
ETIQUETTE

THE INS AND OUTS OF MODERN DAY ETIQUETTE

YOU'VE DECIDED TO TIE THE KNOT, LIFE IS PURE BLISS, LOVE IS IN THE AIR, THE RING IS A REAL SPARKLER; BUT WHAT NEXT? CHECK OUT THE ANNOUNCEMENT ETIQUETTE AND AVOID FRIENDS AND RELTIES HAVING UNEXPECTED HISSY FITS.

WE'RE GETTING MARRIED!

You might be walking on air, but an engagement and pending marriage affects a lot of people, they can get sensitive if they feel overlooked. So know the rules and get things right.

In *VOGUE'S BOOK OF ETIQUETTE*, Millicent Fenwick gives the advice that it's bad form to let family or close friends receive their first news of the engagement through an announcement in the paper. She says letters should be sent by the engaged couple or by their mothers to all those who are close.

Although this advice was written over 50 years ago and letterwriting is a dying art, it's common sense that people should not hear sensitive news like this on the grapevine. However, these days the news might be broken personally by phone or email rather than by post.

In the *PENGUIN BOOK OF ETIQUETTE*, author Marion von Adlerstein agrees that family should be informed before anyone else.

Vera Wang in *VERA WANG ON WEDDINGS* points out that relating the good news can be one of the most joyful parts of the wedding experience. The possibilities include a formal announcement, dinner with the family, a telephone call or email to close friends.

Where children are concerned, they should always be informed first and in private.

When informing people in tiers, it's appropriate to ask them to delay calling others until the bride has informed them herself. Sometimes the sequence in which friends and family are told can lead to resentment.

Once close-ones have been personally apprised of your engagement, a notice in the newspaper is completely acceptable.

The engagement can be as long or short as you like, there are no rules.

And the bonding of the two families? Unless the in-laws truly get on like a house on fire, it's not a good idea to force them to get along. It's better to allow them to keep a polite distance than to put everybody through close encounters of an uncomfortable kind.

VOGUE'S BOOK OF ETIQUETTE by MILLICENT FENWICK, SIMON & SCHUSTER 1948. *VERA WANG ON WEDDINGS*, by VERA WANG, HARPER COLLINS 2001. *THE PENGUIN BOOK OF ETIQUETTE* by MARION VON ADLERSTEIN, PENGUIN PUBLISHERS 2002.