

# What Singles Can Learn From Weddings in 'Save the Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest'



By Liz Kim and

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Weddings come in as many varieties as there are brides and grooms, and with them come some great receptions and some equally terrible ones. With each ceremony, you play a different role, and at a time where people are getting married later in life, weddings give us a little peek at what we want and don't want in our relationships. And when you've gone to as many weddings as author Jen Doll, you get a pretty good handle on wedding guest culture. In her memoir *Save the*

*Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest*, she recounts many of the different weddings she's been to in her life (which is nearly 30 at this point!) and what they have taught her about herself and love.

**What inspired you to write *Save the Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest*?**

From the time we are very young, wedding culture surrounds us in so many ways. I grew up seeing pictures of my parents' wedding, watching televised weddings of celebrities and fictionalized wedding stories, and, of course, perusing photos of myself at weddings as a child. As a kid, I thought about my own future wedding; I considered it something that was just inevitable. You grow up, you fall in love, and you get married. But as I got older, I realized it's not always that simple – and just because it's not simple doesn't mean it's not good.

I was inspired to look at my own wedding-going life because I think we've all been there in some way or another; while the specific stories may be different, the things we face at weddings – in the external situations or with our interior selves – are in many ways universal. The feelings we bring to these events play into our experience, just as those weddings also shape us and our feelings. I wanted to write about it so we could start to talk about it. Wedding guests have their own stories too.

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**What would you like readers to learn from reading *Save the Date*? Do you have one message you're hoping they take to heart?**

I'd like people to come away with a sense of openness and possibility, to be relieved of some of the anxiety we tend to bring to weddings, and to feel that there is a community of

wedding guests who have all been there too. I'd like for people to feel like they can tell their own wedding guest stories. We can have each other's backs! I'd also like people to feel that they don't have to judge themselves so harshly for failing to live up to old expectations. We should all just be the real selves that we are, acknowledge our inherent complications and occasional mortifications, and try to be good to ourselves and each other as we learn and grow and have as much joy as we can in life.

**Since you've been to your fair share of weddings, can you give our readers a few of your dos and don'ts when attending a pal's nuptials?**

If you have concerns about the person your friend is marrying or about the marriage, do not get drunk and decide it's the right time to talk to her about it. I would recommend, if it's possible, addressing your concerns beforehand. She has her feelings, and you have yours. You are not the same people, and all that is reasonable and fair. But if you are good friends who love each other and want to stay close, you have to tell each other how you feel.

As for drinking in general, it's so easy to overindulge at a wedding. Waiters are constantly refilling your glass, sometimes without even asking! So just be careful. Sometimes, in the festive atmosphere, things turn a bad corner without you noticing, and then it's too late to get a handle on it.

And oh yeah, if you hate the bouquet toss (I hate the bouquet toss), leave the room!

**You reference the single woman's perspective in your book. What have you found to be the most difficult part about being a single woman at weddings? Do you usually bring a date or go solo?**

I have gone to weddings in each and every way it is possible to go to weddings as an unmarried person. I think the most

difficult part of going to a wedding as a “single woman” (and probably guys feel this too) is just about going to anything alone. It’s nerve-wracking to show up by yourself, and you can feel awkward. But this also means that going as a single person to a wedding can be really expanding. You learn to be on your own and feel the power and freedom that comes with that. You can move seamlessly between conversations; you don’t have to worry that your date isn’t having a good time. You are just you. That’s kind of awesome.

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**Any advice for other singles attending a wedding or two this summer?**

It can be really fun to go to a wedding on your own! If you are going by yourself to a wedding, I recommend really owning it. If it’s in a nice destination, stay for a few more days before or after. Treat yourself to a massage, a new dress, a great haircut. Admit how you’re feeling to yourself – because with repressed feelings come disaster, at least in my experience. Even if you are feeling a whole lot of confusing or complicated emotions, admitting that fact frees you up a bit. You can say, “Yes, that’s there. I feel that, but I don’t have to let it determine how I’ll behave or prevent me from having fun in this moment.”

*You can get your hands on ‘Save the Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest’ on Amazon. Keep up with Doll on Twitter @thisisjendoll.*