

# Lifestyle options for today's couples

Marriage today has no one formula. Gone are the days when those who married settled into one particular lifestyle. Today, married couples are more aware than ever before of the different lifestyle options available to them.

On the average, partners are older, more sophisticated and better educated than ever before. All these factors contribute to making today's bride and groom more equipped to decide what lifestyle is best for them.

And, there are many lifestyle options open to young couples today. Whether you opt for getting married when you are older or younger, or decide to have a dual-career marriage or a more traditional marriage,

one thing most brides and grooms agree on is that you can make your marriage what you want it to be.

This type of freedom has had a positive effect on the institution of marriage. Young couples now share more of the responsibility for planning a wedding and deciding what type of life is right for them.

When both parties take an interest in the planning, the results are a very personalized, joyous occasion. Planning a wedding the way you want, like planning the type of life you want together, is an expression of what you, as a couple, are "about."

Today's weddings are a combination of yesterday's tradition and your own creative touch. It is not unusual

today to see a wedding where the bride wears a traditional wedding gown complete with long train and veil, but refuses to go along with the traditional wedding vows in which she promises to "love, honor and obey."

Most couples take what they feel comfortable with, in terms of tradition, and then add their own personal style.

People are more relaxed today when it comes to wedding etiquette. Many brides and grooms share in the cost of the wedding celebration, and what is even more popular is that sharing of wedding expenses between both the bride and groom's parents.

Rules of proper dress have also eased up considerably. At one time, it was thought appropriate for the groom and his ushers to wear tuxes only for an evening wedding.

Today, it is not unusual to spy a groom and his ushers dressed in tuxes or tails for a noontime wedding. They might even be wearing a plaid,

pastel or bright red tie and cummerbund.

The traditional bridal shower has also been updated. Once thought to be a time for girlfriends, aunts and mothers to get together and shower the bride with gifts and words of wisdom, today's bridal shower is more likely to be a cocktail party for both the friends and family of both bride and groom.

Planning a wedding is wonderful and exciting, but it's costly as well. Proper planning and setting your priorities straight early on can help you to cut down on costs.

Concentrate on those things that you feel make your wedding special and unique. That way you can cut corners on those things that aren't as important to you. Determining early on what mood you would like to create will make things easier when it comes to determining costs.

The '80s is a decade of numerous options, but the only way to feel happy about the type of lifestyle you choose or the type of wedding you plan is to follow your own instincts, because you don't have to follow one formula!



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