

Friendship and the Wedding Industrial Complex

Jo's childhood best friend Teddy is engaged to be married and has asked Jo to be in the wedding party. Although not as close as they once were, Jo and Teddy consider each other a big part of their lives. Jo is happy for Teddy and accepts.

As time goes on, Jo is invited to many events connected to the engagement and wedding. There is an engagement party, which Jo gives up a shift at work to attend. Teddy's sibling, Lou, reaches out asking Jo to help plan and pay for a wedding shower hosted by the entire wedding party. Lynn (another wedding party member) plans a bachelorette weekend, asking everyone to travel to a different city, pitch in for hotel rooms, and bring a gift. Lou and Lynn both want to show Teddy that they care and to plan memorable gatherings and they think it is fair to split the costs. Jo feels conflicted as the time and money involved in these events begins to add up.

Curious about what the traditional expectations are, Jo turns to the internet and finds that the mounting costs aren't uncommon. One study found the average bridesmaid spends about \$1,200 on wedding-related expenses.¹ The general consensus seems to be that as a member of the wedding party, Jo is supposed to help plan and pay for a wedding shower and bachelorette weekend, buy both a shower and a wedding gift, and buy the outfit to wear at the wedding.² Jo wonders whether it would be okay to ignore the rules of etiquette, but worries about hurting Teddy's feelings. Jo thinks that pretending to be sick during the bachelorette weekend might be the best way to save the time and cost without making Teddy feel bad.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Do the levels of time and money that can be fairly expected of Jo depend upon how close Jo and Teddy are?
2. Is Teddy doing anything wrong by involving the wedding party in so many events?
3. What value, if any, does following proper etiquette have? Are we ever doing something wrong by eschewing rules of etiquette?

¹ <https://www.weddingwire.com/wedding-ideas/actual-cost-of-being-a-bridesmaid>

² <https://www.glamour.com/story/what-are-bridesmaids-jobs-for-a-wedding>; [https://www.brides.com/story/what-your-bridal-party-should-pay-for-bachelorette-bridal-shower-;](https://www.brides.com/story/what-your-bridal-party-should-pay-for-bachelorette-bridal-shower-) <https://www.theknot.com/content/what-bridesmaids-pay-for>

