

Why Are Grooms Having to Hire A Best Man?

We've probably all seen a wedding at some point where the bride has multiple friends and sisters to stand beside her. They're a pretty sight, dressed in their finery, carefully holding their flowers, and beaming as their friend walks down the aisle.

And then you look over at the groom's side.

There, too, the men stand with smiles on their faces. But their ranks don't measure as large as those on the bride's side. In fact, when it's time for the recessional, some of the men escort two ladies down the aisle.

We dismiss such a situation a bit sheepishly, because, well, women tend to be more relational and therefore generally have more friends. Men, on the other hand, are increasingly grasping at straws in this area.

Given this situation, it should perhaps come as no surprise that rent-a-best-man has become a thriving business for an enterprising British man. As *The Telegraph* [describes it](#):

"Roughly once a month, Ewan Jones, 28, throws on his well-worn morning suit, dusts off his speech and heads off to be best man at yet another wedding. At the end of the day, as the final guests are staggering upstairs to their rooms or drunkenly calling for Ubers, he presents the groom with his bill. £450 for the day."

Jones is a best man for hire – a ringer for any groom who either can't rustle up a friend or who thinks his real friends can't be trusted with such an important job."

The reasons Jones has been hired vary: the groom has lately

removed to a foreign country and hasn't made friends; the nature of marriage at hand has caused rifts with former friends; and as mentioned above, the groom really doesn't have many reliable friends upon which to draw.

Such a scenario recalled to mind what my colleague Daniel Lattier [once noted](#) about the declining nature of male friendships. As he explains, reasons for the lack of male friendships include the [war on men in the workplace](#), the heavy emphasis on utilitarianism, and the shift from agrarian to office work.

Undoubtedly, these three aspects play a role in the reason why men are having to hire a best man for their weddings. But several more reasons for this particular wedding trend also come to mind.

The first is the decline of manners. As Jones explains, the idea for his rent-a-best-man business began when a groom confessed his hesitancy to ask his brother to do the honors. The brother, he confided, was "a bit edgy," suggesting that his behavior was rather unpredictable and ill-mannered. In this day and age, we often act like good manners and polite behavior aren't important. But when it comes down to it, no one is thrilled with the idea of their wedding day being ruined by an inappropriate comment or action placed in front of guests in the midst of the best man's speech.

The [decline of respect for marriage](#) in general might also play a part. The role of best man was once viewed with seriousness, respect, and a bit of responsibility to encourage and advance the permanence of the marriage. But when marriages often last for only a few short years, it's not difficult to see why the role of best man can be filled by a person far removed from the groom's life.

Finally, many of today's men have grown up in single mother homes, never having the benefit of a father figure with whom

they can develop a healthy relationship upon which to model their future interactions with men. Without this foundation, is it really any surprise that many of today's men have difficulty cultivating male friendships?

The practice of hiring a best man seems ethically questionable, but given the above reasons, is it really any surprise that men might consider such a practice?

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