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# WEDDING GUIDE











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# WELCOME

## AWESOME ALL HEART PHOTOGRAPHY COUPLE!

Your engagement season is such an amazing time for you and your partner! I'm sure you're seeing all the things that need to be planned. It's all very exciting but it can also be somewhat overwhelming. I'm here to help!

My goal as a wedding photographer is to make this one aspect of the planning process simple. Photography is more than just images, it's a real part of your day. Not only do you deserve beautiful images, you also deserve an incredible photographic experience. We're not here for cheesy, stiff poses, and I'm sure you're not either. The goal of this guide is to help you plan your wedding day in a way that will allow me to provide you with the best experience possible.



**JOHN MANSFIELD**





# ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS







## THE BEGINNING

Now that you have picked a date, probably a venue (and a photographer soon), you can celebrate! Those are some of the toughest decisions in wedding planning and you can cross them off your list! Take a break.

Now onto the fun stuff, like your engagement session. I think engagement sessions are important simply because you'll have the chance to get to know me, experience how I shoot and how I handle posing and lighting. It doesn't have to feel stuffy, but more like we're creating images that tell a story about your life at this point in time to look back on later.

Your engagement session can be scheduled anytime before your wedding day. I normally suggest booking it at least 3-6 months in advance to avoid any unwanted jitters.

As you start to plan for your engagement shoot, you can start brainstorming about location ideas. I love it when couples pick a location that is special or sentimental to them in some way. Your story matters more than anything. If it's a bar, or a park or in front of your first apartment, I'm in. If you can't think of anywhere specific that you would like to shoot, I can help you decide on a location. As long as the light is great, I can make any location look awesome. I've shot at bars, campuses, downtown alleys and even carnivals. I'm serious! Do not shy away from crazy ideas. The more creative, the better. Be sure to keep reading to find out more about outfit ideas and inspiration.



PREPARING FOR YOUR

# ENGAGEMENT SESSION

It's always a little intimidating to have your picture taken, even if it's just a photo on an iPhone that is taken by a friend, we still want to look nice, make sure nothing is in our teeth and that our hair (or beard) is behaving. I realize that preparing for your engagement session can be a little nerve-wracking, so here are some things I've learned over the years from photographing many engagement sessions.

I have no doubt we'll create some great, fun and epic photos no matter what. I am extremely laid back, but also want to ensure that you both look and feel good, and feel like yourselves. So here are some general tips to make sure you feel as comfortable as possible during the shoot.

I'm constantly surprising couples by discovering their hidden modeling skills and the most common response from my couples, women and men alike, is "that wasn't as bad as I thought! It was actually fun." Boom!

When you both say that taking pictures was fun, I've done my job well! Here are some outfit tips to make sure you're looking and feeling your best on the day of your shoot.





## DON'T HESITATE TO CHECK OUT LOCATIONS

If you can't think of anywhere to shoot I LOVE to help, but if you have a cool idea, please don't hesitate to share that with me, even if it seems like a weird location at first! I encourage you to find a place where you both feel comfortable, and please know that there is not such thing as an "ugly location." A lot of times it's about the light more than the location. I've shot pretty much everything imaginable (dark bars, candy shops, parking garages, graffiti walls, etc.), so please know that the location doesn't have to be pretty at every corner.

## THE SHOOT SHOULD REFLECT YOUR PERSONALITIES AND WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

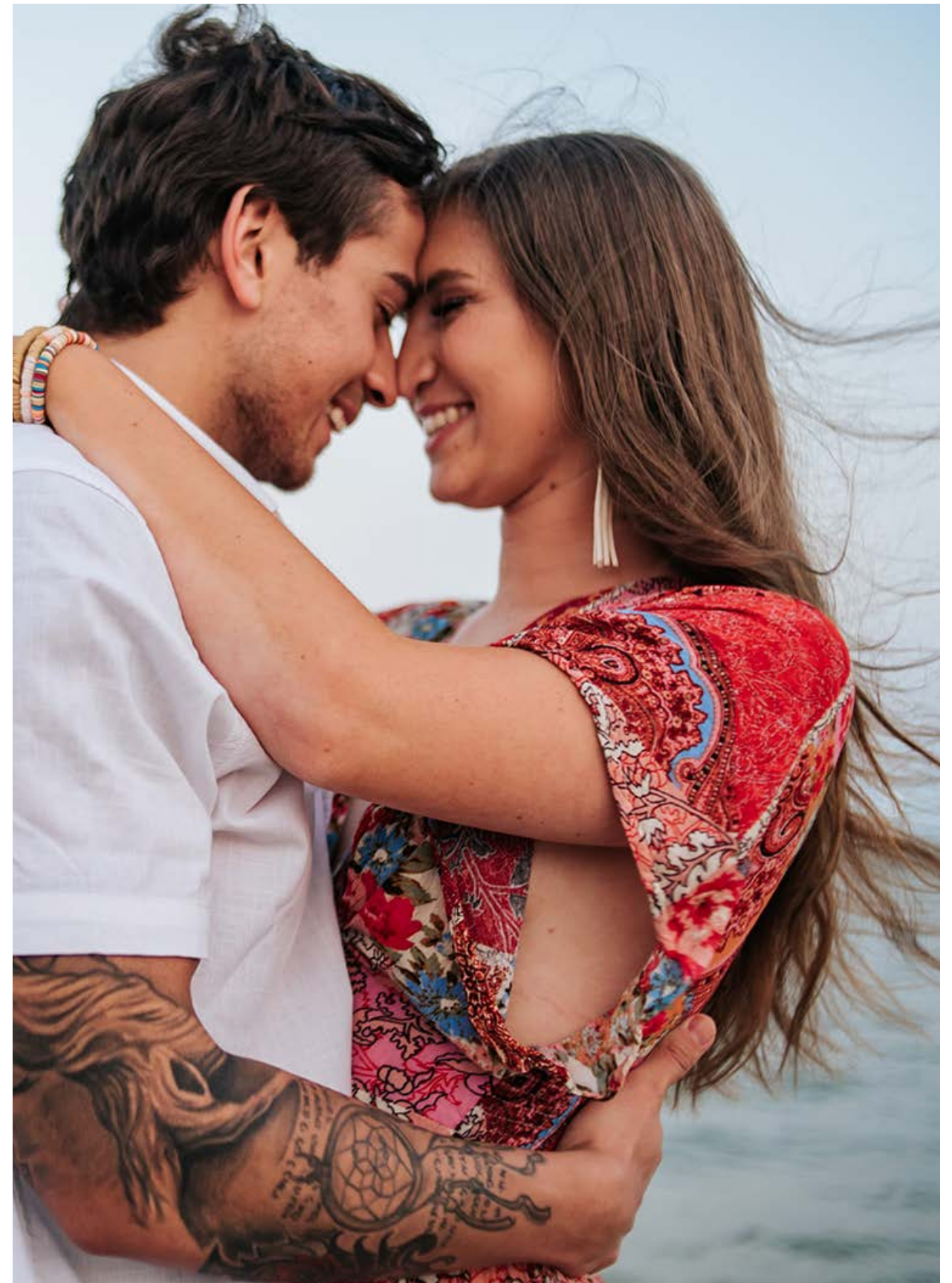
I want every engagement shoot to reflect your personalities and what matters to you. While props aren't necessary, some couples choose to bring something that has meaning to them or reflects their personalities. Pets (like dogs and cats) count, but may require some extra planning! A friend to entertain the pups while we take photos without them is much more helpful than tying a leash to a tree.

## MANY COUPLES WILL HAVE PRACTICE-RUN HAIR AND MAKEUP FOR THE SHOOT

Hair and makeup helps most people feel a little more "done-up" for the shoot, but is totally optional. Everyone wants to feel beautiful and confident, and sometimes spending a little extra time getting ready achieves just that.

That said, don't overdo it! My style of photography brings out the color and look of everyone I shoot, so sometimes things that look good to our eye may be overwhelming in photos or feel unnatural. A practice-run prior to our shoot can ensure that you'll be happy with how you look on the day of the shoot.

If you'd like my recommendations on makeup artists (and just about everything else), I can provide you with a list of amazing vendors.





## SESSION

# START TIMES

## SPRING

### MAR-MAY - VARIES

The sunset time drastically changes throughout the course of these few months and so our shooting times change as well. You can plan on approximately 5:30-7:30 in March and 6:00-8:00 in May.

## SUMMER

### JUN-AUG 6:30-8:30PM

Summer engagements, just like all engagements, take place two hours before sunset. This will hopefully mean that the shoot will be during the cooler part of the day.

## FALL

### SEP-NOV - VARIES

The sunset time varies throughout this season. In September, you can plan on 5:30-7:30 until the third week and then you can plan on 5:00-7:00 until Mid-October. After the first week of November, 3:00-5:00.

## WINTER

### DEC-FEB 3:00-5:00PM

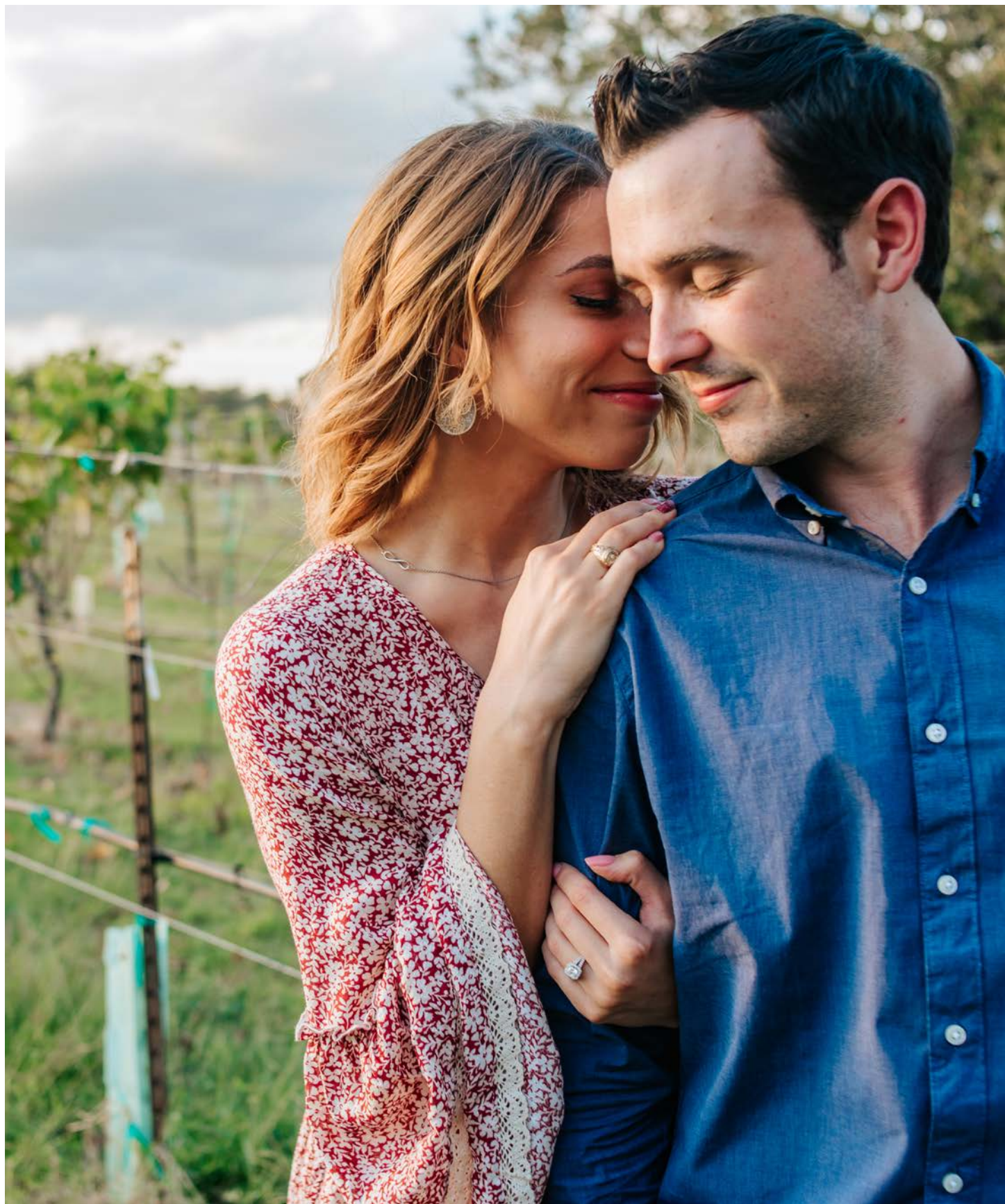
During December through mid-Feb you can plan on your engagement session taking place around 3:00-5:00pm.











# WHAT TO WEAR

## DON'T TRY TO MATCH

Try to pick out engagement photo outfits and accessories that coordinate instead. If everyone wore the same exact color at their engagement shoot, how boring would those images be? Long gone are the days of wearing jeans and white shirts. Sorry, 1990s. These images are going to represent who you are in 10-20 years during this time in your lives and you probably don't match every day, so make sure you spend time on this.

## DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE BOLD

Accessorize and make your outfits your own. Scarves, bold necklaces, and fun shoes are always welcome. Most patterns are actually okay, however, graphics are not favorable for portraits. If you are wearing a pattern, make sure it's not overwhelming and distracting, and think about having your partner wear a solid color so your patterns don't clash. Feel free to send your over outfit ideas if you need help.

## MIX UP YOUR OUTFITS

For my engagement sessions, most couples like to have one casual, everyday outfit and another that is more formal or fancy. This will give your shoot two totally different looks, and it's awesome! I usually recommend that the one who loves fashion a little more dress first, then the other coordinates based off of that. If you'd rather play it low-key, you can opt for just one outfit. Some couples have even had swimsuits as their second outfits. If you're rocking heels for part of the shoot, bring some flats or sandals for walking around.







YOUR  
**WEDDING DAY**







## WEDDINGS AND SEASONS

### SUMMER

Summer weddings are amazing! There is so much daylight and let's be honest; I love the cardio. In some months, the light will last until 8:30. Let's plan on having a few minutes to slip out of the reception for your sunset/night portraits. Usually these portraits happen during dinner or open dancing so that no one even notices that you're gone for a few minutes.

### SPRING

Spring weddings are wonderful because they are the perfect temperature. However, I recommend having plenty of Claritin and Zyrtec on hand just in case allergies start to act up during portrait time. I'll also have some in my camera bag. Spring weddings normally mean the potential for some blooms! Yay Nature! It's neat!

### FALL

Fall weddings are my favorite! I love the temperature and the colors. Most of my fall couples worry about color and I just want to encourage you that all I need is one tree with some color in order to make it look like fall. Your portrait time will vary depending on your wedding date. We'll be sure to discuss this when we approve your final timeline.

### WINTER

Winter weddings are gorgeous! However, they do take some additional planning simply because of the sunset time, the sun sets around 4:30pm. This means that all of your portraits have to be done before then. This isn't a problem if you're having a late afternoon wedding. However, if you're planning on having a late evening wedding, you may have a bit of downtime from 4pm until the start of the ceremony. You will also need more coverage time as well.



LET THE DAY

# BEGIN

This portion of The Wedding Experience really sets the stage for the entire wedding day.

The next few pages will share tips and tricks that will ensure a seamless morning of wedding preparation and beautiful portraits!

It's the morning of your wedding! Hopefully you're relaxing with your best friends while your hair is being done. If certain items haven't been checked off of the to-do list, it's time to hand them over to someone else.

Delegation is a key part of a stress-free wedding day. I know it's hard to hand over the decorating duties, beer deliveries and all of the last minute things that need to be done but, it really is important to relax the morning of your wedding. The rest of the day is going to be fast paced and filled with a lot of emotions. Definitely have your favorite music playing, and relax.



# THE EMERGENCY KIT

- Sewing Kit
- Band-aids
- Tylenol
- Allergy Meds
- Deodorant
- Blotting Paper
- Scissors
- Mints
- Toothpaste + Brush
- Bobby Pins/Hair Ties
- Midol
- Tampons
- Body Tape
- Show Laces
- Socks
- Earring Backs
- Cell Phone Charger
- Safety Pins
- Granola Bars
- Antacid
- Lint Roller
- Pen





# GETTING READY

There are a few things to consider about the “Getting Ready” portion of the day. Do you want to share a “first look” with any person who plays a huge role in your life? (i.e. Parent, bridesmaids) Will you and your partner be exchanging gifts during this time? If so, who would you like to deliver them? Are there certain people in your life who would appreciate seeing you get into your gown?

Some couples want very few people around for this moment. Other couples love having aunts and grandmas present. It’s totally up to you.

Another thing to consider as you get ready to put your dress or suit on is to refrain from putting any jewelry or accessories on. I love shooting all of those small but important details once you’re in your wedding day outfit!

Speaking of the outfit, if your wedding dress is on a plastic hanger, try to make a note to bring a wooden hanger along for picture sake. Keep reading along for more “getting ready” tips to help you prepare for incredible wedding photos.



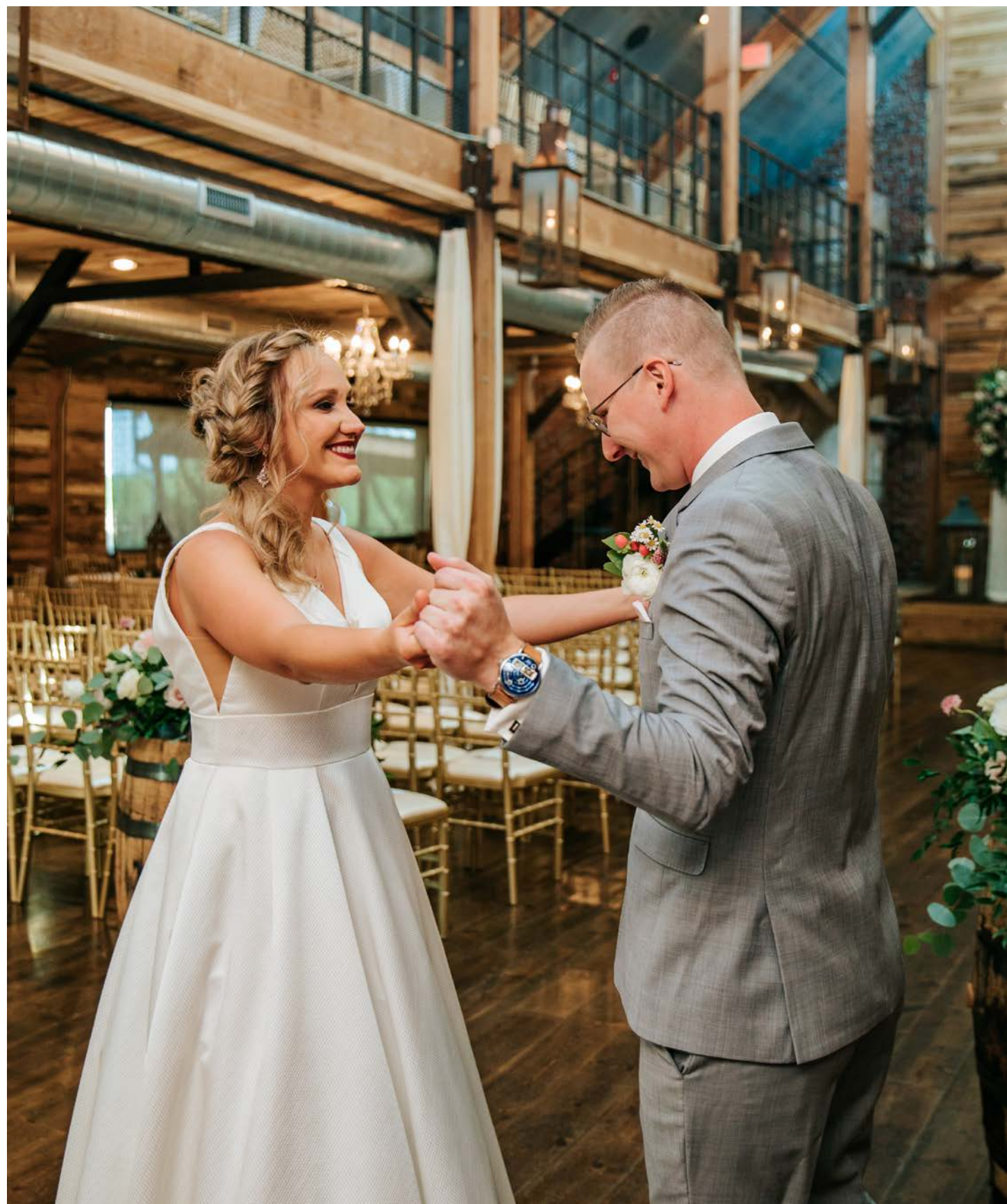


# THE FIRST LOOK

Your first look is an amazing part of your wedding day! If you aren't sure about this tradition, the next few pages will explain why it would be a romantic addition to your wedding day celebration that not only adds to the experience but also reduces stress. Please know that I would never want any of my couples to feel pressured to go with this option. However, I do want to make sure that I share all of the benefits of a first look because there is a reason 90% of our couples do it and love it.







## THE FIRST LOOK

# EXPLAINED

I have confessed my deep love for First Looks numerous times on my blog and I tend to point them out in every blog post. There is a reason for this. They're awesome. However, not everyone is aware of how awesome they are because they get caught up in how "non-traditional" it is and they immediately write it off. Most couples want a reaction. When I saw my wife, Taylor, during our first look, I teared up and was immediately relieved from the stress of the day. But even after seeing her during our first look, I still teared up seeing her walk down the aisle. #AllTheFeels

After experiencing my own wedding and shooting many others, I've come to a conclusion. Some couples love traditions, but what a partner really wants when it comes to their partner seeing them for the first time is a reaction. Those who are not interested in a First Look usually think that by seeing each other beforehand, they will lose part of that reaction. They also assume that it will not be as emotional or as intimate as it would be if they were coming down the aisle. But it's so much more intimate when it's just you and your soon-to-be, alone and soaking in every second. You don't have to whisper "You look amazing" while 150 people watch everything you're doing. In this moment you can let it all out and have a sweet moment alone.

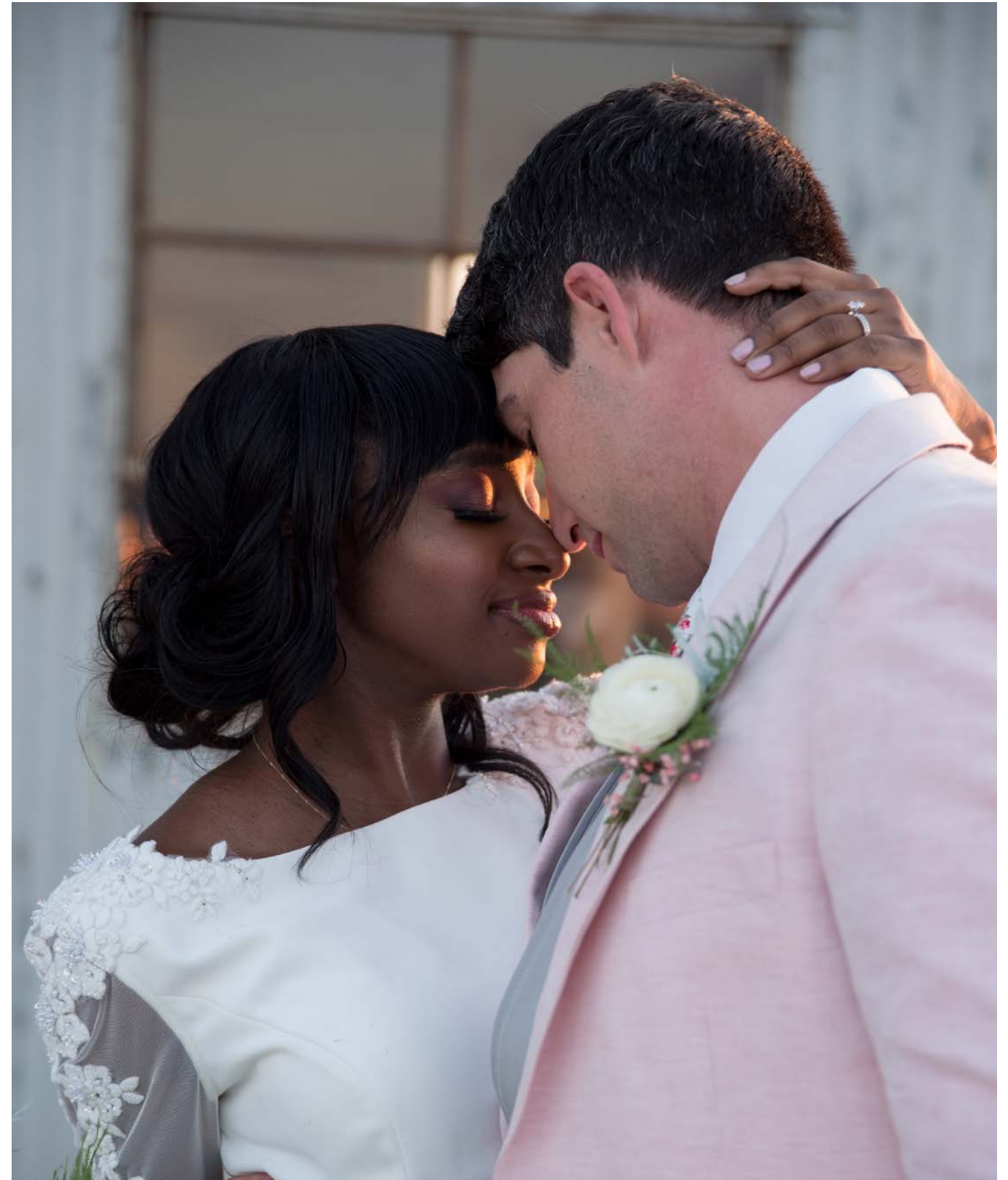


So what happens next? That's up to you! For Taylor and I, we had our wedding party, officiant and photographer present for a group prayer. Then I lined up with my men and was so ready for the day! When Taylor walked down the aisle, I wasn't a nervous wreck. I had spent the morning with her and our best friends and the pressure was off. The nerves were gone and when the nerves are gone, true emotions are free to be expressed.

So if I were to condense what I just wrote, basically, everyone normally becomes incredibly nervous on wedding days even if they seem cool and collected.

For most couples nerves kick in before you even see each other, so at the first look everything becomes very real! So when the nerves start creeping up, instead of keeping your partner in a secluded space until their time to enter the ceremony, what if you took them to a private place, no people, no on-lookers, no distractions and you let them, the love of their life, quietly call your name and have them turn around to see you for the first time. They would turn around and finally get the first look at their stunning partner and not only would you see each other, you could embrace, cry, or enjoy a kiss together and ENJOY that moment for as LONG as you wanted.

You can share about your outfits, what's happened so far, take a breather. Because you aren't on a time crunch, you casually move into your romantic portraits. No one is around, the coordinator isn't announcing "15 minutes left", and there is no pressure. It's just the two of you and your photographer capturing the excitement and the joy of your wedding day. This is your time to be together and to be alone. When does that happen on a wedding day? Without a First Look, it doesn't.





THE FIRST LOOK:

# WHY IT'S WORTH IT

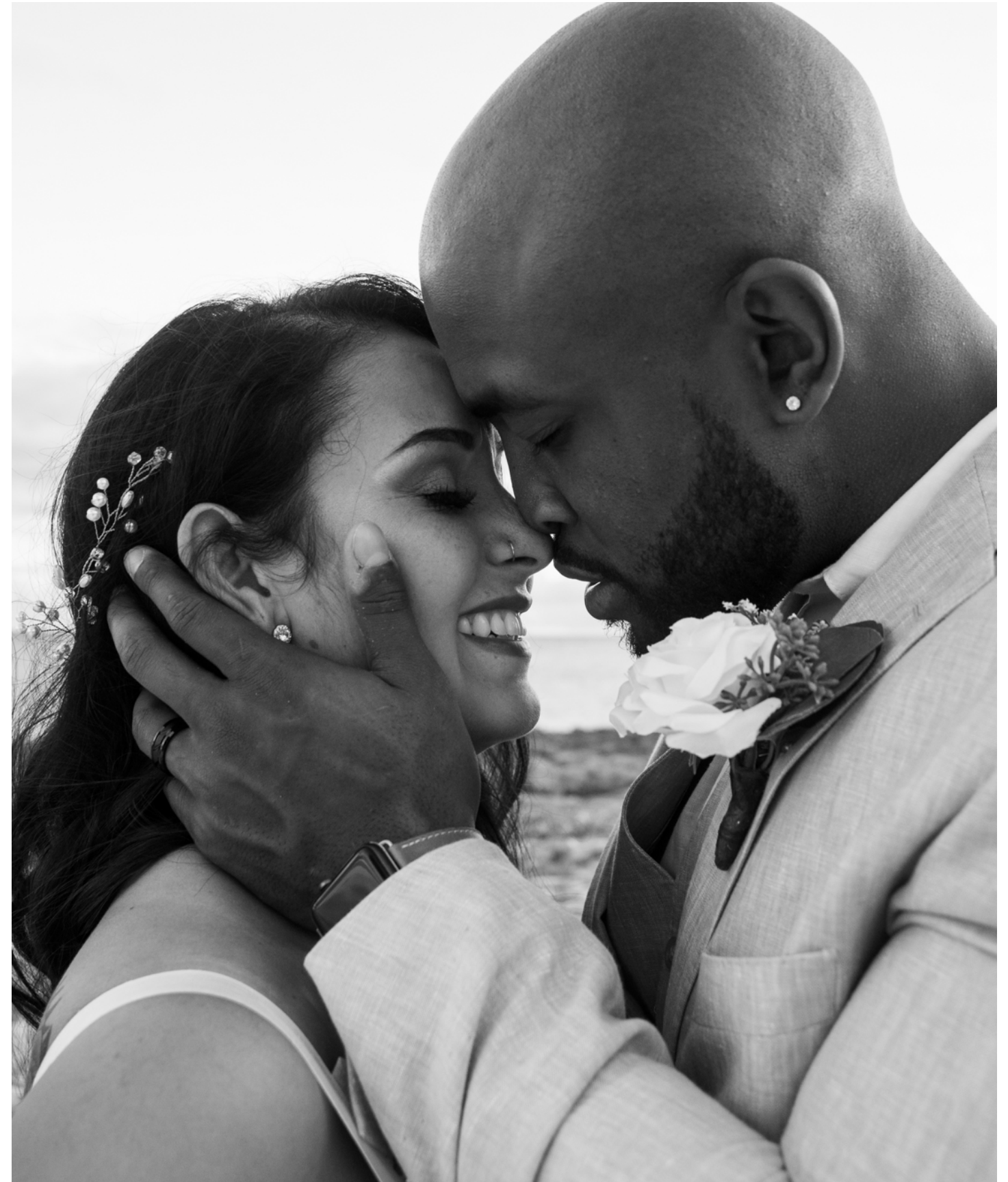
## 40% MORE PORTRAITS

You're investing a lot into your wedding photography. With a First Look, you'll receive 40% more portraits of the two of you and those are the images you will decorate your first home with. With a first look, you make the most out of this large investment and get the most for your money.

## ENJOY THE SURPRISE FREELY

You actually get to have intimate time on your wedding day with your spouse. Most couples don't realize that when you come down the aisle and totally shock each other with your gorgeousness, you can't touch each other, embrace or even speak to one another louder than a whisper.

You have to wait until 30 minutes later when the ceremony is over for the other person to react and tell you how amazing you guys look. After 30 minutes of the ceremony, the reaction isn't the same as the initial first glance.





SAMPLE WEDDING DAY

# TIMELINES





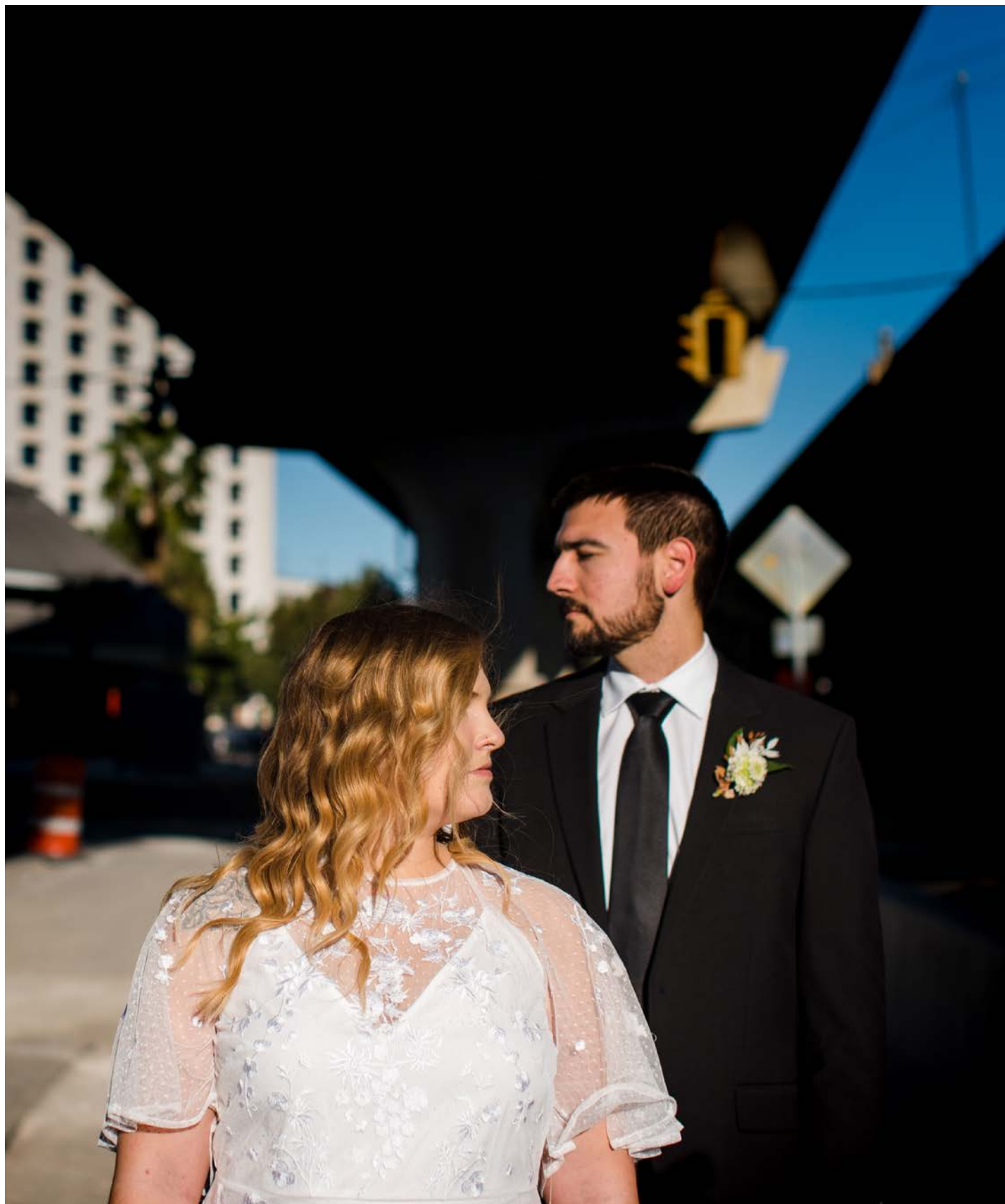
# INCLUDING FIRST LOOK

1:00 PM	Personal Details & Getting Ready Photos
3:00 PM	First Look with your partner! And a few portraits of course!
3:30 PM	Wedding Party (not family but bridesmaids, groomsmen, etc.) Photos
4:00 PM	Family Photos. This is optional but if you want to have your entire cocktail hour taking portraits at sunset or with your guests, you can do family photos before the ceremony!
4:30 PM	Couple in hiding/final pre-ceremony prayers, traditions, ketubah signings, etc.
5:00 PM	Ceremony!!! You can adjust everything after this based on how long your ceremony is! For some of my couples, it's an hour, for others, it's only 12 minutes!
5:30 PM	Cocktail Hour begins Photographer with Couple for Portraits. Wedding Party and Family photos if not taken before ceremony.
6:30 PM	Cocktail Hour ends. Guests are seated for the reception.
6:45 PM	Introductions, first dance, toasts.
7:00 PM	Dinner
7:30 PM	Dancing & other traditions!
8:00 PM	Sunset/Starry Night Pictures (depending on time of year) This is also the best time for couples who traditionally change into different outfits to change!
10:45 PM	Last call
11:00 PM	Last dance. Reception ends. After Party begins!

# WITHOUT FIRST LOOK

2:00 PM	Personal Details & Getting Ready Photos
3:30 PM	Wedding Party Photos Separately (You and your attendants, Your partner and their attendants)
4:30 PM	Couple in hiding/final pre-ceremony prayers, traditions, ketubah signings, etc.
5:00 PM	Ceremony!!! You can adjust everything after this based on how long your ceremony is! For some of my couples, it's an hour, for others, it's only 12 minutes!
5:30 PM	Cocktail Hour begins While your guests are content with food and drinks, you, your wedding party and family are taking photos!
6:30 PM	Cocktail Hour ends. Guests are seated for reception.
6:50 PM	Introductions, first dance, toasts. Couple have arrived after taking photos!
7:00 PM	Dinner
7:30 PM	Dancing & other traditions! I like to put any traditions at the beginning of the reception because that's when most people are there, haven't left, and is attentive! But this is up to you if you want to spread it out!
8:00 PM	Sunset/Starry Night Pictures (depending on time of year) This is also the best time for couples who traditionally change into different outfits to change!
10:45 PM	Last call
11:00 PM	Last dance. Reception ends. After Party begins!





## TRUSTING PORTRAIT LOCATIONS

One of my favorite parts of my job is taking something so ordinary and making it look absolutely amazing! This happens most often when it comes to picking portrait locations. If there is one thing that I love and appreciate about my couples, it's that they trust me. Sometimes I select portrait locations that most people wouldn't consider attractive. So my encouragement is to just trust me. You don't have to worry about a thing! Trust the locations and I promise you, you'll love the results.





## RECEPTION

# TIPS

The fun has begun! It's time to relax, dance and celebrate. Your reception should be a blast! The last thing you need to be worrying about is your timeline. Usually the coordinator and/or DJ should take care of making sure that everything stays on schedule so that you can enjoy your night. Here are some helpful tips that will help your reception flow smoothly.

### THINK OF YOUR GUESTS

Take your guests into consideration when planning your timeline. If you have a lot of elderly guests that will not be staying until the very end, make sure you schedule the cake cutting at a relatively early time so that they can be a part of it. I know, you're not ready for this moment yet, but let's be real; Grandmas love seeing this sweet tradition!

### GRAB ME

Sorry, that sounded weird! Anyway, if you want a picture of you and someone at the reception, don't be afraid to find me! Because I don't know most of your guests, I can't know who is special to you. I'm there to photograph the people and things you care about, so don't be afraid to grab me and we'll get that photo!



**MAKE IT YOUR OWN**

If you want to have a special dance with your grandparents, or skip wedding party introductions, do it! Taylor and I had a special Popcorn machine and fire pit with everything for s’mores, because we LOVE those things and make them regularly when friends come over.

Make your reception a reflection of who you are and don’t feel tied to traditions. Also, make sure you give your DJ or Band a “Do Not Play” list if there are some songs you really don’t want to hear during your reception.

**DON’T GET CAUGHT UP**

Sure, details are pretty and fun to photograph, but they can steal the joy of the day if you get too caught up in them. Plan your centerpieces, welcome table, etc. well before the wedding date and teach your coordinator or family friend how to set them up so that you aren’t even thinking about those things the day of.

**RECEPTION COVERAGE**

When it comes to the reception, I try to stay until the end. Towards the middle, people are more joyous, the stress is gone, and this makes for much more fun photos. Plus, I’m always looking for those moments that aren’t scheduled or planned. And that dance floor gets wild toward the end when your guests have enjoyed a few drinks.

**I SHOULD EAT WHEN YOU DO**

I never ever request a meal or anything like that, but luckily, most couples want to feed me! Thank you, seriously! Timing wise, I should eat as soon as you, the couple, eat. This way, I’m only missing people eating and no one wants photos of that. We can even sneak out for a few sunset or night portraits! I suggest explicitly telling the caterers not to hold the photographers meal until after all guests have been served (as many caterers prefer). I often don’t get to eat at all, because by the time we’ve been served, we’re on to speeches, dances, and I’m on the dance floor with your guests! Then boom! It’s 10:30pm and I’m hitting up Taco Bell on the way home! (The Fritos burrito love is real!)







# IS A DESTINATION WEDDING RIGHT FOR YOU?

## ELOPEMENT OR INTIMATE WEDDING

An elopement or intimate wedding is usually 25 guests or fewer, and usually centered around adventure. Many people elope because that matches their personalities better than a traditional big wedding. Here are a few reasons people elope.

## EXPERIENCE BASED

If you lean more toward the adventurous lifestyle and highly value experiences, an elopement might be up your alley. Taylor and I rarely give each other physical gifts because we both LOVE experiences and we feel like those will create lasting memories more than a gift in hand might.

If you're like me and you still want to celebrate with your family and friends, an option could be to elope for the ceremony/honeymoon and then celebrate with everyone at a reception party at a later date back home.

## PRIVATE CEREMONY

You may feel serious anxiety about being the center of attention like you would at a traditional wedding day. An intimate wedding is another option similar to an elopement where you have 20 or so close friends with you, either at a destination or even in your home town.

An elopement also gives you the privacy to express your emotions together without everyone staring at you.

## THE WAY YOU WANT

If you are running into difficulties in planning your wedding the way you want it to be, you might look at an elopement. Sometimes as good-natured as they try to be, parents can try to live vicariously through you by dictating the style, the timeline, and many details of your wedding day.

We had parents on both sides fighting us about things we wanted to incorporate into our wedding day, so we know the struggle is real. Elopements give you the flexibility and freedom to celebrate your love the way that best represents your marriage.





## WEDDING INSPIRATION

It's time to get excited about your wedding (if you haven't started already)!!

I'm all about working together to my couples to create something amazing and unique for their weddings.

Pinterest is okay for inspiration, but a lot of what is on there aren't from real weddings and they often lack emotion. You're welcome to share your boards, but know that I will always value emotion and feeling over the style of the photos.

Here are some photos from past couples. If you want to try something similar for your wedding or engagement session, definitely let me know! I love putting together fun things with my couples and let their personalities shine!





















## A LETTER FROM

# THE MANSFIELDS

I love this job. I started this business in 2013 and I still can't believe I get to call this my career. Taylor and I look at our wedding photos regularly. Honestly! They're hanging on our walls, our computer's screensaver, and we share our album with friends and family whenever they come over.

Why am I a photographer? Well, it's kind of a crazy story. In 2010, I was finishing college and working at a wedding venue. The owners knew I had a nice camera and asked if I would photograph a wedding on a very tight budget. I did, and I LOVED it!

I saw the relationships between grandparents and the couple and all the laughter and tears, and I knew that I wanted to seek out those moments and share them with couples. Taylor and I have lost family members who were at our wedding and those photos we have of them on the dancefloor and smiling while telling old stories are PRICELESS!

Your guests matter, you matter, you have purpose, and you deserve to have your story told. And if you like the photos and intention behind this guide, I'd love to talk to you and tell your story.

Enjoy this season of planning but also remember that your marriage is more important than the wedding. The wedding will come and go in a matter of hours but your marriage needs to stand the test of time. Continue to make time for one another, even with all that needs to get done. As you continue to plan, please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have along the way.

Our Advice: This is something that Taylor and I received on our wedding day, and it's helped keep us from many fights and it's kept a peaceful, fun-loving energy in our home. "Always believe the best in each other. You are a team!" Knowing that my wife is my teammate keeps me from assuming that she would do something deliberately to hurt me, because that would hurt us both. So, Go Team, Go!

Throughout the wedding process, I'll be in touch proactively before your engagement and wedding. I hope this guide has been helpful as you continue to plan and prepare for your wedding day! Contact us at [AllHeartPhoto@gmail.com](mailto:AllHeartPhoto@gmail.com) or [Allheartphoto.com/Contact](http://Allheartphoto.com/Contact)









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