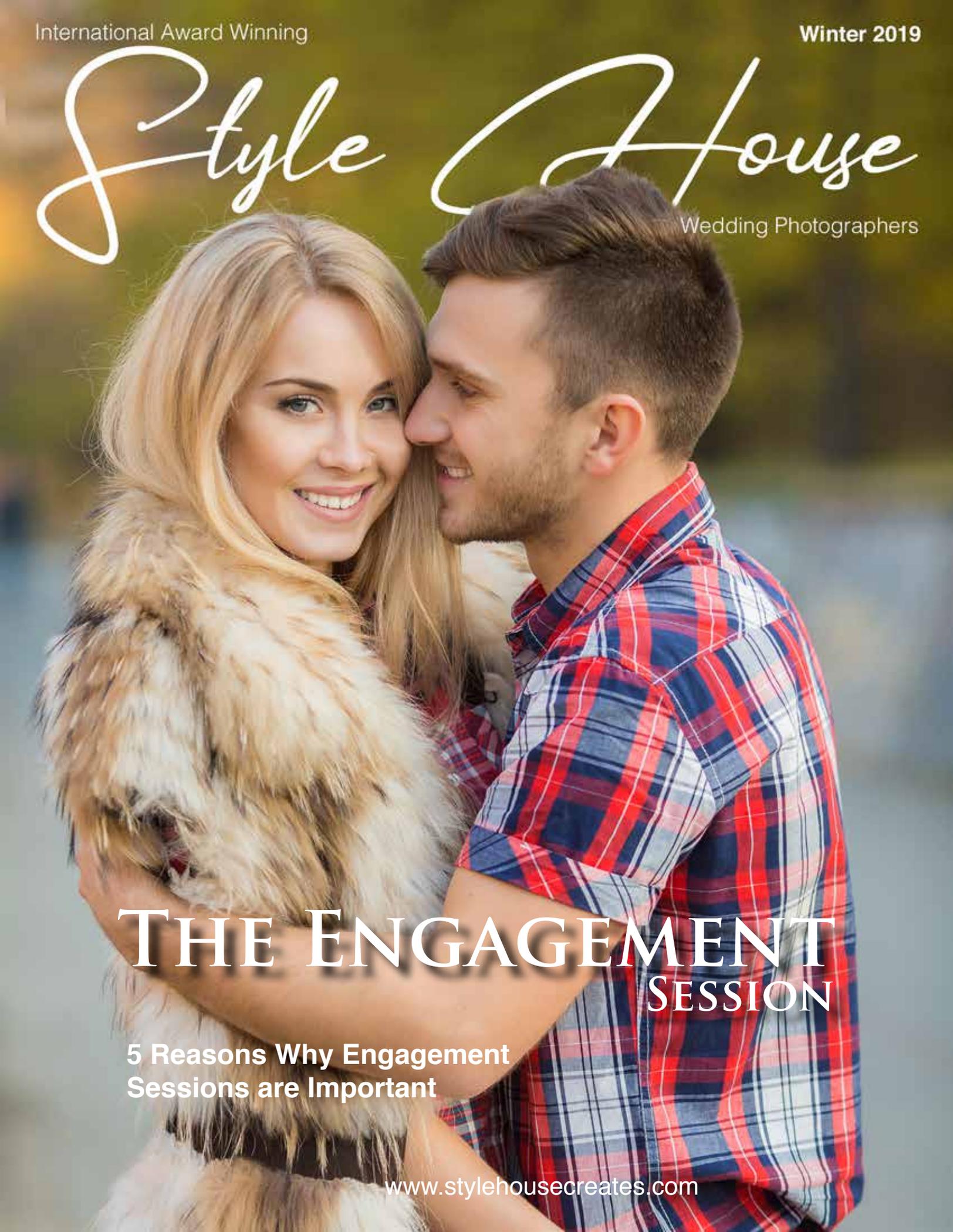


International Award Winning

Winter 2019

Style House

Wedding Photographers

A young couple is shown in a close embrace outdoors. The woman has long blonde hair and is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a thick, light-colored fur stole. The man has short brown hair and a light beard, and is smiling as he kisses her on the cheek. He is wearing a red, blue, and white plaid shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery and a body of water.

THE ENGAGEMENT SESSION

**5 Reasons Why Engagement
Sessions are Important**

www.stylehousecreates.com

5 Reasons Why Engagement Sessions are Important

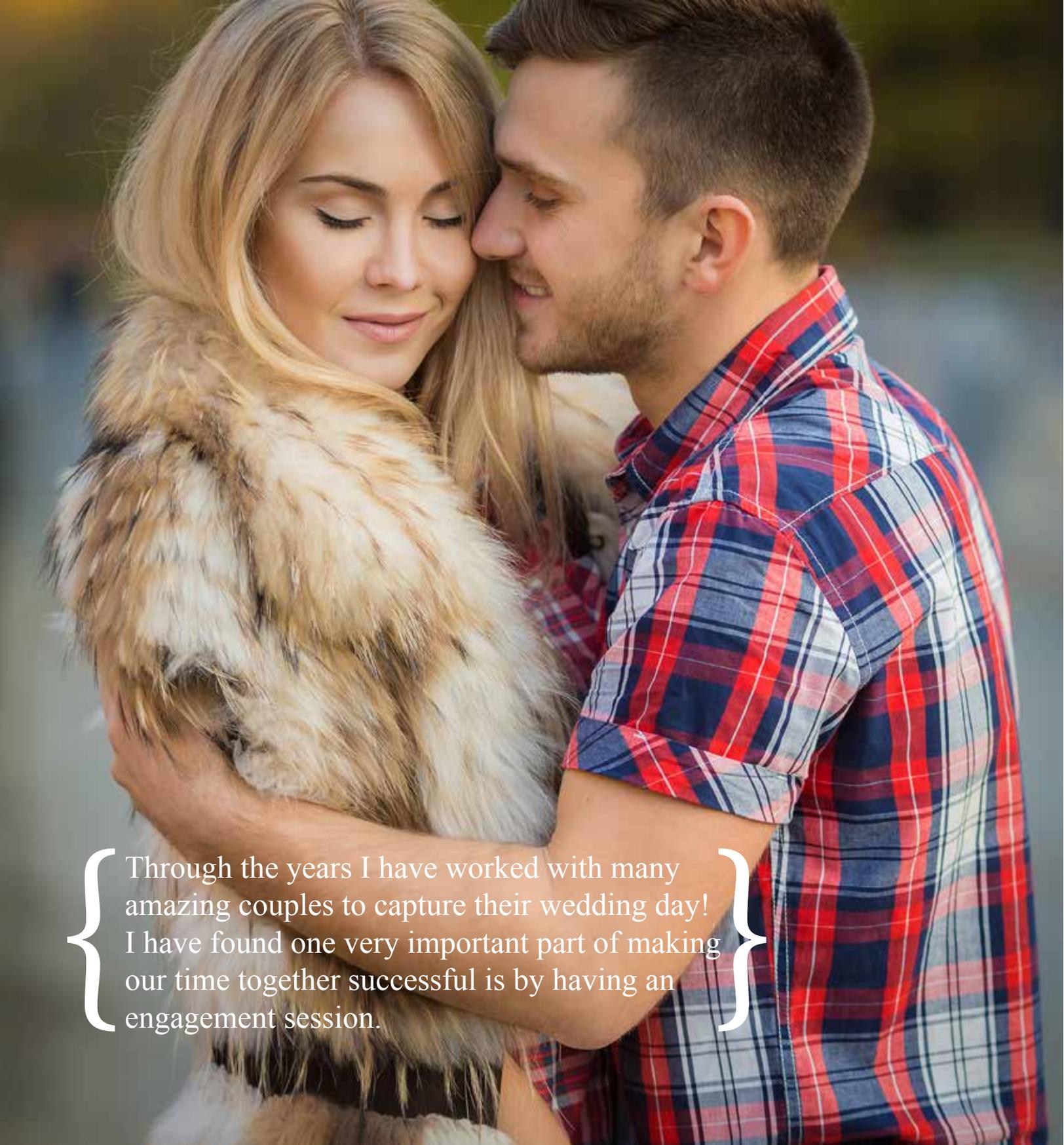


So, you're engaged?!? Congratulations!!!

Whether you knew about it or it was completely a surprise, this has to be an exciting time for both of you! Ok, so let's just pretend the proposal was a surprise. After you've alerted everyone, shared your engagement story over and over, and alerted social media (we can't forget social media), the real work begins. This all important day where you profess your love for one another in front of your dearest family and friends takes some planning. Fast forward a few weeks or months and you've determined a wedding date, selected a venue, and maybe have even hired a wedding planner. Next on your list may be interviewing and hiring a photographer. Once you meet with your photographer and make the commitment with him

or her, you've hopefully added one valuable event to your photography package – The Engagement Session.

Now, before we dig into the details, one of the questions that I receive often is “when should we take photos?” And that's a great question! I usually recommend taking them six months to one year before the wedding date. If you wait until you are too close to the wedding date, you may become pressed for time when trying to find the best date with your photographer, thus creating unnecessary stress. Also, if you will be using your photos for your save-the-date announcements or in other creative ways, you will need to allow yourself time for your session, editing time for the photographer, and design and delivery of your materials. When my couples have taken photos too early, they



Through the years I have worked with many amazing couples to capture their wedding day! I have found one very important part of making our time together successful is by having an engagement session.

came up with fresh ideas months later and wanted to take photos again, which caused them to incur a session fee they would have otherwise avoided. Couples that waited until too close to the wedding date found themselves in a time crunch and the

session never happened. Now, the naysayers may say that the engagement session is unnecessary. I've even heard of it being referred to as boastful and that the time can be used for something else. I would love to share with you 5 reasons why



engagement photos are important.

you for the entire wedding day. In addition to the relationship, it becomes a win-win for both you and the photographer because you will receive images that you can use for your save-the-dates, wedding website, or wedding day display. Your photographer also gets to see how you and your fiancé interact with one another, and can better direct you two into natural, flattering, and authentic poses. While these sessions typically have a time-limit, you aren't pressed to make the perfect shots happen in a short amount of time like you are on the wedding day.

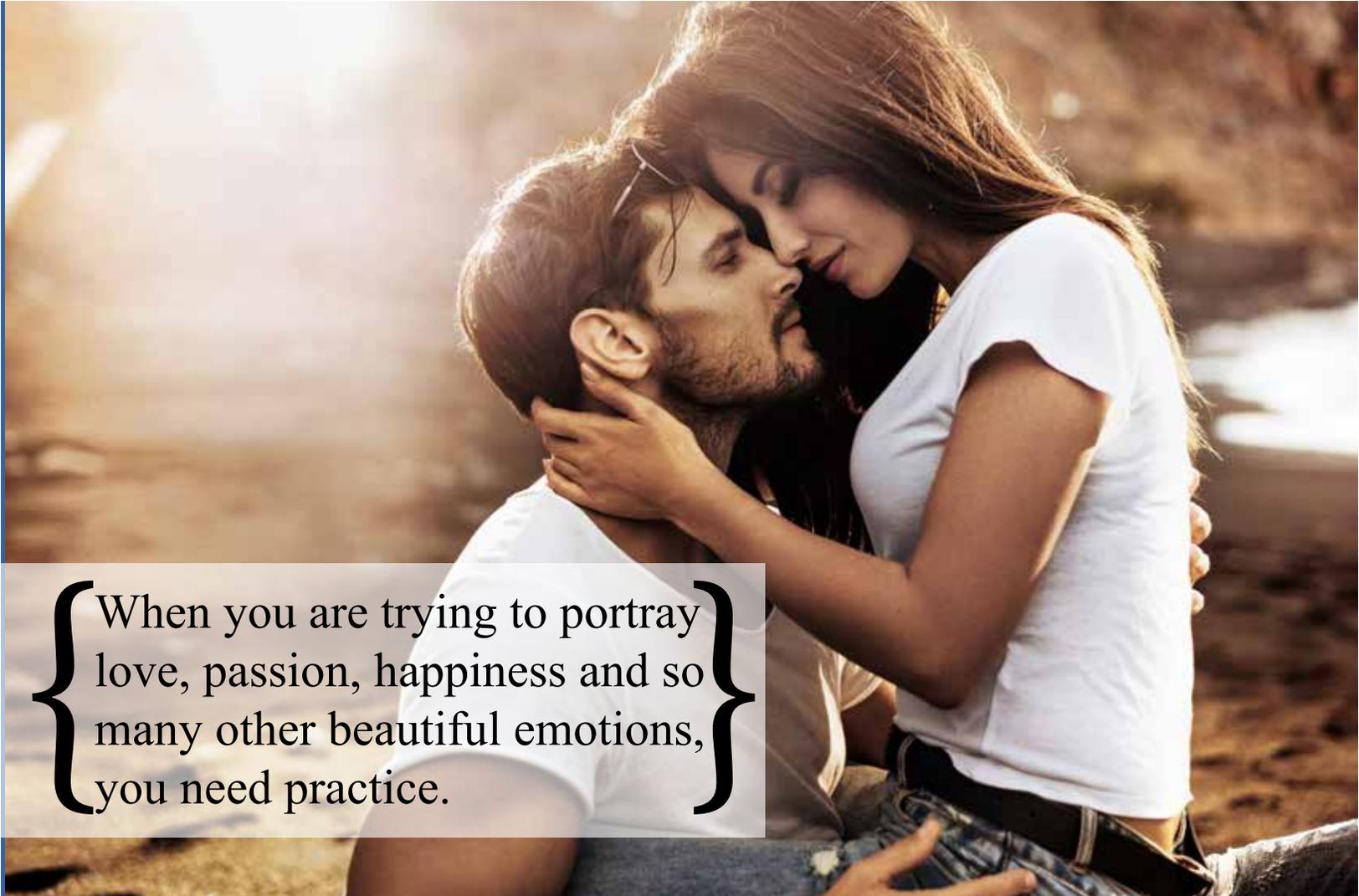
2- You're Able To Become Comfortable In Front Of The Camera

Spending 90 minutes (or however long you and your photographer have agreed upon) in front of their camera is the key to preventing stiff and uncomfortable looking photos. The days of the 80s "Stand here, be still and smile" poses are over. No offense to the 80s, we love you! The number one question that I am asked when a couple starts their session is "Okay, what do you want us to do?" This lets me know they may be a little nervous of the unexpected. I get it, how often do we take professional photos, right? Probably not often since selfies don't count, so it's natural to have a feeling of uncertainty in the beginning.

When I begin an engagement session, I let the couple know a few things up front about what to expect in order to make them relax, and while it may take a few minutes to get into the swing of things, we always get to the point where their true personalities come alive! On occasion, the groom-to-be is not as thrilled as his future bride is to be spending a portion of his morning or afternoon openly showing his affection. So this time to connect on a more personal level can really save valuable time on the wedding day. Consider your wedding photography as an investment

1- You're Able To Get To Know Your Photographer

The engagement session is the perfect opportunity to spend some time with your photographer before the wedding day. Let's face it, on the wedding day there are so many things that happen – hopefully all good of course. Having a relationship with your photographer after having taken engagement photos, will allow you a level of comfort and trust since he or she will be the one wedding professional that is around



When you are trying to portray love, passion, happiness and so many other beautiful emotions, you need practice.

in a lifetime of memories. Your ability to relive those moments from the wedding day is most likely what you expect from your photographer and that's understandable, so ensuring you are comfortable in front of the camera will add value to your experience in the long run. Trust me!

3- Your Session Can Serve As A Hair and Make-Up Trial

When a bride is selecting the wedding professionals that are going to make her even more beautiful on her wedding day, she is not going to go into this agreement blindly. Most brides have a hair and/or make-up trial scheduled prior to the wedding to ensure they have the perfect look on their wedding day. Combining this trial with the engagement session is the perfect opportunity to see how you are going to look on camera on the wedding day (minus the gown). Not only does it serve as a trial, but typically brides that come to their session

with professional make-up application feel great about how it is all coming together and have a better understanding of what adjustments, if any, need to be made for the wedding day. Women that typically wear little to no make-up daily may feel overwhelmed about the finished look from a professional make-up artist, but when they see their images it's almost always a decision they were happy about.

4- Your Session May Be Complimentary

Many wedding photographers include the engagement session in their wedding packaging because as I mentioned previously, we want to get to know you better and understand how you two operate as a couple. Some wedding photographers offer this session as an add-on to the experience. Either way, it's worth the investment. As photographers, we want to understand if



you're shy, very outgoing, conservative, or funny so that we can best bring out YOU while having you do things that you enjoy! While engagement sessions require a bit of work to plan and prepare for, it's meant to be a fun, care-free time with you and your sweetie! This is also an opportunity for us to build trust. On the wedding day, there may be many opinions about which family photos you should or should not take, and that's a personal decision between you and your fiancé. However, the engagement session gets that conversation started, so that on the wedding day, the potential delays and awkward conversations are avoided as much as humanly possible. Can you discuss these details with your photographer outside of the engagement session, absolutely! However, your photographer can usually offer an expert opinion about how much timing is needed to fulfill

your desires and this time can be used to talk openly and face-to-face about these things.

If by chance you've won a complimentary engagement session at a bridal show, for example, I would still recommend you taking your wedding photographer up on their offer for a session. A few reasons to do this is because it's usually included in the cost of the wedding package, and since it is complimentary, the price of the wedding package may not change if you decide not to use it. Also, each photographer has their own style and way of giving direction. So the session that you won from a photographer may be completely different from the one your actual photographer offers.

Not everyone knows how to pose and be relaxed in front of a camera

5- You're Able To Get Creative Photos

How often do you get to do something that you really enjoy with your fiancé where there is a professional photographer there documenting the moment? I say that jokingly but there's also some truth to it. Your session should be focused on what makes you two click! Think of that first date that you two went on, or things you love to do together, or the special moment when your fiancé proposed, or maybe even the location where you met. There are so many things that you can incorporate into your engagement session to make it fun and unique!

Having your engagement session also gives you time to spend quality time together and step aside from all the wedding planning. Sometimes the planning gets so crazy you forget the reason

why you are even planning...it's to celebrate your LOVE! I personally take this opportunity to get to know your love story a little more. Get a sense of your chemistry and it helps me understand your relationship. It is the time where we get to bond and build a friendship. Not just as a client and photographer working together. I really keep all my couples close to my heart. At the end of the day, my goal is to have my photographs tell your love story as best I can.

Engagement sessions are so important to Style House that we include them, in all of our wedding collections. I hope this helps any couple out there contemplating whether to have one or not.

Not only are you missing a special milestone for you and your future spouse but you are missing out on time with getting to know your wedding photographer!



By having your engagement session it helps to practice for the big day and allows you to have some fun!



**Just Engaged and
Completely Overwhelmed?
Read This Now.....**



Simply put, the key to a glitch-free wedding is smart planning. Spare yourself multiple headaches by making a plan and sticking with it—and our helpful wedding planning tips, tools and apps are perfect for staying organized and minimizing stress.

First of all, congratulations! If you haven't started basking in the glow of being engaged yet, we highly recommend it. And while family members and friends will definitely want to know all the details and plans (you know, the ones you haven't made yet), don't be afraid to tell them you're just enjoying this special time together for now. And when you're finally ready to start wedding planning, let us help. Not to brag or anything, but we're kind of pros at this. So, first things first...

Stay Organized

This one's pretty obvious. The more organized you are, the less likely something will go wrong. That means your first to-do is to check out our All-In-One Wedding Planner app, where we'll keep track of anything and everything, from defining your wedding style to managing RSVPs and all the details in between. Start by taking our fun Style Quiz, then search and book amazing vendors, manage your budget, guest



list and registry, and even create a detailed, day-of timeline (although you don't need to worry about that detail quite yet)—and that's just the tip of the iceberg. If you're someone who likes to handwrite your plans, pick up *The Knot Ultimate Wedding Planner & Organizer*. Keep all your wedding information in it: receipts, contracts, ideas, dates, times, locations—you name it. Bottom line: We're here to keep you sane and organized every step of the way.

Start Your Personalized Checklist

Once you determine your wedding date, create your personalized wedding checklist on *The Knot* to figure out what your to-dos are on a month-by-month basis. Don't stress yourself out in the beginning by setting deadlines that might prove to be unrealistic—let us guide you on which essential tasks to do when. And we know that it may seem a little scary to try and get as much done as possible in the first few months, but that way, the last few months won't be as hectic. You'll thank yourselves later—promise.

Set Aside Weekly Time to Plan

Choose a day or two during the week when you'll focus on wedding planning (or choose a time to do one or two things every day if you're pressed for time). It's also good to sit down together and plan. This eliminates confusion—i.e., one of you thinking you're supposed to call and check on hall rentals when the other's already narrowed it down to what will suit their needs. Whether you're searching for style inspiration on *The Knot Real Weddings*, Instagram feed and Pinterest boards, or finding local vendors in the Marketplace, clearly allocating time for wedding tasks can only help you in the long run.

Divide and Conquer (While Communicating)
This is the best way to get things done. You and your partner should both be involved every step of the way. Make a list of details to be taken care of, then divide the list in half and choose what you each want to do—your partner may not be concerned with exactly which flowers you carry, and maybe you're not picky about what your partner's wedding party wears, but even though you have your checklist, it's good to over-communicate. If you're sharing duties, you



should also be sharing the details. It's okay to take care of certain things by yourself, but don't neglect to tell each other about it so the caterer isn't contacted twice.

And when the planning gets tough, take a break from contracts and seating charts to create your official wedding website. It's free and a fun thing to do if you can't look at any more cakes for the day.

Be Flexible and Fair

So, you really didn't want the ushers in tails and top hats. And maybe your partner doesn't want the wedding cake to be lemon with pecan icing. Each of you is going to want things the other doesn't care for (or care about), but flexibility is a must, so be willing to bend. If you really object to something, let your objection be duly heard and noted—and have a good reason for it. This may come up the most when you start deciding on your guest list and budget, but with our Wedding Guest List Manager and Wedding Budget Calculator, it's easy to keep track of each choice you make and make adjustments along the way.

Details, Contracts and Negotiations
When dealing with wedding professionals (caterers, florists and so on), be sure to clarify all the details and your expectations during the initial discussions. Make sure you always, always get a contract specifically stating dates, times and locations—in other words, spell everything out. It's not about nitpicking, it's about paying for and receiving exactly what you want to make your day spectacular.

Try to negotiate the best deal for goods and services, but don't sell yourself short on important things just to get a better price. Most importantly, be sure to read the fine print on every contract before you sign it, and make sure you're aware of cancellation policies and fees. Also ask if there's a grace period to cancel just in case you change your mind about the service or vendor, or something happens and you need to postpone the wedding (better safe than sorry).

