

# *To See or Not to See. . . That is the question*

## WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT SEEING THE BRIDE/GROOM BEFORE THE WEDDING?

*There is no right decision. Everyone is different and I strongly believe that your wedding should reflect your character and personality. It's a simple concept that makes a huge difference. Believe me, I have heard both sides of the argument. Again, it is about what YOU desire. I definitely respect the brides who envision their walk down the aisle, seeing their groom for the first time or the groom who anticipates the vision of his bride to be. But, from my perspective, as a bride, as a photographer, and as someone who's seen the in's and out's of many weddings, I present a few reasons to consider seeing each other before the ceremony.*

1. **You still get the aisle experience.** Most brides are concerned about losing the "wow" factor of the groom seeing her for the first time as she walks down the aisle. But the magic of that moment isn't lost. You're about to get married. The moment is HUGE. You walk down single and walk back united with another person. Whether he's seen you in your dress or not has little to do with the magic of the moment. You can see it and feel it. The emotion is still there.

2. **Nerves.** It's really nice to get through that nervous moment of seeing each other. Typically you are nervous and anxious about the moment you first see your future spouse. Seeing each other prior to the ceremony helps the butterflies to subside, allowing you to enjoy - and remember - each moment of the ceremony. You suddenly have your other half and you can begin experiencing the day.

3. **Enjoy the moment alone together.** Think about it. If you see each other for the first time at the end of the aisle, you can't talk or kiss, you can hardly touch. At the ceremony, you'll have somewhere between 5 and 500 of your closest friends, family, co-workers - and their plus 1's - watching you. OR, you can enjoy a romantic, memorable moment. Laugh, hug, kiss, and cry - you don't have to hold anything back because you don't have to worry about anyone watching (okay, except for us, your photographers. You won't even know that we are there AND, the moment really makes for sweet pictures).

4. **Get to the party sooner.** Seeing each other beforehand and getting pictures done means that once you're done with the ceremony, you're ready to head straight to the reception with nothing else to worry about - except dancing with your friends and party! By scheduling pictures following the ceremony, you'll have a lot less time to enjoy the reception.

5. **Photos.** If you list photography as an important thing on your wedding day, I'd highly recommend shooting before the ceremony. It really expands your options for what you're able to do. You can schedule in extra time to drive to a great location, (with the entire wedding party OR just the two of you) time to get a wider variety of shots and just have a more relaxed photo shoot.

6. **Spend the day with each other.** Really, when you think about it, a wedding reception is a big party that the bride and groom are hosting. Everyone wants to talk to them, congratulate them, dance with them, etc. Yes, you'll probably spend most of the reception side by side, but you'll be talking to your guests. In our pre-wedding consultations, I have always said to the bride and groom that the day is a beautiful whirl wind. And what you will have are the wonderful pictures to look back on to remember each moment, each emotion. It is a wonderful time to talk to each other before the ceremony.

7. **Get away from the stress.** The few hours before the wedding is when the MOB (Mother of the Bride), florists, caterers and friends are helping make sure each detail is addressed. Each open issue is typically presented as a question to the bride (and sometimes, the groom). All things that will work themselves out and if you're not available because you're off taking pictures, the wedding stress will be more manageable.