

5 Tips for an Epic Wedding Film

1. **Focus on the story.** I put this first because I believe that the most important component of an epic wedding film is simply the story of you and your partner. Like any good story, it has a beginning, middle, and a future. A "love story", speeches at the rehearsal dinner, letters written to each other on your wedding day, and toasts at the reception are excellent ways to get some of the back story behind how you two found each other, how you fell in love, how you eventually made the monumental decision to get married, and your hopes and dreams for your life together. With a focus on the story, you can ask your toaster to also keep this in mind as they prepare for speeches. They don't have to be scripted out and perfect, but at least thought out and include elements of your story. Remember, your close friends may know the backstory, but the dozens of guests and friends that view your film might not. Why not share your amazing story with everyone?
2. **Focus on light.** In its most basic form, film making is all about working and manipulating light. It really isn't about having fancy camera or gear. You don't have to be an expert on lighting, but your videographer should have a solid understanding of the basic principles. Therefore, let your videographer have some control over lighting. What I mean is, let her or him give some feedback on where hair and make up happen, or where the first look occurs, or where beauty shots take place. One of the things we videographers try hard to use is natural light. Natural light, light from the sun as opposed to florescent or tungsten electric lights, creates natural skin tones, whereas electric lights tend to create images that are too orange or purple. One thing they might do, for example, is ask you to turn off all lights, even if for just a few minutes, and move closer to a window where natural light is coming through. In the end you will appreciate being illuminated by natural light and not the harsh electric lights.

Sometimes, however, we do need to use artificial lights, especially at receptions that tend to be dark and poorly light. This is especially important during the dances, bouquet and garter toss, and toasts. We usually have a spot light or two shining somewhere near the center of the dance floor. You don't have to spend the entire dance in the illuminated spot, but spend some time there so we can get some incredible shots. Ask your toasters to give the toasts from those illuminated spots. We can't easily move those lights, so remaining in place allows us to keep them lit for their entire toast.

3. **Focus on beauty.** Natural light is the most beautiful, but natural light at the "golden hour", those 30 or 40 minutes right before sunset, are truly epic. As much as we would like, we cannot recreate the majestic light that is magically appears at the golden hour, therefore, give your videographer a good 15-20 minutes during the golden hour to take some amazing footage of you and your partner just being together and in love. Forget about everything else and just focus on each other and let the videographer capture those short, beautiful, and tranquil moments, moments that you live only once.

4. **Focus on audio.** This point really goes hand in hand with tip #1. Nothing can ruin an epic wedding film like poor and low quality audio. The videographer is responsible for having professional audio recording equipment and knowing how to properly adjust and operate that equipment so as to optimally record all audio. However, there are a few things you can do to help out. During hair and make up, every once in a while let the videographer turn down the music so they can capture the joyful banter that naturally occurs. If you are reading letters to each other, make sure all music is off so that the focus is on the words of the letters. During toasts and speeches, instruct the DJ (or let your wedding planner do so) to not play music in the background, again, so that the focus is on the words being said. During your vows, speak clearly and calmly and not rushed. If you are repeating vows spoken by an officiant, take a half second pause before repeating them so that everything comes out clear. Will you tear and choke up? Maybe, but those are the moments we want to capture. Those powerful emotions that have led you to this day. So, take your time; there's no rush.

5. **Focus on Fun.** The wedding day can be stressful, especially if you are doing a lot of the planning yourself. The reception, however, is a great way to decompress, unwind, and simply enjoy being with all of your friends and loved ones. You may want to say hello and thank every guest individually, remember to take a few moments to bust a few moves on the dance floor. Sometimes in the hustle and bustle of the day, some of the traditional events, like the first dances, bouquet and garter toss, cake cutting, get forgotten. Those moments are important, so if at all possible don't skip them, but enjoy them.