



She's a knockout

## Wedding survival

► A guide for guests, bridesmaids, and that lady in the white dress

### The new vows

#### Till break-up do us part

There's nothing more romantic than an exit clause. Celebrants have noticed an increase in couples dumping the "forever" sentiment from their wedding vows. It seems "as long as our love lasts" can often suffice. Sydney's *The Daily Telegraph* reported that one celebrant even presided over a couple who made a "three-to-five year agreement", instead of committing until death.

Sharon Naylor, author of *Your Special Wedding Vows* (\$17.95, Sourcebooks), reckons it doesn't mean people aren't taking marriage seriously: "People understand that anything can happen in life, and you don't make a promise you can't keep." In the case of divorce, the till-death-do-us part can give couples a stigma of personal failure, Naylor says.

While people are free to say what they want, spokesperson for the Australian Federation of Civil Celebrants, Tony Nolan, says "couples must legally say to each other, 'I call upon all persons here present to witness that I [name] take you [name] to be my lawful wedded wife/husband'. The rest is up to them. Although, he argues, "as long as our love lasts" isn't consistent with the definition of marriage: "the union between a man and woman for the rest of their lives".

### Smooth orator

#### Give the perfect bridesmaid speech

► Don't think you have to memorise the speech; even Obama reads a teleprompter. But skip the cue cards – your speech should fit on one A4 page, says Pete Miller, MC and author of *Successful Wedding Speech Secrets* (\$21.50, [weddingspeeches.com.au](http://weddingspeeches.com.au)).

► Keep the sentences short and space out the paragraphs, suggests Miller. Highlight the important bits.

► Get any thank yous out of the way first. Look at the person you're thanking, not the exy centrepiece or Gerard Butler-esque trombonist.

► Never presume your audience knows who you are in relation to the one in the white dress, says Amelia Bloomfield, editor of *Bride to Be* magazine.

Contextualise your connection. Briefly. ► Compliment Mr Right and talk about the ways he makes your mate happy. Don't share anecdotes about how little wedding prep the groom did – or what a great "first" husband he'll make. Not funny, warns Bloomfield.

### Flying solo

#### Navigate single scenarios

##### YOU'RE INVITED TO BRING A GUEST

Of course you aren't obligated to bring someone, but if you really can't bear to rock up alone, invite a platonic male friend. "Try not to bring someone you just started dating," says psychotherapist Dr Linnnda Durré, author of *Great Relationships Manual* ([amazon.com](http://amazon.com)). The slow songs and love-is-in-the-air atmosphere will either encourage you to get into bed together before you're ready for it, or freak him out. It's a lose-lose situation.

##### SOMEONE ASKS, "WHY ARE YOU SINGLE?"

Lighten the mood with a funny quip, suggests Dr Durré. Try something like, "Because I like to speak in haiku on dates." Follow up by saying you're having a great time being single.

##### YOU SPOT EYE CANDY YOU WANT TO MEET

Ask a friend who knows him to introduce you, or better yet – introduce yourself. Get the conversation rolling by asking how he knows the bride and/or groom, says Dr Durré. Easy.

[FAST FACT] Celebrants performed 60.6 per cent of wedding ceremonies last year – that's 10 per cent more than in 2001.\*



Tell us what you think about dumping the "forever" sentiment from wedding vows at [yahoo7.com.au/womenshealth](http://yahoo7.com.au/womenshealth).