

Relationship Advice: Should You Elope?



By Dr. Jane Greer

Planning a wedding can be exciting, but it can also be an enormous undertaking once you become immersed in all the details. From choosing a maid of honor and whatever number of bridesmaids you have agreed upon (and trying not to offend anyone with your choices), to the flowers and the cake, not to mention the seating arrangements, it can be a lot to deal with. That's why, in the midst of it all, people often begin to wonder if they should elope. For some, it is just a joke, something to say when all they really want to do is get a break from thinking about the dress and the photographer and where Aunt Fran is going to sit. For others it can be the right choice. Actress Gina Rodriguez said she almost married

her fiancé Joe LoCicero after this year's Golden Globes, gushing about getting caught up in the excitement and the beauty of the dress she had on, and saying it could have happened that night if she hadn't had to work the next day.

In this relationship advice, find out if eloping is the right choice for you.

Of course, that is a perfect example of how eloping can happen if you get swept away by a moment of love and romance. To those who just met or consider getting married after a drunken night in Las Vegas, caught up in the passion and spontaneity, waiting a bit to get to know each other may be a better idea. But many people who are deep into a relationship and are sure they want to spend the rest of their lives together also consider eloping for a variety of reasons. There is a certain practicality to avoiding a big wedding, especially if people don't have the money to spend on a lavish reception. Or, they might not want to burden their family with a huge bill. Along the same lines, a couple might decide they would rather spend the money on something else, such as a honeymoon or to use as the down payment for a house. Finally, since so much family history and baggage can come along with the elements of a big wedding, the future bride and groom may simply want to avoid possible criticism, judgement, or blame for the particular choices they might make, and thereby not have to feel guilty because of the disapproval. While the two options have their merits and cons, it's important that both partners are on the same page about when and how to tie the knot. So how can you know if eloping is the right choice for you?

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The most important question to ask yourself as you make this

decision is will you or your partner be disappointed in any way if you forgo the traditional route? Some people fantasize about a big white wedding for their entire lives – a time when they might feel like a princess or a prince – and imagine having pictures documenting it to look at for decades to come. Others have been leafing through bridal magazines for years and have already chosen the style of dress they want to wear down the aisle. And still others may have imagined it as a time to gather all their fraternity brothers for a reunion. If this is the case for either one of you, eloping might not be the best choice. Talk about it and try to make sure there won't be one single regret looming out there, but only happiness for what lies ahead.

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The bride and groom are not the only ones who have emotions wrapped up in the monumental event. With that in mind, consider also if there are family members who might be let down if you decide to have a small, private ceremony at City Hall. Did your mother always dream of this moment? Did your uncle for whom you are named always imagine what he would say during the speech he hoped to give one day? Think about what is most important to you as far as keeping the peace or having your life start together on your own terms, and how much you are willing to deal with to achieve that. If you do choose to elope, keep those family members in mind and see what you can do to appease them and make them understand that for you this is a gain and not a loss of any kind. Even if you elope and choose to make the ceremony your own, you can still throw a celebratory party and invite everyone at any time.

If in the end it feels like there would be no regrets, nothing that you imagine you might wish you had done down the road, and you are eager to begin your life together and not spend a lot of time or money getting to that point, then eloping might be the perfect choice for you. Who knows how Gina and Joe will end up tying the knot in the end, but they certainly aren't

alone if at times they think they could just elope.

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