



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR *Photographer*

BEFORE YOU BOOK

© JILL GUM PHOTOGRAPHY

As a bride, I was one of the first of my immediate friend group that got married. While I had been dreaming about wedding planning for a while, I hadn't necessarily done a lot of "research", so when it became time to really plan, I was so thankful for resources like wedding magazines and websites, and places like The Knot to give advice on what to do and how to spend money and when to do it! That being said, I felt a little like the information I was reading wasn't fully applicable to me and what we were planning. I wished for more concrete advice that applied directly to my situation.

One of the areas that I think can be really tricky for a bride is knowing what exactly to ask the professionals you are planning to hire to execute your day. So I wanted to share a list of some great questions to ask your photographer before you hire them. I found lists like this at the Knot...but the truth is, those lists aren't made by photographers and often have a lot of questions that just don't make any sense. I think the thing you need to focus on the **MOST** is looking through a lot of their work and knowing that you love it and can see yourself in those images-- the posing, the editing style, and the interactions. Then I think you need to make sure the person you are considering has a personality you love-- because the bride spends more time with their photographer than anyone else on her wedding day- which is crazy! After you have found a small handful of people who match that criteria (unless you are like me who knew there was only **ONE** photographer for her!), then these are the questions that I think are really useful to ask:





10 Important Questions Before You Book

1). What exactly is included in the coverage?

You want to know exactly how much time you will have them for and what is included. Digital files? Prints? If files, are you given the print release to print and share as you would like? Make sure you know exactly what the fine print is, and make sure it's what you want!

2). What is the delivery method of your images?

If you are getting digital files, how are they given to you? If not, what happens after your wedding day to get your prints/etc?

3). What happens if the schedule gets off and you go over your allowed time?

This is a tricky one, because personally, I am not staring at my watch waiting for the moment we are done contractually to leave. I cover what needs to be covered (which is always about 20-30 minutes into open dance floor for us), and always give our couples a 15 minute warning in case there is anything we missed. That being said, if a schedule gets an hour or more behind, obviously there is a point at which a considerate photographer would still have to say something and have a plan to add extra coverage. You want to know what that looks like if it happens on your day. Will they just pack up and leave? Are you charged for another hour even if it's just 15 minutes?

4). How long will the photographer back up your files after delivery?

I truly believe that right after you get your gallery (assuming it's digital), you should find a way to back up off site, whether that is a flash drive in a safety deposit box or another type of cloud storage. But ideally, your photographer would too just in case-- at least for a year (and in case a file wasn't sent large enough/etc so you can get something different from them if you need).

5). How will your files are backed up *before* they are delivered to you?

Picture this: Your photographer photographs your day, and it was perfect. Within a week or so, he or she uploads them to their computer, and then formats their cards for a new wedding the next week. When they go to edit your images, they realize their hard-dive failed. And the files are gone. It is a complete nightmare, and not something I would wish on anyone. Your photographer should be backing up your images multiple ways, ideally ASAP after the wedding. We actually import during the reception so even by the time we leave the images are in 2 places- and it only continues after that, including an off site backup just in case of the unimaginable. Our cameras also record on 2 cards so we always have a double copy in case a card goes bad. You cannot recreate those moments-- so make sure your photographer has a plan to ensure that you don't have to!

6). What is their role in your day?

I think this is an important question with a wide variety of answers. Do they like to help you create and stick to a timeline? Are they involved in helping and/or orchestrating each or some parts of the day? Or do they take a more passive role and just let things happen as they happen? Which would you prefer? There are definitely benefits to both styles (and I think a mix of the 2 might be best), but you want to know what their wedding day role is and how they typically interact during the day.



7). Are they more of a pose every moment or capture exactly as it happens sort of photographer?

I am guessing you will be able to tell some of this by what you see in their work- but you probably want to know if they are going to be orchestrating every moment, staying completely out of everything and letting what happens happen, or anything in between to make sure it settles well. Some couples need constant direction- and some would rather have none. Make sure you know which and what you think will work for you! I generally think you do want and need some direction-- but you also don't want someone interrupting every moment of your day telling you where to go and what to do.

8). Can you see a full gallery of a complete wedding day?

Let's face it--on social media, each photographer is sharing the BEST of the best. The images on their website, blog, or facebook/ instagram should be images you love and can see yourself in--but what about the rest of the day? It is important to see a full gallery so you can see how the images look throughout the day... even in a darker church, or even with flash at the reception, so you know that you like the entire flow and how it all looks, and not just their favorite 1-2 images of each couple.

9). How will your images or wedding day be shared on social media?

I don't think this is a make or break-- but you might want to know ahead of time how your images will be shared and if it is something you are comfortable with (or if they don't blog at all, is that ok with you or would you rather find someone who shares your story in that way).

10). When will you get your final gallery?

When we blog our images 2 days after the wedding and deliver within a couple of weeks, one of the first things we hear from our couples (and their friends!) that they cannot believe how quickly they got their images back. It is often followed by horror stories of friends of theirs who have been waiting months...*months*... to get their gallery. Or sometimes even 1 image. That is just crazy to me-- but it is reality that when photographers are shooting a high volume of weddings, sometimes they just don't have the systems in place to get your images back in decent time. You need to choose a photographer who has a timeline you are ok with. What happens if they aren't ready when promised? You don't want to be stuck waiting months and months to see the images from the happiest day of your life, friends. Check this out beforehand and make sure you are comfortable with the answer.



You will find many questions about equipment, types of files, and lots of other “technical” jargon on typical lists, but the truth is, unless you are really educated about those topics, the answers really won't make a difference for you-- so I am not sure they are really worth your time!

Remember, the key is how he or she as a person makes you feel, and how their images make you feel. Then use the answers to these questions to help guide you, and I know you will find a good match!



Thank you so much for joining me!

I hope this guide was helpful for you! Prepping content for brides has been one of my favorite parts of newsletters and blogging in my business, and I just hope the weekly newsletter will be *such* a blessing to you and make your planning process more easy and fun! Because that's what it's all about, isn't it?! Planning the start of the rest of your life with your *best friend*, and enjoying the process (and a really beautiful dress ;-)) while doing it!

I'd love to connect with you!

WWW.JILLGUM.COM
ON FACEBOOK: JILLGUMPHOTOGRAPHY
ON INSTAGRAM: JILLGUMPHOTOGRAPHY

© JILL GUM PHOTOGRAPHY