

Weddings Are A Sexist, Misogynistic Endeavor — So Why Even Bother?



[Lynne Meredith Golodner](#)

Blogger

[LOVE](#)

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Did you know that fathers used daughters as a way to pay off debt?

I hated my second wedding dress.

I was on the verge of 40, the mother of three, and I'd already been the pristine young bride in white. I was approaching the absolute best and most confident time of my life, and people knew better than to mess with me.

I wanted a navy blue dress, short in the front and to the floor in the back — a dare-to-mess-with-me dress to signify the better choice, the part two, the this-time-I'm-getting-it-right.

But it's hard to find a dress like that when you live in suburban Detroit, and your primary occupation is raising kids and earning a living. Lucky for me, I had a bridal client in my PR business, so I went to her and pleaded for an out-of-the-box type of dress.



No deal. Everything on her racks was 50 shades of white, and this was before the [blush trend took over bridal fashion](#). I shopped online, finding what I wanted on Pinterest, but couldn't track down a link to actually purchase it.

In the end, I settled for a strapless fitted white bodice and to-the-floor skirt that my bridal client gave to me for the bargain-basement wholesale price of \$1,800. (I cringe when I see that comma.) In the 11th hour, I hacked off the skirt to an above-the-knee length.

I wore no veil. (You're not going to check to make sure I'm the right bride like Jacob, Rachel and Leah. By the time you meet me at the end of the aisle, you'd better know.)

I looked beautiful but [hated the must-wear-white dimension of my second wedding](#). The first wedding is for the fairy-tale fantasy, while the second is for reality. Reality is, no one looks good in white.

But it's more than that. [White symbolizes a virgin bride](#), and I was not on either occasion. It's the promise of purity, of a never-been-touched gift of a girl to this hunky man. That's what a white wedding dress says to me.

Just like when I hear "you are now MAN and [wife](#)," which has mostly been changed to "husband and wife," I cringe when I [think of some of these misogynistic wedding traditions](#).

Think about it: the groom wears a sleek dark suit or tuxedo, showing him to be debonair, in control, master of command of the relationship, while the pretty little bride prances down an aisle on display for all to see.

In my first wedding, my parents accompanied me down the aisle to ostensibly "give me away" to my [husband](#). Transfer of ownership as in older times. Ironically, even at my first wedding, I already lived in a house I purchased with my own hard-earned cash, so who was giving away whom?

(In my weddings, there was no throwback to the origins of this giving-away tradition. Did you know that [fathers used daughters as a way to pay off debt](#),

give a peace offering to an opposing tribe, or buy their way to higher social status? Yep, that's where the giving away the bride tradition hails from.)

Because of the stoic, antiquated language of most wedding ceremonies, I wrote the script for my second wedding. There was no rabbi to officiate. My brother and one of my brother-in-laws became ordained online, and I combined bits of Judaism, poetry, [Vedanta](#) and Native American wisdom for a ceremony that was respectful, egalitarian and beautiful.

I walked down the grassy aisle with my three children at my side, and my husband was accompanied by his daughter. Our children stayed with us under the wedding canopy and our friends held the corners, symbolizing the tent of our family, open on all sides to whomever wanted to dwell with us.



There was no best man to kidnap the bride if she dared escape (yep, that's [one of the origins of the "best man,"](#) whose swordsmanship was what best referred to). No bridesmaids other than our daughters, and they chose

flouncy dresses and tiaras because they were eight and nine years old at the time.

My parents played no role in my second wedding other than to be smiling guests and dance on the parquet set up in my friend's backyard. They were happy for us as parents should be but they didn't impose their beliefs, dreams or pocketbooks on our big day. That was something I disliked about my first wedding: how much [control both sides of parents had and wanted over our big day](#).

One tradition I did go for in my second round of weddings was a wedding cake. I didn't do it the first time because it seemed like a big waste of money (think [Steve Martin](#) in *Father of the Bride*— "A cake is flour and sugar!"). At my second wedding, we had a beautiful three-tier cake of varying favorite flavors, and a sideline attraction of cupcakes for all the kids there.

We both slipped rings on our fingers; I hate [when men don't wear wedding bands](#), as if they are not bound but we women are.

We didn't need any stuff to start our [married](#) life together. In fact, we were consolidating two full households into one! So, we asked friends and family to forgo gifts and instead make a donation to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in honor of our marriage.



Now there's one traditional misogynistic thing I succumbed to in both weddings, and I'm still not sure it was the right way to go. I took both husbands' surnames.

At the time of my first wedding, I was optimistic that this was my [soulmate](#). And besides, his last name, Schreiber, means scribe or writer in German. I thought it was symbolic. And my former mother-in-law urged me to take it, since I was marrying her only son.

When it came time to say "I do" to husband number two, I pondered the last name quandary for quite some time. If I didn't take Dan's last name, I'd still have the last name of husband number one.

I briefly [considered eliminating last names altogether](#) and just going with my first and middle names: Lynne Meredith. Sort of like [Cher](#), evoke my inner independence and condense all of my bylines. I also considered returning to my maiden name, Cohn, but the reason I leaped away from that in the first place was because my name sounded like a doorbell: Lynne Cohn, *ding dong*.

So in the end, I swallowed up Golodner, a mouthful of a new name, despite the fact that my husband couldn't care less whether I link to him in name or

just legally. I sort of regret it. But it's enough names for one person in one lifetime, so I'm letting it slide.



In modern society, it's perfectly acceptable to keep your own surname, but it still remains [sexist when you give your kids their father's last name](#) and not some hybrid of the two. We've got a ways to go on the naming question.

While I love my husband and I love being married, part of me believes that the whole institution of marriage is a sexist endeavor. And I'm not convinced we are meant to be with one person all the length of our lives. I mean, we live a really long time nowadays. Perhaps [marriage was meant for political reasons](#) in times when people didn't live far past 30 or 40.

Part of me believes we are meant to roam free, to experience great loves throughout our lives, and sometimes, to be alone without the burden of a relationship. I'm just saying...