

My fiancé and I both have fairly complicated family situations with two sets of parents each. We have everything worked out for who sits where during the ceremony and at the reception but aren't sure what to do about pictures. Is it OK to have portraits of us with my mother and father and then with his parents, without stepparents in the picture? My mom says she refuses to be in a picture with my father, but it would mean a lot to me.



Although your wedding day will be one of wonderful memories for you, you can't bring old memories into the picture. Your parents and your fiancé's parents are no longer couples. They each have new spouses. You and your groom can have a picture taken with your mom, a separate one with your dad, and then shots with your groom's biological parents, one at a time. It would also be thoughtful if you two have pictures taken with each of your parents and respective stepparents. Just as you want your parents to support your marriage, they must be hoping that you support their marriages, too. Your photos with each couple would be a nice way to show that you do.

Our families are fairly complicated -- all our parents have remarried, and this is my fiancé's second marriage. We are at a loss as to how to arrange the dancing, when the bride is supposed to dance with her father, the groom with mother, etc. How do we do this, or can we just skip it?

The best way to ensure that there are no awkward moments or hurt feelings is to skip the "who dances with whom next" tradition and do a little pre-planning. Tell your attendants and all your parents that the two of you will begin the dancing. Let them know that you would like them, after a minute or so, to join you on the dance floor to indicate that dancing is, as of that moment, open to everyone. You can ask your attendants to invite partners other than their spouses or dates to dance for the duration of the first song so that there are several people on the dance floor with you. Then, throughout your reception, you and your groom can dance with your parents and stepparents without having each dance announced or put in the spotlight.