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BRIDES

How to Tell Your Groom You're Not Changing Your Last Name

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It's no longer a foregone conclusion a woman will take her groom's last name. Whether she's made a name for herself in her career, or has children with whom she shares a moniker, there are many reasons she might hesitate before heading to her local Social Security Administration office.

Yet, "men are proud of their wives, and they want to feel like they're connected to them. The way they do this is by sharing the same last name, giving them engagement and wedding bands to indicate marital status, and creating families together," explains relationship expert April Masini. "On a deeper, more primal level, many men want to protect their wives and families. By giving their wives their last name, they broadcast to others that this is a woman who is protected by a man."

So if you're set on keeping your maiden name — or at least considering it — understand this is a touchy subject for many men. "Some men may feel outright rejected," Masini says.

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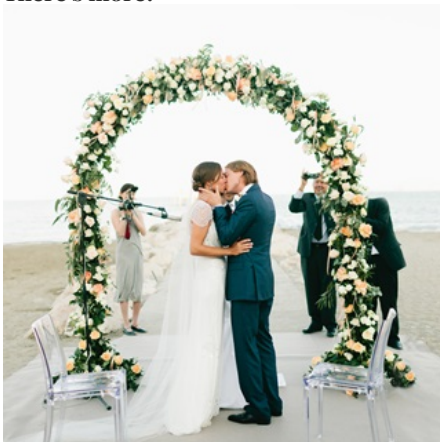
Before you drop this "bomb," Masini advises, "try to be understanding. For example, if he comes from a long line of marriages in which the wife always takes the husband's name, and his friends all have wives who do the same, he'll feel like an outcast and rejected. So start by acknowledging his disappointment and your recognition that the two of you would be breaking ranks with his family tradition."

Next, be clear that you're keeping an open line of communication. While you're expressing your desire, you also want to hear his opinions. "Avoid a power play and a power struggle," says Masini. "Be open minded, as well as understanding, in addition to having your own feelings on the topic."

Finally, "remember that compromise is the go-to tool of successful marriages," Masini says. "For instance, you may want to talk about naming a future child after his mother or father, in exchange for your keeping your maiden name." Also, if you're open to it, you can hyphenate both of your names, use his last name as a middle name, or blend names to create a brand new name.

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