

Who Walks the Bride Down the Aisle?

Aren't Sure Who Should Walk You Down the Aisle?

In movies, it's always the Dad who walks a bride down the aisle, sniffing as he gives her away. But, that tradition doesn't fit all families or all cultural traditions. There are so many options of who to choose to walk you down the aisle:

1. Dad

It makes sense that the father of the bride is the most traditional man for the job. For many people, a Dad is who gives guidance, and can be counted on the most. If that's true for you, then your Dad will probably be thrilled to walk you down the aisle, if not give you away.

2. When Your Dad Has Passed Away

Choosing someone to fill your father's place after his death is extremely difficult. The most popular choice for a substitute is a brother, followed by an uncle. These men presumably have offered guidance and love throughout your life.

3. In Blended Families

Sometimes the question is not, "Should my father walk me down the aisle," but rather, "Which father?" When you have a Stepdad that you're very close to, or if you were raised by gay fathers, you may choose to have both men accompany you. This might take some finessing with your biological father, patiently explaining to him that you're not taking away from his role, you're just wanting to honor your second Dad as well. Some people choose to walk arm-in-arm with both men, or have one Dad walk them half way where there's a "hand-off" to the second Dad.

But if you aren't close to your biological father, there's no reason you have to choose him to walk you down the aisle. Your stepfather, adopted father, or anyone else is a fine substitute. Again, there might be some hurt feelings, so be prepared to talk through them with love, understanding, and the strength of your convictions.

4. Just Your Mom

If you were raised by a single mother, it can be awesome to honor all that she's given you by asking her to accompany you.

5. Both Parents

In a Jewish wedding processional, both members of the couple walk up the aisle, accompanied by their parents. Non-Jewish couples can also choose this option as a symbol of equality – both between them and their intended, and between their parents.

Be sure that the aisle of your ceremony venue can accommodate three people walking side by side, especially if you have a big dress. You might also choose to walk up alone, immediately followed by (or preceded by) your parents.

6. Just the Groom

In Hindu weddings, it's traditional for the groom to process on a horse, with his family walking alone. He meets his bride and her father at their home, or at the altar.

7. Just the Bride

This is a popular option for older brides, and for second weddings. It can be a statement that no one is "giving her away," but rather that she comes of her own free will. Yet, it doesn't have to be a political statement. It's also frequently chosen when a bride's father has already passed away, and she doesn't feel like anyone else should fill his place.

8. At Same-Sex Weddings

Most wedding traditions assume that you'll have one bride and one groom. But what happens when you have two brides or two grooms? Some couples choose to stay close to heterosexual traditions, choosing the more feminine spouse to fulfill the traditions of the bride, and the more masculine to fulfill those of the groom. There's no reason why one person can't walk down the aisle on the arm of his or her father to meet their intended at the altar. But other couples prefer to make new traditions. They may choose to enter together, to not have a processional, or to flip a coin to see who processes first.

9. Together as One

Walking down the aisle hand in hand is a modern and fresh approach. It says, "We enter this marriage together as partners." You'll give each other strength to calm any nerves, and experience the joy side-by-side. Doing so means that you'll have seen each other before the ceremony, but you'll have a different magical moment to remember instead.

10. No Aisle Walk At All

Some couples expressly plan it so that they mingle with their guests before the ceremony, and then, without drawing any attention to themselves, step up to front.

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