

# ***Karen Telleen-Lawton: Words of Wisdom from a Mother of the Bride***

Enthusiasm and flexibility go a long way toward ensuring a smooth and happy beginning

By [Karen Telleen-Lawton, Noozhawk Columnist](#) | Published on 11.02.2010

Emily was 3½ when she said the cleverest thing. I was reading the evening newspaper, and she sidled up to watch.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

“I’m reading the paper.”

“Why?” (You remember that stage.)

“So I can find out what happened today.”

“I know what happened,” my toddler asserted.

“Oh, you do? What happened?” I challenged, amused.

“Some people were good, some people were bad, and some babies were born.”

Over the years, I’ve often marveled at her prescient analysis of life. Emily and her brother grew, played, studied, graduated from college and transitioned to leading productive lives. Aside from some teenage angst, they pretty much fulfilled the “some people are good” category.

In due time, she became engaged to her delightful boyfriend of two

years. I dashed out to buy a wedding planner and a survival guide for Mother of the Bride. The guidebook cautioned about brides' hypersensitivities. On seeing her engagement ring for the first time, for example, the guide warned, "Ooh and aah and make the biggest fuss you can muster, or else you will later hear how your reaction was not what the happy couple had hoped it would be."

A week after their engagement, I eagerly accompanied her to look at wedding gowns. On the way, Emily and I stopped by a jewelry store to see a ring similar to the one a friend was designing for her. It was lovely, and I told her so — effusively.

We met up with my mom and sister at the bridal store, where Emily drew the ring. Now, drawing isn't Emily's strong suit, so the stick figure she showed them was basically a circle with line segments protruding from the left and right. A few other squiggles represented some side designs. Grandma and Auntie nodded, smiled and ooh-ed. They may not have aah-ed.

After a long and exhilarating day of shopping, mom and my sister departed while Emily and I headed back to her house. In the car, Emily enthused about the gowns and wedding plans for a while before confiding, "Mom, I don't think Grandma and Aunt Cindy liked my ring!"

Despite a few early trip-ups along the learning curve, the bridal season proceeded with grace and enthusiasm. My top four tips for mothers-of-the-bride:

- » 1. If you're helping with wedding costs, give the couple a check at the beginning and let them make decisions. This moves you from being the budget master to the adviser — a nicer role.
- » 2. Be flexible if any “rule” doesn't work for you. At this point, success is building the best adult relationship you can with your daughter and her spouse.
- » 3. Remember, your child is simultaneously establishing her relationship with her future in-laws. Help make this a smooth beginning.
- » 4. The wedding is just a day. God willing, and with grace and humility, the wedding day will lead to a marriage that is fulfilling for the next half-century or more. Keep that prize in mind.

Marriage is not for everybody. Some work to expand society's inclusiveness of marriage, and others choose not to marry when others think they should. For those who value it and make it a top priority, it can be a very satisfying and fulfilling way to live.

Twenty-five years after her clever life analysis, Emily has just added one more category to her insight: Some people get married.

— *Karen Telleen-Lawton's column is a mélange of observations supporting sustainability. Graze her writing and excerpts from Canyon Voices: The Nature of Rattlesnake Canyon at [www.CanyonVoices.com](http://www.CanyonVoices.com).*