

Trey and Kinsey: The Vegas wedding

By Sherri Gardner Howell

I do embrace the things that life brings me, good, great, bad or ugly.

I do like good surprises.

I do prepare myself fairly well for the unexpected, because what isn't expected seems to crop up quite often.

I do like a little drama in my life to keep the blood pumping.

I do like a full life, filled with more people than solitude, more activity than quiet time.

But a couple of "I do's" on Sunday, March 2, left me wishing for a week on a deserted island and provided enough drama to warrant closing the theater for a year.

Children, it seems, are enough to keep the blood pumping, no matter how old they are.

After the happy phone call in February to tell us he was asking Kinsey to marry him, my older son, Trey, made another call on Feb. 29. Actually, he called me 12 times, but I was at a reception and had my phone on "silent."

When I hit the lobby on my way out, I panicked. Trey never calls more than twice. On top of that, there was a "missed call" from my husband.

I sat down on a bench to steel myself for something being terribly wrong. Before I could dial the number, the phone rang. My husband.

"Nothing is physically wrong, but call Trey," he said.

Before I could grill him further, the phone beeped with an incoming call. Trey.

His voice was a combination of dread and excitement, if you can conjure up such a combination. He began with an apology and a "this is not up for discussion" clause.

"I know you're going to be mad, Mom, and I'm sorry. But we've made a decision, and we're happy about it. It's what we both want."
(Deep breath from him as I held mine)

"Kinsey and I are flying to Las Vegas tomorrow. We're getting married Sunday."

I would like to tell you that being the mature, responsible, loving mother that I am that I handled this news well. That would be a lie. I lost it. My first born was getting married, and I wasn't going to be in attendance.

When it was obvious that there was nothing I could do to change their minds, I offered for Neville and I to fly to Vegas and be there for the ceremony. This was the third or fourth offer for that, evidently, as Neville, Kinsey's mother and her sisters had all made the same suggestion.

Trey held firm. "We just want it to be us. We're going to spend the rest of our lives together, and we will have many family times for all of us. But we want this weekend to just be us. No stress. No plans. No expectations. Just me and Kinsey."

My husband, our cousin Randy Burlison and a small group of good friends got me through the night. The men sympathized with my sadness at not being included, but applauded Trey's decision. The women held my hand and understood.

By 2 a.m., I was better and actually slept a little. By 10 a.m. on Saturday, I was racked with guilt at how I had reacted with my son and worried that Kinsey would think I was going to be a Monster-in-law.

It was my good luck that I was very, very busy on Saturday, helping build a playhouse at Hall's Salvage in Alcoa for the News Sentinel's Women's Today Expo. At lunch, I walked outside and called my son.

This time, I said all the right things, all the things I was now feeling in my heart about this wonderful step he was taking in his life. By then, he and

Kinsey had gone On-line and read the "engagement column" I had written. By the time they got on the plane, they knew they had Trey's crazy, overbearing Mother's blessings and best wishes. They promised to call after the ceremony, and I settled down for a break from all the drama.

Except I forgot about my younger son, Brett. I had called him Friday to find out "When" he knew -- two days earlier than I, it turns out. He didn't have much to say, just told me everything would be okay.

So, I should have been more prepared. Brett and Trey are very close. And, Brett's motto in life is "Act Now. Ask for forgiveness later."

Brett wouldn't answer his phone Sunday. I called him twice, and it went straight to voice mail. Thinking they must be busy at work, I went about my day, with Trey and Kinsey always in the back of my mind. They called us once, to thank us for a gift we had sent to the room in Vegas.

Late Sunday afternoon, I called Kinsey's mom, Sandie, to see how she was doing.

"Well," she said, "it's been quite a weekend! I have talked to them several times, and Kinsey is so excited. I just hung up, matter of a fact. They were on their way to meet Brett."

"My Brett?"

"Oh, yes," Sandie said. "He flew down last night."

My next voice message to Brett was short.

"I know where you are. Call me NOW."

He did, and put me on speaker phone with Trey and Kinsey, as they sat in their room at the Bellagio, getting ready for a wedding.

Trey's reaction to his brother showing up?

"Mom. It's Brett. What could I do? We're happy he's here."

Brett's explanation: "They needed a witness."

I'm not sure he will survive his first meeting with Kinsey's sisters, but, as Trey said, "It's Brett." He does what he does and, because his heart is so full of love and good intentions, things just work out.

At midnight, Neville and I sat at the computer at our home -- the home where we did our best to raise two boys, where we loved them, protected them and poured all our efforts into whatever we believed was best for them -- and watched a video of Trey doing what he believed was best for his bride and this new chapter in his life. They stood at A Special Memory wedding chapel in Las Vegas, gazed into each other's eyes and made promises to keep the rest of their lives. I cried, but they were happy tears.



The witness grinned, clapped, slapped his brother on the back and hugged the bride.

Elvis was NOT in attendance.