

Getting Too Much Advice? Here Are Ways to Cope

How to handle a never ending stream of advice from family and friends is a challenge all marrying couples face, according to an article in a recent issue of "Bride's" magazine.

"It's not good for a marriage if a wife makes more money than her husband," the bride's mother might say. "You really should buy a condominium instead of renting," the groom's uncle will insist.

Everyone is eager to help a bride and groom adjust to their new roles. The only trouble with all this help is that it can be so overwhelming that the couple ends up feeling confused and pressured. Which advice should they take? How can they turn down a piece of advice without hurting a loved one's feelings?

In order to deal with this situation, the couple must know what they want. They should sit down together before the wedding and ask: "Where do we want to live?" "How important will our careers be?" "How do we hope to spend our free time?" Premarital counseling — available through churches, universities, and psychological associations — can help by providing a framework for these talks.

The answers the couple arrive at should be as specific as possible — for instance, "We'll try to start a family within three years," or "We'll plan to spend one weekend a

month alone, just the two of us." When the couple disagree, they should push to find a compromise rather than one or the other simply giving in, since "easy" solutions often lead to anger and resentment.

Once a couple feel secure in their decisions, they'll be able to react calmly to the advice coming their way.

First, they should determine if there's an underlying reason for a person to be so eager to offer advice. If a bride finds her mother-in-law to be taking a little too much interest in the wedding, she should stop and examine what's going on; maybe the woman always wanted a daughter of her own. The bride can then respond on this level instead of with anger and perhaps think of ways to get her fiancée's mother more involved.

Second, the couple should realize that all the advice they get won't be useless —

... THE TOAST ...

If the person giving the toast knows of a special interest or activity of one or both of the partners, this knowledge can be used facetiously in a toast; e.g., tennis (love match), football (the bride and groom are now a team and teamwork is essential), an interest in music can lead to references of harmony and occasional discords.

especially when an advice-giver has experience in the area. A harried bride and groom may feel that yet another opinion on where they should go for their honeymoon is the last thing they need; but if it's coming from a cousin who has traveled all over the world it could prove invaluable.

Finally, the bride and groom must know how to stop listening and turn down unneeded advice. Since most advice-givers mean well, it's only kind for the couple to let them know that they do value their opinions even if they can't use all of them.

But at the same time, they should make it clear that they are rejecting the advice: "We've thought about what you said, but it's just not right for us," or "Thank you, but we've already decided on another plan." In the end, a couple must be able to say, "We did it our way."

... THE TOAST ...

Many a toast can be lost in the hubbub of activity. If the wedding is a sit-down affair, and there is a PA system, the task is not difficult. Otherwise you will have to work to make yourself heard. Take a deep breath and speak out fully. Keep eye contact with your audience but turn to the couple from time to time to focus attention on the recipients of the toast.

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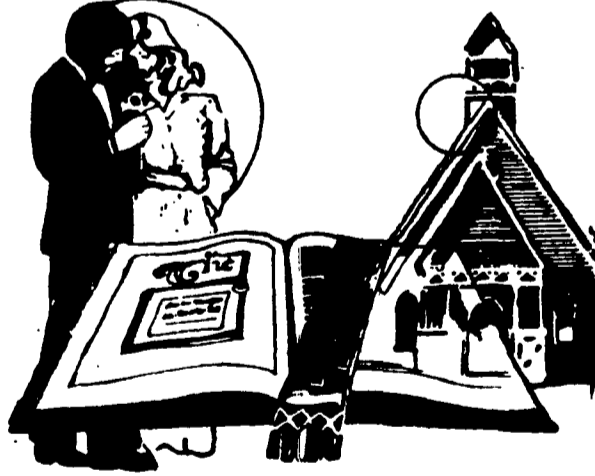
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