

10 Questions to Ask Mom

"I want an off-white wedding dress, no veil and orange roses in my bouquet," I explained to my mother. It was the fifth time we had had this discussion in the less than two days I had been home. How does a daughter talk to their mom?

Communication Problems

I had always had a difficult time navigating the motherly communication waters. My wedding was an example of that. I felt I was right and I wanted my way. She wanted it her way. It was clear communication was at a standstill.

"You will look back on this time and regret that you didn't have all white," she said. "I so regret not having a big wedding ..."

"I know, Mom, but this is not your wedding. It's mine."

Then she had to ask about the songs I would use.

"I don't know for sure, but I know I don't want the here-comes-the-bride-big-fat-and-wide song," I said.

"Those aren't the words to the song, and you *have* to have the wedding march!"

"I am not ... I'm so not talking to you about this. We never agree on anything. Why would we start now?"

Making Peace With Mom

It should have been one of those wonderful mother-daughter bonding times, but it was certainly lacking the storybook charm.

I understood my mother wanting to be involved in planning my wedding. I wanted her to be involved, but my nontraditional '70s style clashed with her vision of the elegant '50s-style

wedding she never had.

How could I tell her I heard what she was saying and allow her to be involved but still have the type of wedding I envisioned?

In that moment of despair, a God-inspired idea dawned on me. She could plan the wedding reception!

With hat in hand, I came back home ready to make peace.

"Mom, can we talk?" I asked.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I know it's your wedding. I just want to be involved."

"I want you to. So how about you plan the reception?"

"You mean everything?" Her eyes brightened.

"Yes, Mom, you can do it all. You are in charge."

She threw herself into her part of the wedding.

The day went off without a hitch. It could have ended terribly had I not tried to understand my mother's heart.

Would You Rather Be Right or Happy?

I admit I am highly opinionated, but I felt my wedding was one thing I should have an opinion about.

Looking at it from her point of view, though, I saw she wanted to be involved and I was not letting her. The compromise let us both have our way.

Arguing a position you feel is "right" doesn't really prove profitable especially if the other person thinks they are right. It is a push-pull that only ends in an uncomfortable draw.

Most people, though, just want to be heard. They want you to

see their side—not necessarily embrace it, but know it exists.

My mother didn't want to feel left out of her daughter's wedding process.

Giving her a part was like saying, "I hear you. I want you involved. I care about you."

A Gift for Mom

Obviously, I'm thinking about this because Mother's Day is just around the corner. This will be the 22nd year I haven't had my mom to give a Mother's Day present to.

If you do, I'd like to make a suggestion for a really great gift. Take her out to dinner. If you can't do that then call or Skype with her. Ask her questions, and for the first time, really listen to what she says.

Don't know what to talk about? Past the normal "What did you do today?" here are 10 questions that dig deeper. Choose a few that work for your mom, and have a real conversation.

10 Questions for Mom

1. What's one thing you wished you had done when you were my age?
2. What's the best gift anyone ever gave you, and why?
3. If you could spend time with any person from history, who would you choose, and why?
4. What's one thing you wish you would have done differently?
5. How are you and I alike? How are we different?
6. What is one thing you have always wanted to tell me but never have?
7. What's the best thing I could do for you now?
8. When did it hit you that you were a grown-up?
9. What would you like your great-great-great-grandchildren to know about you?

10. Is there anything about our relationship you would like to change?

Don't forget to share your heart with her, as well. Mothers love that. Mine would if she were here.

Teresa Shields Parker *is a wife, mother, business owner, life group leader, speaker and author of Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor and Sweet Grace Study Guide: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Overcome Sugar Addiction. Get a free chapter of her memoir on her blog at Teresa Shields . Connect with her there or on her Facebook page.*