

How To Plan a Nongendered Wedding

10 Tips for a More Inclusive Wedding

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Weddings, as they stand now, and the traditions that come with them are immensely gendered. Fathers giving away brides is a tradition that stems back to when women were sold to their husbands. Wearing white, taking your husbands last name, all of it is outdated. When I got engaged, as a feminist, modern woman (who goes by she/they pronouns and is a member of the LGBTQA community), I was very worried about how to throw a wedding. Once I did research on their history, most of the traditions kind of shocked me, and left me feeling a little uncomfortable. So, I scratched all of them and decided to make my wedding more inclusive and open. I wanted all of my guests to feel happy and included, and so far nobody has missed any of the traditions. I've rounded up some of the choices that we made to help you have a more inclusive wedding for your guests and for yourself!

- 1. Wedding Invitations:** Typically a wedding invitation is addressed to "Mr. and Mrs.," My wedding invitations simply say the guests names. "Sally Jane and John Smith." (We also don't put a husband's name before a wife's on every invitation. We do it in alphabetical order, because they're equals!).
- 2. Father Daughter Dance:** Instead of a slow dance with my dad, my family and I are doing a montage dance together. I want my mom to be honored in the wedding just as much as my dad, and this was a great way to include her. The dance lessons that we're taking are so fun, and have brought us all so much closer. Truly, it was one of the best choices we made, and now we have the memories to last a lifetime.
- 3. Wedding Party:** We have an inclusive wedding party that walks down the aisle in their own way. Some of them will walk down the aisle alone, some women with other women, it has nothing to do with what their gender is! Our wedding party loves it, and it eliminates the 'gendered' part of a wedding party. Also, we're not forcing our wedding party to wear specific clothing! We just picked a color and we're letting them decide from there, no matter what type of outfit they want! Bridesmaids wearing the same outfit stems from an idea that evil spirits come to weddings to curse the couple. Bridesmaids wore the same outfits to act as decoys and confuse the spirits. Personally, we just want our party to feel comfortable and happy.

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- 4. Garter Toss and Bouquet Toss:** The garter toss comes from a medieval tradition where the guests would try to rip parts of the bride's dress for good luck. It often left the bride

feeling incredibly anxious. I've dropped this entirely from our wedding. I always found them a bit uncomfortable to watch, and honestly when I've been to weddings without it, I've never once heard of anybody who missed it. As for the Bouquet toss, I haven't decided yet if I am doing one, but if I do, it won't just be for the single ladies, it will be for everyone! As a single lady, I never wanted the bouquet, so I think it would be way more fun if my grandfather caught it, or meaningful if my mom caught it.

5. **The White Dress:** White Wedding Dresses became popular as a sign of purity and innocence. Personally, I don't feel like I need to be pure to get married. So I added blue to my dress, in the skirt. Don't let anybody tell you what kind of dress to wear! You want a yellow dress? Go for it. There are literally no rules, it's your wedding day.
6. **Taking the Grooms Last Name:** Yeah, this one is self-explanatory. If you want to, that's super cool, do it. However, for me, this stems from this idea that we're property. I have no interest in being my husband's property. We're coming up with a completely new last name together, and I'm pumped for it.
7. **Sitting on the "Bride" or "Grooms" Side:** We're not having sides. We're joining families, so why bother separating everything? We're hoping that everybody will sit with some new people and make some friends.
8. **"You may now kiss the bride:** Instead of saying 'You May Now Kiss The Bride' we are saying 'You May Now Begin Your Marriage with a Kiss!' We love this difference, and think it's a more inclusive way for both of us to begin our marriage!

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9. **Including my male fiancé in all the decisions:** Since we started planning a wedding, I can't even tell you how many people have told my partner that his opinion is not relevant. My partner actually has an incredibly eye for detail, and asked very specific questions at each venue. We immediately eliminated every venue that mocked him for asking questions. He is an equal part of this wedding and this marriage, and we wanted a venue that would treat us as such.
10. **Asking your vendors if they support the LGBTQA community** – This was super important to me. I've checked in with each vendor to let them know I was pansexual, and many of my guests were part of the LGBTQA community. If there was any hesitation, I wouldn't hire that vendor. I've also looked on websites and specifically reached out to people with more diverse clientele and who have worked with LGBTQA couples in the past. I want to be comfortable on my day, and I wanted a vendor who supports who I am, and who the people I cared about are!

If you love wedding traditions, keep them! However, if you're like me and wedding traditions aren't for you, I hope this was helpful! If you end up doing any of these tips and tricks, let me know! I would love to hear about your wedding, and would love more tips on making weddings more inclusive!