the ways of your in-laws, strange though they may be.**
- 6. You can't change your parents or your in-laws; they are like the weather. Focus on decisions to be made, not on their attitudes and feelings.**
- 7. Some people act out of character and just plain strange during wedding planning. There is usually an underlying reason.**
- 8. Don't let anyone blackmail you with threats to boycott the wedding or withdraw their support; move ahead and let them make their own decisions.**
- 9. Since impossible people are predictable in their bad behavior, plan accordingly rather than being surprised and outraged.**



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## **Vignette Exercise**

### **A Bride's Nightmare Story**

I have nearly killed (at least once if not twice) every member of his family and mine.... We have 10 hellish months to go and I am HATING all this planning. Nobody on either side of the family likes anything I have already chosen, am going to do, or will get around to doing.... I hate this. This is my wedding day and it's supposed to be about ME. My fiancé, one night when I was screaming hysterically saying how much I hated everything that was happening around me, said "Let's just cancel it all and go to Jamaica!" At first I said yes but then I realized he intended to STILL have both our families there. THESE ARE THE VERY PEOPLE I WANT TO KILL! So, I would merely be moving all the personal complaints, disagreements and stress locally to another country. We are still having the wedding we originally planned, but I wish I had just gone down to the local registry office in my jeans and a t-shirt and said "Marry us now, please!"--and then told our families to get over it!!!!

#### **Questions:**

- 1. Why is this going badly?**
- 2. What can the bride and groom do about it, based on the principles in this program?**



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## **The First Dance Couple Evaluation Form**

Please circle the appropriate letter for each question.

**As a result of taking The First Dance class:**

1. My **knowledge** of how to handle the **couple** aspects of wedding planning has:
  - a. Has not increased
  - b. Has increased somewhat
  - c. Has increased a lot
  
2. My **confidence** in how I will handle the **couple** aspects of wedding planning has:
  - a. Has not increased
  - b. Has increased somewhat
  - c. Has increased a lot
  
3. My **knowledge** of how to handle the **family** aspects of wedding planning has:
  - a. Has not increased
  - b. Has increased somewhat
  - c. Has increased a lot
  
4. My **confidence** in how I will handle the **family** aspects of wedding planning has:
  - a. Has not increased
  - b. Has increased somewhat
  - c. Has increased a lot
  
5. I would **recommend** this class to other engaged couples:
  - a. Yes, for sure
  - b. Maybe
  - c. No

I am: ( ) the bride-to-be ( ) the groom-to-be