



THE Wedding GUIDE

Get the most from your
WEDDING
PHOTOGRAPHY

A Guide for
ABBEY GRIM
COUPLES



Welcome

Hello Husband & Wife-to-be and welcome! First of all, let me say THANK YOU for choosing me to photograph one of the best days of your life! This is going to be SO much fun. I'm sure your mind is racing with all that needs to be planned. It's all very exciting, but it can also be somewhat overwhelming. You're planning the day that you've been anticipating your whole life and yet you only get one shot at it! By the time you get the hang of it, the planning is over! 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 amazing photographic experience. 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. Since we're official, the next step is to plan your engagement session and then start chatting about wedding day details as we get closer to your date! I'm beyond excited to be working with you!! I cannot wait to get to know you two!

HEY THERE! I'm
Abbey!



GET TO KNOW ME!

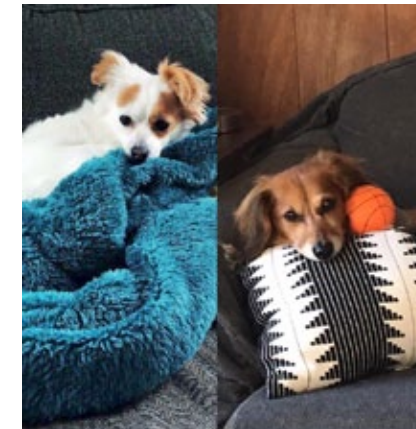
You may have already gotten a hint of this already... but I LOVE what I do! Documenting your wedding day is such an honor!! Since we'll be spending a lot of time together on the big day, I want to make sure you really feel like you know me- so here are a few things that make my heart flutter.

A Few of My Favorite Things



MR CALEB GRIM

I LOVE my husband! Hands down he is the most supportive, sweetest, smartest, most genuine, human I know. Our marriage is what has inspired me to become a photographer- watching two people begin their life together- is there anything more beautiful!?



OUR DOGGIES!

These are our two nuisances... I mean... pets. Lincoln (named for Lincoln Park where we rescued him) is a papillon mix and Joey is a miniature dachshund. They make great company for long days in my office!



HOUSE PLANTS

We live in a literal jungle... I think we're up to 34 house plants? Because I work from home, there will be some weeks in the winter that I don't leave the house for DAYS, so having a lot of green surrounding me is super important! Helps chase away the winter blues :).



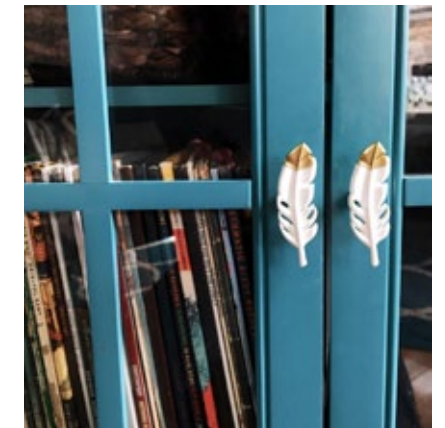
VALPARAISO, IN

We're obsessed with the city we live in. We are both from the Fort Wayne area, but after we went to Valparaiso University for college, we couldn't leave. We even tried moving to Chesterton but but it didn't take. I think we're going to be Valponians for a really long time...



MORNINGS

My family will probably be surprised at this one, because I used to HATE mornings. But being married to a teacher has me getting up a lot earlier now. I love spending time journaling, sipping coffee, and a moment to myself before the day officially starts.



DECORATING

I think this is something I picked up from my mom growing up, but I see our home kind of an extension of myself. I love finding new fun things to decorate our home with (ESPECIALLY if it's vintage or teal- I have a problem with the color teal... ask anyone...)

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#TheWeddingsGrim



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YOUR ENGAGEMENT *Session*

Now that you have picked a date, a photographer, and probably a venue as well, you can celebrate! Those are some of the toughest decisions in wedding planning and you can cross them off your list! Hooray!! Now on to the fun stuff.... like your engagement session! I include engagement sessions in the wedding collections because I truly believe that they are a VITAL part of the entire process. During your engagement session, you'll have the chance to get to know me, experience how I shoot and how I handle posing and lighting. This session will make a HUGE impact on how the wedding day flows. I'll arrive on your wedding day already knowing how you two interact, what your best poses are and how to photograph you in a genuine way! What I learn about you during your engagement session is invaluable! You will feel like such a pro on your big day because of the great practice you had during your engagement session and that's how it should be! Your

engagement session can be scheduled anytime before your wedding day.

Because our weekends are filled with weddings, I shoot engagements on weekday evenings, normally from 5-7pm depending on the light and the time of the year. In the winter months, 3-5pm is a normal time frame for an eshoot! As you start to plan for your engagement shoot, you will need to start brainstorming location ideas. I LOVE it when couples pick a location that is special or sentimental to them in some way! 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 shoot at farms, campuses, downtown alleys and even laundry mats! 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!

ENGAGEMENT *Prep*

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 is behaving! I know that planning for your engagement session can be overwhelming- you should have seen me rummaging through my fiance's closet for coordinating clothes! Here are some tips for outfits and accessories that will make the e-shoot preparation a little more manageable!



- Don't try to MATCH...try to pick outfits and accessories that coordinate instead. If everyone wore the same exact color at their e-shoot, how boring would those images be?
- Don't be afraid to be BOLD! Accessorize and make your outfits your own! Scarves, bold necklaces and fun shoes are always welcomed!
- MOST patterns are actually ok.... however, graphics are not favorable for portraits. If you're wearing a pattern, make sure it's not overwhelming and distracting. No words!
- Be sure to check out Pinterest boards for more outfit inspiration if you're having trouble!
- Empty your pockets! Literally. You don't want to have key chains or phones showing through your pockets. (This is for the guys especially!)

- Most often, couples like to have one casual, everyday outfit and then one outfit that is dressier! This will give your shoot two totally different "looks". I recommend beginning with the dressy outfit first!
- Make sure you're comfortable in what you're wearing. And ladies, if the top is super low cut, that will limit the amount of angles I can shoot from.
- Clean the ring! I love to shoot a few rings shots while you change outfits! The cleaner the better!
- Relax! You don't have to be a pro at this! I'm going to help you along the way and it's going to be a blast! Enjoy this time together and make a date out of it! Plan dinner afterwards and celebrate!!





ENGAGEMENT *Session*

Approximate
Start Times (cst) :

WINTER

Dec-Mar 3-5pm

During December through Mid-March you can plan on your engagement session taking place around 3-5pm. However, the time changes in Mid-March and so that will make the start time one hour later.

SUMMER

Jun-Aug 5:30-7:30pm

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.

SPRING

Apr-May - Varies

The sunset time drastically changes throughout the course of these two months and so our shooting times change as well. You can plan on approximately 4:30-6:30 in April and 5:00-7:00 in May.

FALL

Sep-Nov - Varies

The sunset time changes drastically during these three months. In Sep, you can plan on 4:30-6:30 until the third week and then you can plan on 4:00-6:00 until Mid- Oct. After the first week of Nov, 3:00-5:00pm.

LOGISTICS:

- We photograph engagement sessions on weekday evenings because our weekends are dedicated to photographing weddings!

- We love shooting at fun unique locations. We recommend one-two locations max for engagements. A general rule of thumb is the more locations and outfits, the less images but the more variety you'll have!

-If the location is a private place, it is your responsibility to make sure we have the proper permission to photograph there. Because of state law, I no longer photograph on or next to train tracks.

-Be thinking if there is anything I need to know before we start. Maybe you have a "good side", you don't like how your arms look at a certain angle, etc. Knowing this before hand will help me pose you in a flattering way!





YOUR
Wedding
DAY



WEDDINGS & *Seasons*



Portrait & Timing Tips for: WINTER, SUMMER, FALL & SPRING

WINTER

Winter weddings are gorgeous! However, they do take some additional planning simply because of the sunset time. The hard part about a winter timeline is the fact that the sun sets around 4:30 or 5pm. 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 down time from 4pm until the start of the ceremony. You will also need more coverage time as well.

FALL

Fall weddings are my favorite! This is probably because Caleb and I got married in November! I love the temperature and the colors! Most of my fall brides 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! A little bit of color can go a long way!! Your portrait time will vary depending on your wedding date. We'll be sure to discuss this when we approve your final timeline.

SUMMER

Summer weddings are amazing! I love that there is so much daylight! In some months, the light will last until 8:30pm! So, if you're having a summer wedding, you can plan on having a few minutes to slip out of the reception for your sunset portraits! You will NOT regret this! This is the absolute best light of the day and you're going to want to have portraits during this time period. 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 flare up during portrait time. Spring weddings normally mean the potential for some blooms! If we happen to find any type of blooming tree or plant, it will be worth it to give us a few minutes for a few portraits with it! You'll LOVE the result!

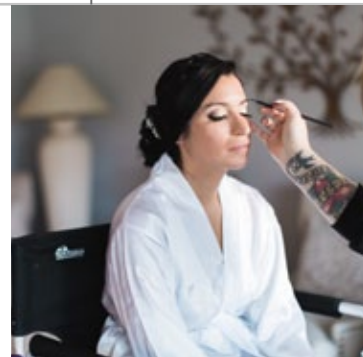
SAMPLE *Timeline*

Bridal Details 2:30-3:00

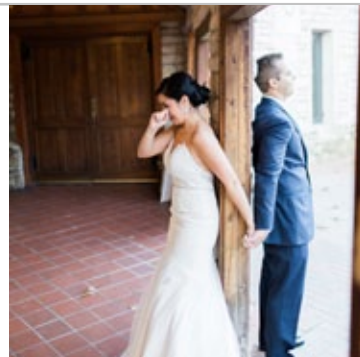


After the details have been photographed, it's time for the bride to get into her dress! This is a big moment! I usually ask the mother of the bride and all of the bridesmaids to be dressed by the time the bride is ready to get into her dress. This ensures that everyone will look nice in those images. After the bride is in her gown, she can put on her jewelry, veil, shoes, etc. and I will shoot some additional bridal portraits!

Every bride loves having those beautiful shots of her bridal details. It's an important part of the story and I love having some time to shoot the dress, shoes, jewelry, invitations, etc. These shots allow me to get warmed up for the rest of the big day. I normally like to allow at least 30 minutes for this part of the day. While I'm shooting details, I'm also capturing some shots of the bride and her girls getting ready! If the groom is getting ready in the same building, Caleb will begin photographing the boys close to 30 minutes before the first look since it always takes them less time to get dressed!



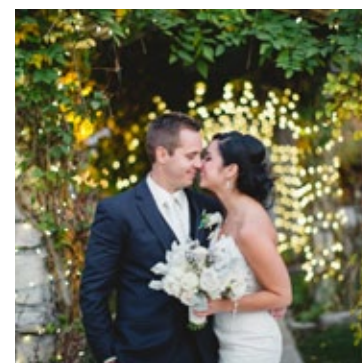
3:15-3:45 Bridal Prep



First Look 4:00-4:15

This is one of my favorite parts of the wedding day! I will find the perfect location for my couple's First Look prior to the getting ready portion of the day! Don't stress about that one bit! I will make sure the location is private and as secluded as possible. We ask that all friends and family give the couple space during this time.

Portraits 4:15-4:50

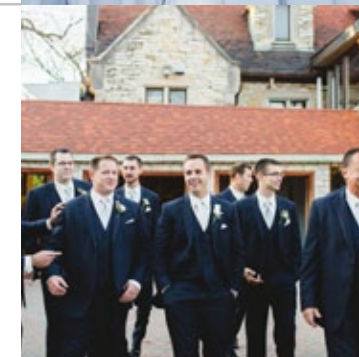


After the bride and groom take their time with the First Look, I will begin taking a bunch of romantic portraits of the two of them while the initial excitement is still present! Remember, the LIGHT determines where we shoot and so we usually can't decide on specific portrait locations until the day-of.

Bridal Party Portraits 4:50-5:20



After bridal party portraits are complete, the bride will go into hiding so that early guests don't sneak a peek and the ushers will begin their duties.



Now it's time for Bridal Party shots! I buffer in extra time throughout the day just in case we have some unexpected things that hold us up! One way to make sure we stay on schedule for bridal party portraits is to have someone put the boutonnieres on the guys BEFORE they arrive for portraits. During Bridal Party portraits, Caleb and I will make sure to take some great shots of the guys and girls both separately AND together!



5:30-6:00 Bride in Hiding

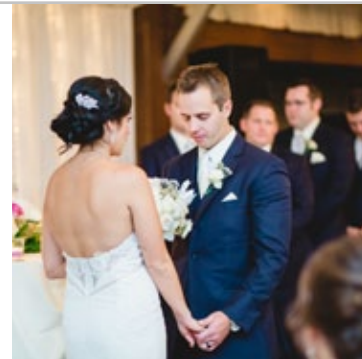
THE *Timeline* CONTINUED...

Reception Details 5:30-5:50



It's time to get married!! Most ceremonies are 30 minutes long. If your ceremony is longer than 30 mins, we'll make adjustments to the timeline! Cherish these moments! Your ceremony will pass by so quickly!

If the reception is in the same location as the ceremony, I will use this time to shoot the reception decor untouched. If the ceremony and reception are in different locations, I recommend having a cocktail hour outside of the main reception area if possible so that I can grab some great shots of your reception before the night begins and guests start laying down purses and coats on their seats!



Ceremony 6:00-6:30

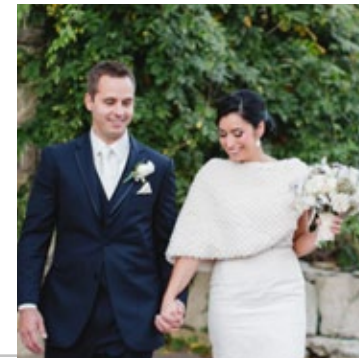
Family Portraits 6:40-7:10

Family formals normally take place immediately following the ceremony. It's best to save all of the family formals until after the ceremony because ALL family members will be present at that time.



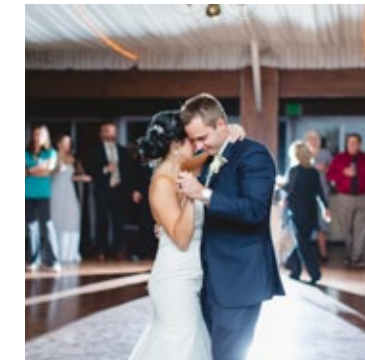
We'll need about 30 minutes for family formals and I will send a questionnaire before the wedding where you can list out the shots that you want. Please make sure all family members know where to be and what time, as we have no time to waste! :) I recommend shooting portraits outdoors if possible so that they resemble more natural family portraits, especially if you have a dark indoor ceremony location.

A Few "Just Married" Portraits 7:15-7:30



7:00 is the BEST time of day for portraits in the late spring, summer and early fall! This is when the sun is glowy and golden. I love having a few extra minutes with the bride and groom, if there's time, to take a few "Just Married" portraits right after family formals!

Reception Begins! 7:30



This is when the bridal party lines up for introductions and the party begins!! By this part of the day, my timeline isn't as strict. I work off of the natural light and so after the sun is set, my portrait time is over and I begin focusing on the reception events! We are pretty tired by this time, and look forward to a quick meal at a table with your guests before we get back to work!

I include 8 hours of coverage so that I can be present for the main events of the reception and about an hour of dancing! I work with your DJ to make sure the first dances, toasts, bouquet and garter tosses, and any other special events are taken care of, still leaving plenty of time for candid of your fun group of friends and family!



10:30 We say Goodnight!

APPROXIMATE TIMES:

DETAILS & PREP : 1.5 HOURS

FIRST LOOK & PORTRAITS : 30-40 MINS

BRIDAL PARTY : 30-40 MINS

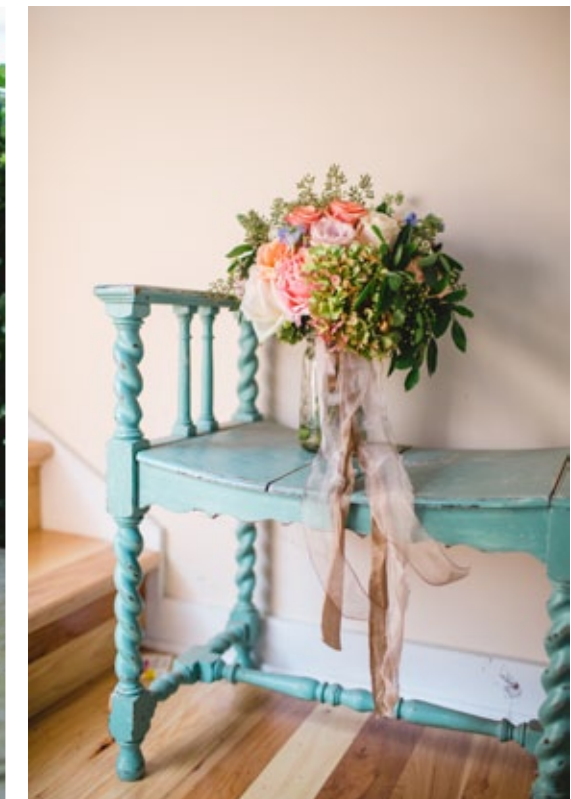
FAMILY FORMALS: 30 MINS

EXTRA PORTRAIT TIME : AS MUCH TIME AS YOU'LL GIVE ME!

RECEPTION: 3-3.5 HOURS



Pre CEREMONY



Let the day begin!

This portion of day 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 bridal preparation and beautiful portraits!



GETTING *Ready*

It's the morning of your wedding! Hopefully all of the little details are taken care of and 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 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! Take advantage of this down time! There are a few things to consider about the "getting ready" portion of the day. Do you want to share a "first look" with your dad or any other person who plays a huge role in your life?

Will you and your groom be exchanging gifts during this time? If so, who would you like to deliver them? Are there certain women in your life who would appreciate seeing you get into your gown? Some brides want very few people around for this moment. Other brides love having aunts and grandmas present! It's totally up to you! A few other things to consider.... as you get ready to put your dress on, refrain from putting any jewelry on. I love shooting all of those final steps once you're in your gown! Speaking of the gown, if your gown is on a plastic hanger, try to make a note to bring a wooden hanger along for picture sake. If you forget, no big deal! I'm a pro at finding wooden hangers at venues! Keep reading along for more "getting ready" tips to help you prepare!



EVERY
little
DETAIL

RINGS, SHOES, JEWELS ...

The whole day begins with the DETAILS! This is one of my favorite parts of the wedding day because it allows me to prepare and get my creative side warmed up for the rest of the day! I photograph a bride's details in a way that matches and showcases the style of the entire wedding day. So, in some ways, the details set the stage for the look of the whole wedding and I love having ample time to stylize and shoot everything from the dress to the jewelry to grandma's handkerchief! To the right you'll find a list of the most common details that I shoot. I ask brides to gather any details they have before I arrive so that I can walk in, say hello, give you a huge hug and then begin with all the goodies! (Please ensure your mom that I will take GREAT care of the dress, I promise!)

WHAT TO HAVE READY

- dress
- veil / hair pieces
- rings (all three)
- shoes
- bouquet & boutonniere
- jewelry
- perfume
- invitation suite
- borrowed & blue

When you're planning a wedding day timeline, the best advice I could give is to ADD CUSHION TIME! Sometimes the most simple things can take an extra 20 minutes and then all of a sudden, the whole morning is thrown off. I have seen "getting the bride in her dress" take almost 40 minutes because of a button malfunction. It's a smart idea to add in an extra ten minutes here and there so that we have some wiggle room to work with! This way, if one part of the day gets thrown off by 20 minutes, I can help you compensate that time in other areas. There are so many different things to think about when you're planning a wedding day and so here are some tips for the preceremony timeline! I realize that every single wedding day is different and so not all of these tips will apply to every wedding day schedule. Something else to consider is that not EVERYTHING will go as planned, and I promise you, that is completely normal!!



Timing TIPS



BOUQUETS AND BOUTS

You will need your Bouquet & Bouts for your First Look! Have them delivered to the room where the bride is getting ready.

TRAVEL TIME

Be sure to think about the travel time and TRAFFIC to and from your getting ready location and your venue!

HAIR & MAKEUP

I encourage brides to have at least their makeup done before I start because who wants a ton of shots without their makeup on?! Nobody!

GROOMSMEN PREP

My second shooter (Caleb) will photograph the guys getting ready if they are getting ready in the same location as the bride.

GETTING IN THE DRESS

I'll instruct you to get into your dress close to a window and it would be fabulous to have your bridesmaids dressed when you're getting in your gown!

CREATE A CUSHION

A 10 minute cushion every now and then is a GREAT idea! It's amazing how fast time slips away the day of!

A groom in a grey suit, white shirt, and black tie is looking at a bride's bouquet. The bride is wearing a white dress and has her hair styled in an updo with a white headpiece. They are standing on a white picket fence outdoors. In the background, other guests in suits are visible, and a white cross decorated with yellow and white flowers is on the left. The text 'YOUR *First* LOOK' is overlaid on the image.

YOUR *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 we would never want any of our couples to feel pressured to go with this option. However, we do want to make sure that we share all of the benefits of a first look because there is a reason 75% of our couples do it and LOVE it!



THE 1ST 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. I can talk about those brides because I was one of them. I wanted a REACTION....I wanted Caleb to be so surprised and overcome with joy when I walked down the aisle that he bawled at the first sight of me! Isn't that EVERY girl's dream? Who doesn't want that reaction? I did have my dream-reaction, and he LOST IT when I came down the aisle. He was in tears and so was everyone who was watching him!! Walking down the aisle on my wedding day was a moment that I will treasure for a lifetime! But I will tell you, I really wanted a few moments with him. To hold each other and take in what was about to happen.

After experiencing my own wedding and shooting over 100 others.... I've come to this conclusion. Some brides love "traditions".... but what a bride REALLY wants when it comes to her groom seeing her 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. Everyone knows that wedding days are a bit stressful for the bride and

groom. The whole day is focused on them, they need to look their best, they need to be on time, the groom has no idea what side the boutonniere is supposed to go on and little by little... the tension grows.

Picture this: It's before the ceremony and the gravity of what is about to happen starts to sink in and the calm, collected groom who was playing golf just a few short hours ago is now starting to feel a little anxious. So what happens next? The groom waits in a little room somewhere for his cue from the coordinator. It seems like it's taking FOREVER. Finally, the coordinator leans her head in and hurries the groom to get ready. With clammy hands, the groom enters the ceremony and what does he find? he finds anywhere from 80-300 people and they're all looking where? Right at his face... because everyone has expectations and anticipation about his first reaction. This is the farthest thing from a private, intimate moment. Sure, it's SO powerful and SO wonderful. ... I already said that walking down the aisle was one of the BEST PARTS of my WHOLE wedding day!! It's magical!! But when I walked down the aisle... Caleb was also a nervous wreck...if he had spent the morning with me and our best friends and the pressure would have been OFF. By the time our ceremony rolled around he would have been totally ready to ENJOY our beautiful day!

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

For most grooms, the nerves kick in before they see their bride because when they see her, everything becomes VERY real, So when the nerves start creeping up, instead of keeping the groom in a secluded space until his time to enter the ceremony, what if you took him to a private place... no people, no on-lookers, no distractions.... and you let his beautiful bride, the love of his life, quietly call his name and have him turn around to see her for the first time. He would turn around and finally get his first look at his stunning bride and not only would he get to see her... he could embrace her... cry with her.... kiss her... and ENJOY that moment with her for as LONG as they wanted. As she shows him her dress, twirls a few times and then asks him what he thinks... his nerves start to diminish. After all, she's the one who can make him most comfortable anyway.

Because they aren't on a time crunch... they casually move into their 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 them and their photographer.... capturing the excitement and the joy of their wedding day. This is their time to be TOGETHER...and to be ALONE. When does that happen on a wedding day? Without a First Look.... it doesn't. After their romantic portraits are done, they meet up with their best friends. Their bridal party joins them and because they still have plenty of time to spare... the bride touches up a little makeup while the boys act like boys. After a few minutes the bridal party portraits begin and they're FUN. They're FUN because there is time to make them FUN.

There aren't any guests waiting impatiently at the cocktail hour and there isn't a DJ coming to find the photographer to get a time check. It's wonderful!

After portraits are done, the girls and guys separate and prepare for the ceremony. The guests begin to arrive and the ushers are in place. Pretty soon it's time for the processional music to begin and one by one, the bridesmaids make their way down to the front of the ceremony. As the groom clasps his hands... they aren't clasped out of nervousness but excitement. The music builds, the mother of the bride stands and all of the guests follow her lead. The groom looks up and here comes the BRIDE!!! His best friend, his companion, his sweetheart....she's stunning.... ABSOLUTELY stunning. The closer she gets, the bigger he smiles.

Now let me put a disclaimer on here before we continue...my clients are not required to do a First Look by any means! I used to feel bad for sharing this option with couples who were against it because I didn't want to push anything on them. However, I've seen the benefits of a first look over and over again and so I only share this because I want the BEST for my couples!! It's totally ok if couples choose not to share a first look! It's just my preference to do one for many reasons.... Keep reading to find out more of the benefits of sharing your first look privately! For brides not interested in a First Look, lets start chatting soon about how we'll create a special timeline to fit everything in!



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! (Believe me, our house is PACKED full of our portraits!) 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 man. Most brides don't realize that when you come down the aisle and totally SHOCK him with your gorgeous-ness... he can't even tell you how amazing you look. He can't touch you, embrace you or even SPEAK to you. You have to wait until 30 minutes later when the ceremony is over for him to react and tell you how amazing you look. And after 30 minutes of the ceremony, the reaction isn't the same as the initial first glance.

EXTEND YOUR DAY BY HOURS

First Looks allow you to extend your wedding day. Normally the wedding day would start when you come down the aisle, then the ceremony would end, you would rush through portraits so that you're not late for the introductions and then it's reception time. With a first look, your wedding day is extended by almost 3 hours! Instead of being rushed for your bridal party portraits... you actually get to enjoy them and have fun hanging out with your BEST friends on your wedding day. The WHOLE first half of my client's wedding albums are filled with images just from this time together before the ceremony.

DIMINISHES NERVES

You get rid of your nerves! I'd say, literally 1/2 of my couples who have decided to do a first look, the grooms were not fans of it at first. However, because they have never experienced their wedding day before, they didn't know how nerve racking it can be. I have testimonials from so many grooms who initially weren't a fan of the first look... but afterwards admitted to being SO much more relaxed and ready for the ceremony!

FUN FACT

This was my husband's face when he saw me for the first time on our wedding day! SWOON! This photo actually went viral and had over 801k likes & comments! So you can see why I especially find the first look so special. This photo still makes me cry!



photo by grace jones photography



THE *Ceremony*

Here it is! The moment everyone has been waiting for! The music is playing and the guests have been seated. Ushers make their way to the back of the church and the coordinator is lining up the bridesmaids while giving the musicians a 5 minute warning. The bride is about to walk down the aisle to the love of her life..... and if she's like most girls, she's dreamed about this moment for a long time! Vows will be shared and promises will be made... this is what it's all about!! In a world full of wedding blogs, Pinterest and bridal magazines, it's easy to be overwhelmed and consumed by the "prettiness" of the event. While details do matter and planning is necessary, it's important to never lose sight of the real purpose of this amazing day!



LIGHTING

Ceremony lighting is really important. If you get married outdoors at 12pm, the lighting will be extremely harsh and not only will there be harsh lines of light on your faces, you will also be squinting. I suggest planning an outdoor ceremony 2 hours before sunset if you are having a FIRST LOOK. If you are not interested in sharing a first look, then I would suggest having your ceremony 3-4 hours before sunset to ensure that you will have plenty of time for all of your portraits afterwards. The lower the sun, the more romantic the lighting. If you are having an indoor ceremony, it is always best to have EVEN lighting at the altar. If there are two spotlights on the bride and groom, I will not be able to expose the rest of the bridal party. It is better to have soft, even light across the whole altar.

ORDER OF SERVICE

I have seen so many couples do so many AMAZING things during their ceremony. I've photographed couples washing each other's feet, symbolizing that they want to serve each other for the rest of their life. Some couples share in communion while some light a unity candle. I've seen sand ceremonies, rope ceremonies and the signing of the family Bible. The options are limitless!! As you plan your ceremony, make sure you design it to be exactly what the two of you envision it to be. This is your day!! If you have the freedom to be creative, then by all means, be creative!! Caleb and I had a less than traditional wedding. We said traditional vows, but also wrote and read to each other what we want the other person to remember when we see our wedding rings! It was so amazing and much more meaningful than "With this ring..."

PROGRAMS & DETAILS

The BEST advice I have for the program making process is to remember that not EVERY guest needs a program! We printed a program for everyone attending our wedding but quickly realized that most families only took one. We ended up with over 200 extra programs! Yikes! Also, before ordering your programs, have SEVERAL people check it for spelling and grammatical errors. Programs and the ceremony decor are things that the bride can plan in advance but then delegate the actual job of setting it up to a friend or coordinator. The last thing a bride needs to be doing the morning of her wedding is running around setting up floral arrangements! This leads me into my next column!

COORDINATION

Hiring either an event planner or just a ceremony coordinator is SO important!! Brides realize very quickly that if they do not have someone in charge of the coordination of the day, that responsibility will automatically fall on the mother of the bride, the photographer, or the BRIDE! When a photographer is in charge of the timeline and the coordination of the day, the images will suffer. All of my most stressful wedding situations were caused by a lack of organization and coordination. It's so important to make this a priority. If you need any recommendations on wedding coordination services I would love to share some of my favorite vendors with you!



your wedding
party

Lets chat about your bridal party! This is when the fun RE-ALLY begins! I know from experience that all brides want their closest friends to have an AMAZING time during their big day and I will make sure that happens! Bridal party portraits should be a ton of FUN! After you share your first look, depending on the locations and the timing of the day, your bridal party will join us for portraits! If all goes well, we will be able to accomplish ALL of your bridal party portraits BEFORE the ceremony. This means that your guys and gals will be free to mingle at cocktail hour if they wish! If there are flower girls and ring bearers involved, they can either join us for the pre-ceremony portraits or we can take one final group photo after the ceremony, before family formals. Be sure your groomsmen arrive with boutonnieres and your bridesmaids arrive with bouquets. We will start with the whole group together, then the girls will stay with me and the guys will go with Caleb or my second photographer for photos alone. As soon as wedding party photos are finished, we ask that all party members head to the next location or go back to the bus. While it can be fun to watch the bride and groom get their photo taken, we have noticed that the groom is a lot less willing to be relaxed and natural when a group of his close guy-friends are staring or whistling at him from a distance, you know?



WEDDING *Party* TIPS



SAFETY:

Unfortunately, we have seen far too many incidents where the wedding party has alcohol on the ride to the portrait location, and gets off the party bus WAY to tipsy to cooperate with photos. Please try to keep drinking to a minimum BEFORE portraits. As stated in our contract, alcohol is to stay on the bus/limo during portraits. No one wants to have beer spilled on them! (Unfortunately I speak from experience!)

Poses We Like to Get During This Time:

- Entire Group
- Just Girls
- Each Bridesmaid with Bride
- Just Guys
- Each Groomsmen with Groom
- Groomsmen with Bride
- Bridesmaids with Groom

BRIDE & GROOM *Portraits*

If we're being honest, all of the wedding day images are important but the real favorites are almost always from my time with the Bride and Groom! These romantic portraits of just the two of you will be the images that you frame beside your bed or over your mantle and they will also be the images that will fill your album for generations to enjoy. These images are always my favorite not only because of their beauty but because this is such a sweet portion of the day. For this brief moment in time, you will be alone with your groom on your wedding day. You will have a chance to love on each other and really connect before the craziness begins! Romantic portraits are normally done before the ceremony (after the "First Look") and then I LOVE shooting a few "just married" portraits after the ceremony as well! This is when the light is low and golden! It's such a romantic time for bride and groom portraits! If you're not interested in a first look, we will make sure to include a lot of time after the ceremony for these portraits!



A bride and groom are shown in profile, smiling at each other. They are positioned in front of a large window that reflects the sunset, creating a glowing blue and yellow background. The bride is wearing a white strapless wedding dress with a beaded bodice, and the groom is wearing a dark suit with a patterned tie and a boutonniere. The window frame is visible, and the overall scene is romantic and celebratory.

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 us! Sometimes I select portrait locations that most people wouldn't consider attractive. For example, the image on this spread was taken on the side of the couple's reception venue. The sunset was reflecting off the windows just so that it was glowing blue and yellow! There was nothing special about this window, However, because my couple trusted me and they were willing to run around the building quickly, they know have this fun portrait hanging in their home! So my encouragement is to just trust us- Trust our locations and I promise you, you'll LOVE the results!



Sample List for *Family Formals*

Caleb and I absolutely love meeting our couple's families on the wedding day! Family formals are normally our first interaction with them and so we love to have a game plan for this part of the day! With your contract, you should have received a questionnaire from us that will ask you to list out the family formals you want us to capture. Here is a sample family formal list to help you start preparing what shots you need. We do have to limit the family formal time in order to ensure that we have plenty of daylight for your romantic portraits. However, any large family group shots that we don't accomplish during family formals, we can be sure to capture at the reception! We HIGHLY suggest doing family portraits outside, weather permitting. Formals taken outside look gorgeous and natural, compared to dark churches.

- B&G with Bride's Immediate Family
(Parents, Siblings, Grandparents, Nieces, Nephews)
- B&G with Bride's Parents
- B&G with Bride's Siblings
- Bride with her Parents
- Bride with Mom, Bride with Dad
- B&G with Bride's Grandparents
- B&G with both sets of Parents
- B&G with Groom's Immediate Family
(Parents, Siblings, Grandparents, Nieces, Nephews)
- B&G with Groom's Parents
- B&G with Groom's Siblings
- Groom with his Parents
- Groom with Mom, Groom with Dad
- B&G with Groom's Grandparents
- B&G with all family members if time allows



THE *case* OF A RAINY WEDDING DAY

One of the most frequently asked questions that we receive during wedding season is "Soooo, what do you do if it RAINS?!" I want to reassure you that even if it rains, you will still have beautiful portraits and BRIGHT colors in your images! Overcast skies mean vibrant colors! I know that rain isn't ideal and no bride would wish for rain on their big day but if it happens, it happens..... and it's going to be JUST fine!! Some of our best weddings have been on rainy wedding days! Here are a few things to remember:

1. All I need to create natural light portraits on a rainy wedding day is a porch! Just one porch!
2. Let me worry about the pictures. You have enough to think about. If there is a chance of rain, I'll be sure to do some extra scouting to find a covered location or two for us to use for you first look, romantic portraits and bridal party portraits.
3. Take it one step at a time. Don't think about your entire day and what will happen if it rains. That will only overwhelm you! Definitely have a rain plan for your venue but then let your vendors do the work of handling the rest of the day if rain is in the forecast.

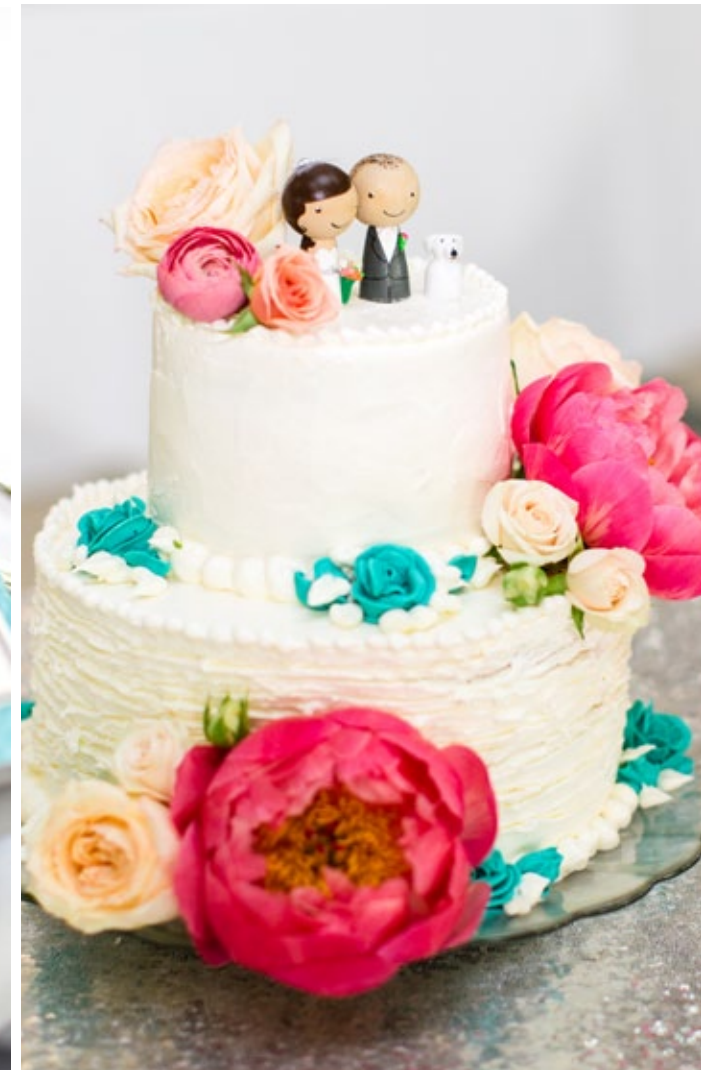


Umbrellas are my FAVORITE on rainy (and snowy) days! Just in case, buy yourself a large, solid colored umbrella (white, black, or clear look best) If you have it in your budget, get matching umbrellas for your wedding party just in case as well. If it doesn't rain, they'll at least have a nice, useful gift to take home from your day. :)



YOUR
Reception

RECEPTION *Details*



The party is here!! Receptions are a blast! However, it's important to make sure that you have your event well thought out. This is the job of your coordinator and your DJ/Band. Your caterer will also play a big role in the design and set up of your event. Every aspect of your reception affects the overall outline of the evening. For example, if you're not having a plated meal, your reception will need to be set up in a way that allows movement. Guests will need to be able to find the food stations easily and there will be a mixture of dinner tables and hightop cocktail tables. This will encourage guests to mix and mingle. If you are having a plated dinner, you will more than likely need escort cards, full place settings and space for all of your guests to be seated comfortably. Whatever the style of your event, make sure that you plan out all of the aspects of the evening. Your coordinator and DJ can help you set up the evening so that guests won't leave early or experience long periods of waiting for the next thing to happen.

Much like the ceremony, you have the freedom to make your reception your own! It's your party, it should be exactly how you want it to be! Here is a list of some key events that happen often at receptions:

- Bridal Party Introductions
- First Dance
- Father-Daughter Dance
- Mother-Son Dance
- Anniversary Dance
- The Shoe Game
- Traditional Cultural Dances
- Welcome by Father of the Bride
- Blessing
- Cake Cutting
- Toasts
- Bouquet and Garter Toss
- The exit of the Bride and Groom

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. Your coordinator and 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.

- **GUEST CONSIDERATION** : 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. Grandma's love seeing this sweet tradition!
- **KEEP IT MOVING** : Chat with your coordinator about how you can plan your reception in a way that will keep guests engaged and moving all night!
- **MAKE IT YOUR OWN** : If you want to have a special dance with your grandparents, do it! 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** in the formalities and the details. 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. (Just speaking from experience here) 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** : I recommend planning your timeline so that you can have at least one hour of candid dancing photographed. The guests who dance during the first hour will still be dancing in the third hour! One hour of dancing will be enough time to really capture the joy of your reception!



YOUR *Online* GALLERY



Years ago you had to order prints of the images that you wanted to have forever. That isn't how we work around here! We want you to have ALL of your memories in your possession forever and ever! We also want you to share your images freely and without any hesitation. This is why we deliver your images via an online gallery! This means that you don't have to wait on a package in the mail and you'll have access to them wherever you are! I've listed some important information that will help you understand your online gallery and all that it can do on the next page! Enjoy! :)

DOWNLOADING PHOTOS:

You will be able to download your edited images directly from your online gallery and they will be high resolution! This process is very simple. All you have to do is click the "downwards arrow icon" and you will be prompted to enter your name and pin # (which I will email to you). Your photos will download directly to your "Downloads" folder. When you download the entire gallery, you will be notified via email when your entire download is ready. It takes a few minutes to prepare for hundreds of images to be downloaded.

SHARING PHOTOS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Please do not share the high resolution photo files downloaded from this gallery on Facebook (though you can definitely share the link to the gallery!). Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter resize photos you upload, and the resizing reduces the quality of your photos dramatically. We want to make sure your photos look perfect when you share! You will also receive a file of photos sized and sharpened PERFECTLY to be uploaded online. As stated in your contract, we ask that you do not edit your photos in anyway and caption your photos "Abbey Grim Photography".

ORDERING PRINTS:

You and your family can actually order professional and high quality prints from within your online gallery and have them shipped directly to your house! Print sizes are very affordable and are printed in a professional lab to ensure color and contrast accuracy! You are more than welcome to print images on your own. However, I would warn you, no beg you, to avoid Walmart, Target, CVS, etc. Your photos will not last long enough to be archival and the colors will be very saturated and contrasty. If you don't choose to print through your gallery, I recommend using Mpix.com!

YOUR *Previews*

SOCIAL MEDIA PREVIEWS: Within a week after your wedding, I love sharing a few of your photos online! You can use these photos for your profile photo, cover photos- anything you'd like! I can't tag you in these photos though, unless you're following me! Below are URL's of all the places I may share you images.

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/abbeygrim

INSTAGRAM: www.instagram.com/abbeygrim

TWITTER: www.twitter.com/abbeygrim

INSTA-STORIES!: My second photographer and I create a short story throughout your wedding! Not only do we love sharing the in's and out's of the job, but it also gives you something to INSTANTLY look back at when you get home after your reception. :)

INSTAGRAM: [abbeygrim](https://www.instagram.com/abbeygrim)



Thank You!

Last, but certainly not least, THANK YOU for trusting us with your special day. I am so honored to be the one capturing your memories and we cannot WAIT to celebrate alongside of you! 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 will 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! I hope this guide has been helpful as you continue to plan and prepare for your wedding day!

Love Your Wedding Photographer, Abbey Grim