



# Gatekeeper

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The Tactical Guide to Commitment

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## References and Footnotes from Gatekeeper: The Tactical Guide to Commitment

- <sup>1</sup> I present case studies and examples throughout the book. I have changed the details to protect identities. I have also ensured that for each case study, I could identify several other cases with similar characteristics. Building case studies in this manner helps me constrain my bias and reduce the influence of outliers.
- <sup>2</sup> Baumeister, R. 2010. *Is There Anything Good About Men: How Cultures Flourish by Exploiting Men*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- <sup>3</sup> Seager, M., L. Sullivan, and J. Barry. 2014. "Gender-Related Schemas and Suicidality: Validation of the Male and Female Traditional Gender Scripts Questionnaires." *New Male Studies: An International Journal* 3: 34-54. In this survey, the authors noted that the contrasting universal expectations for men include 1) fight and win, 2) provide and protect, and 3) exercise mastery and control. The study also examined gender expectation in suicidality. The authors found, in certain circumstances, that failing to live up to the demands of the male script can cause "extreme psychological distress." For example, a man might view himself as a failure if he has difficulty providing for his family.
- <sup>4</sup> Jonason, P. K., J. R. Garcia, G. D. Webster, N. P. Li, and H. E. Fisher. 2015. "Relationship Dealbreakers: Traits People Avoid in Potential Mates." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 41: 1697-711.
- <sup>5</sup> Although culture shapes the dating landscape, this book assumes the basics of mating remain constant even as its surface features shift. Such features include ever-changing social forces (like birth control), subcultures (various social and ideological movements like feminism and Men Going Their Own Way), and technology (online dating). Despite the shifting landscape, our basic human nature evolves at a glacial pace. Human mating preferences have developed over hundreds of thousands of years, and our species has found reproductive success in long-term pair bonding. That arrangement involves ancient mating behaviors that will remain relatively constant even in an ever-changing cultural landscape. See, for example, Fletcher, G. J. O., J. A. Simpson, L. Campbell, and N. C. Overall. 2015. "Pair Bonding, Romantic Love, and Evolution: The Curious Case of Homo Sapiens." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 10: 20-36.
- <sup>6</sup> Bateman, J. A. 1948. "Intra-sexual Selection in Drosophila." *Heredity* 2: 349-368.
- <sup>7</sup> Buss, D. M. 2019. "The Evolution of Love in Humans." In *The New Psychology of Love*, edited by R. J. Sternberg and K. Sternberg. Cambridge University Press.
- <sup>8</sup> Stewart-Williams, S., and A. G. Thomas. 2013. "The Ape That Thought It Was a Peacock: Does Evolutionary Psychology Exaggerate Human Sex Differences?" *Psychological Inquiry* 24: 137-168. In one illustration of male choosiness, the authors wrote: "The idea that women are the choosier sex is one of the best-known claims associated with [evolutionary psychology]. Ironically, another of the best-known claims associated with [evolutionary psychology] is an exception to this rule: On average, men are choosier than women about the physical attractiveness of a prospective mate." They added men may lower their overall standards about casual sex, but "... when it comes to the most important mating decisions of a man's life—who he will marry, who he will have children with—the difference in choosiness [between men and women] is much smaller and maybe nonexistent."
- <sup>9</sup> Barry, J. A. 2020. "Job Satisfaction, Relationship, Stability, and Valuing One's Health Are the Strongest Predictors of Men's Mental Well-Being." *Psychreg Journal of Psychology*, 4(3): 4-27. Other strong predictors of a positive mindset among men in the US and UK included physical health, income, age (men generally get happier with age, with men in their fifties being at "peak positivity"), being married, participation in sports and friendship, and current or prior military service.
- <sup>10</sup> For citations associated with this summary, please see Chapter 3 of *The Tactical Guide to Women*.
- <sup>11</sup> Heron, M. 2019. "Deaths: Leading Causes for 2017." *National Vital Statistics Reports* 68(6): 1-76.
- <sup>12</sup> See, for example, LeJeune, J., and J. B. Luoma. 2019. *Values in Therapy*. Oakland, CA: Context Press. The authors define values as "freely chosen, verbally constructed consequences of ongoing, dynamic, evolving

patterns of activity, which establish predominant reinforcers for that activity that are intrinsic in engagement in the valued behavioral pattern itself.” Translation: values are self-reinforcing behaviors.

- <sup>13</sup> Baumeister, R. 2010. *Is There Anything Good About Men: How Cultures Flourish by Exploiting Men*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- <sup>14</sup> Donovan, J. 2012. *The Way of Men*. Milwaukee, Oregon: Dissonant Hum.
- <sup>15</sup> Tracy, J. L., and A. T. Beall. 2011. “Happy Guys Finish Last: The Impact of Emotion Expressions on Sexual Attraction.” *Emotion* 11: 1379-87.
- <sup>16</sup> Stewart-Williams, S. 2020. *The Ape That Understood the Universe: How the Mind and Culture Evolve*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- <sup>17</sup> For a fascinating example of internal conflict at a low level of processing, see: Garner, A. R., and G. B. Keller. 2022. “A Cortical Circuit for Audio-Visual Predictions.” *Nature Neuroscience* 25: 99-105. In this study on visual perception in mice, the authors found that a mouse’s previous auditory learning can literally shape and suppress what its eyes see in the present. The competition between auditory and visual perception appears to exist in the service of sharpening a mouse’s overall perception.
- <sup>18</sup> van der Kolk, Bessel. 2014. *The Body Keeps the Score*. Penguin Publishing Group.
- <sup>19</sup> Dostoevsky, F. 1985. *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*. London: Quartet.
- <sup>20</sup> Wegner, D. M., D. J. Schneider, S. R. Carter, and T. L. White. 1987. “Paradoxical Effects of Thought Suppression.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53: 5-13.
- <sup>21</sup> Bruner, J. S., and L. Postman. 1949. “On the Perception of Incongruity: A Paradigm.” *Journal of Personality* 18: 206-223.
- <sup>22</sup> Bruner, J. S., L. Postman, and J. Rodrigues. 1951. “Expectation and the Perception of Color.” *Journal of Psychology* 64: 216-227.
- <sup>23</sup> Lord, C. G., L. Ross, and M. R. Lepper. 1979. “Biases Assimilation and Attitude Polarization: The Effects of Prior Theories on Subsequently Considered Evidence.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 37: 2098-2109.
- <sup>24</sup> Khare, A., and J. Inman. 2006. “Habitual Behavior in American Eating Patterns: The Role of Meal Occasions.” *Journal of Consumer Research* 12: 567-575.
- <sup>25</sup> Heinz Kohut was one of the first to use the term. He studied neurology in 1930s Germany, then fled to Chicago to escape Nazi persecution. Kohut was interested in the interplay between self and others during development. In particular, he believed the way we come to view our role in relationships was shaped by the ability of our parents and other authority figures to understand and respond to our childhood drives and urges. See: Flanagan, Laura Melano. 1996. “The theory of self-psychology.” In Joan Berzoff, Laura Melano Flanagan, and Patricia Hertz (eds.). *Inside Out and Outside In, Second Edition*. Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson.
- <sup>26</sup> Kilmann, P. R., J. M. C. Vendemia, M. M. Parnell, and G. C. Urbaniak. 2009. “Parent Characteristics Linked with Daughters’ Attachment Styles.” *Adolescence* 44: 557-568.
- <sup>27</sup> Amato, P. 1996. “Explaining the Intergenerational Transmission of Divorce.” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58: 628-640.
- <sup>28</sup> van der Kolk, Bessel. 2014. *The Body Keeps the Score*. Penguin Publishing Group.
- <sup>29</sup> Zarrindast, M. R., and F. Khakpai. 2015. “The Modulatory Role of Dopamine in Anxiety-like Behavior.” *Archives of Iranian Medicine* 18: 591-603.
- <sup>30</sup> US Census Bureau. 2020. *Living Arrangements of Children Under 18 Years Old: 1960 to Present*. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau.
- <sup>31</sup> Mani, A., S. Mullainathan, E. Shafir, and J. Zhao. 2013. “Poverty Impedes Cognitive Function.” *Science* 341: 976-980.
- <sup>32</sup> Schilbach, F., H. Schofield, and S. Mullainathan. 2016. “The Psychological Lives of the Poor.” *American Economic Review* 106: 435-440.

- <sup>33</sup> Harrison, M. A., and J. Shortall. 2011. "Women and Men in Love: Who Really Feels It and Says It First?" *Journal of Social Psychology* 151: 727-736.
- <sup>34</sup> Stanley, S. M., G. K. Rhoades, and H. J. Markman. 2006. "Sliding Versus Deciding: Inertia and the Premarital Cohabitation Effect." *Family Relations* 55: 499-509.
- <sup>35</sup> Glover, R. 2000. *No More Mr. Nice Guy: A Proven Plan for Getting What You Want In Love, Sex, and Life*. Philadelphia, PA: Running Press. According to Dr. Glover, this is one of the central beliefs of the nice-guy: "If I can hide my flaws and become what I think others want me to be, then I will be loved, get my needs met, and have a problem-free life." Eventually, it backfires.
- <sup>36</sup> Hayes, S. C., and K. D. Strosahl. 2004. *A Practical Guide to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy*. New York: Springer.
- <sup>37</sup> Cosmides, L., and J. Tooby. 2016. "The Theoretical Foundations of Evolutionary Psychology." In *The Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology, Volume 1*, edited by D. M. Buss. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- <sup>38</sup> Sznycer, D., K. Takemura, A. W. Delton, K. Sato, T. E. Robertson, L. Cosmides, and J. Tooby. 2012. "Cross-Cultural Differences and Similarities in Proneness to Shame: An Adaptationist and Ecological Approach." *Evolutionary Psychology* 10: 252-370. This cross-cultural study found some cultures (East Asian cultures, for example) are more shame-prone than others (such as the United States and the United Kingdom). People experience shame when they learn their reputation may be diminished in the minds of others. Across cultures, shame proneness was higher among friends than strangers, and we're more likely to feel shame in important relationships when we don't feel we can easily form new ones. The study did not discuss marriages or romantic relationships, but these relationships, by definition, are difficult to replace, making them fertile grounds for shame.
- <sup>39</sup> Robertson, T. E., D. Sznycer, A. W. Delton, J. Tooby, and L. Cosmides. 2018. "The True Trigger of Shame: Social Devaluation Is Sufficient, Wrongdoing Is Unnecessary." *Evolution and Human Behavior* 39: 566-573.
- <sup>40</sup> Sznycer, D., D. Xygalatas, S. Alama, et al. 2018. "Invariances in the Architecture of Pride Across Small-Scale Societies." *PNAS Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 115: 8322-8327.
- <sup>41</sup> See, for example, Rosenstock, S., and C. O'Connor. 2018. "When It's Good to Feel Bad: An Evolutionary Model of Guilt and Apology." *Frontiers in Robotics and AI* 5: 1-14. The authors wrote that guilt leads to three classes of behavior. "First, the anticipation of guilt prevents social transgression. ... Second, the experience of guilt leads to a suite of reparative behaviors including apology, gift giving, acceptance of punishment, and self-punishment. ... Lastly, expression of guilt leads to decreased punishing behaviors, and forgiveness, by group members."
- <sup>42</sup> Pappas, S. 2019. "APA Issues First-Ever Guidelines for Practice with Men and Boys." *Monitor on Psychology* 50: 35-38.
- <sup>43</sup> Buss, D. M. 1989. "Sex differences in human mate preferences: Evolutionary hypotheses tested in 37 cultures." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 12: 1-49.
- <sup>44</sup> Brummelman, E., S. Thomaes, S. A. Nelemans, B. O. de Castro, G. Overbeek, and B. J. Bushman. 2015. "Origins of Narcissism in Children." *PNAS* 112: 3659-3662. The authors noticed that a narcissistic personality style is acquired, in part, by internalizing parents' beliefs that they are superior to others and entitled to privileges. A more functional self-regard, on the other hand, was predicted by parents' ability to express admiration and appreciation for their children rather than overvaluation.
- <sup>45</sup> In a study on ignoring red flags, researchers found, "Even when participants encountered one of their own personal dealbreakers [in an attractive partner], a characteristic that they had previously claimed would make them reject someone as a long-term mate, they did not reliably end the relationship. On average, participants encountered four pieces of negative information, including two of their own personal dealbreakers, before they chose to reject the hypothetical partner." They also noted, "Moving a relationship forward often feels effortless,

- whereas rejecting a romantic partner is difficult.” Joel, S., and N. Charlot. 2022. “Dealbreakers or Dealbenders? Capturing the Cumulative Effects of Partner Information on Mate Choice.” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 101: 1-16.
- <sup>46</sup> Siebert, Al. 2010. *The Survivor Personality: Why Some People Are Stronger, Smarter, and More Skillful at Handling Life’s Difficulties ... and How You Can Be, Too*. Toronto: Penguin Group. It’s important to note the context of that quote. By “worst experience,” Siebert was referring to life events such as getting laid off, not tragedies involving the suffering of others.
- <sup>47</sup> Amstadter, A., J. M. Myers, and K. S. Kendler. 2014. “Psychiatric Resilience: Longitudinal Twin Study.” *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 205: 275-280.
- <sup>48</sup> McCullough, M. E., M. B. Kimeldorf, and A. D. Cohen. 2008. “An Adaptation for Altruism? The Social Causes, Social Efforts, and Social Evolution of Gratitude.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17: 281-285.
- <sup>49</sup> Balzen, K. M., D. A. Knoch, K. A. Millward, C. A. Corretti, and R. A. Ackerman. 2022. “Narcissistic Traits and Romantic Relationship Outcomes: A Short Daily Diary Investigation.” *Journal of Research in Personality* 96: 1-5.
- <sup>50</sup> Walters, S. D. “Why Can’t We Hate Men?” *Washington Post*, June 8, 2018. Downloaded on August 28, 2018, from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-cant-we-hate-men/2018/06/08/f1a3a8e0-6451-11e8-a69c-b944de66d9e7\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-cant-we-hate-men/2018/06/08/f1a3a8e0-6451-11e8-a69c-b944de66d9e7_story.html).
- <sup>51</sup> See, for example, Shaw, S. M., and J. Lee, editors. 2012. *Women’s Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- <sup>52</sup> Scott, S. B., G. K. Rhoades, S. M. Stanley, E. S. Allen, and H. J. Markman. 2013. “Reasons for Divorce and Recollections of Premarital Intervention: Implications for Improving Relationship Education.” *Couple and Family Psychology* 2: 131-145.
- <sup>53</sup> Lazarus, R. S. 1993. “Coping Theory and Research: Past, Present, and Future.” *Psychosomatic Medicine* 55: 234-247.
- <sup>54</sup> Lev-ari, S., Y. Gepner, and U. Goldbourt. 2021. “Dissatisfaction with Married Life in Men Is Related to Increased Stroke and All-Cause Mortality.” *Journal of Clinical Medicine* 10: 1729.
- <sup>55</sup> Shedler, J. 2006. *That Was Then, This Is Now: Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy For the Rest of Us*. Retrieved from <http://jonathanshedler.com/writings/>. This paper is a jargon-free example of the way skilled clinicians think about the work of therapy. It’s therefore a useful illustration of the type of mindset to seek in a therapist.
- <sup>56</sup> Pinker, S. 1997. *How the Mind Works*. New York: W.W. Horton and Company.
- <sup>57</sup> McDermott, R., J. Fowler, and N. Christakis. 2013. “Breaking Up Is Hard to Do, Unless Everyone Else Is Doing It Too: Social Network Effects on Divorce in a Longitudinal Sample.” *Social Forces* 92: 491-519.
- <sup>58</sup> Brickman, T., and D. T. Campbell. 1971. “Hedonic Relativism and Planning the Good Society.” In *Adaptation Level Theory: A Symposium*, edited by M. H. Apley. New York: Academic Press. 287-302.
- <sup>59</sup> See, for example, Haselton, M. G., D. Nettle, and D. R. Murray. 2016. “The Evolution of Cognitive Bias.” In *The Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*, edited by David M. Buss. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- <sup>60</sup> See also Pumphrey, C. 2022. *Insight Is 20/20: How to Trust Yourself to Protect Yourself from Narcissistic Abuse & Toxic Relationships*. New Degree Press. The author makes a similar point, contending that the combination of agreeableness and conscientiousness makes women vulnerable to abusive relationships.
- <sup>61</sup> Mathews, C. A., and V. I. Reus. 2001. “Assortative Mating in the Affective Disorders: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.” *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 42: 257-262. The researchers found that men with bipolar disorder were almost four times as likely as those without to have a spouse with an affective disorder.
- <sup>62</sup> Post, R. M., L. L. Altshuler, R. Kupka, S. L. McElroy, M. A. Frye, M. Rowe, H. Grunze, T. Suppes, P. E. Keck Jr., and W. A. Nolen. 2018. “More Assortative Mating in US Compared to European Parents and Spouses of

Patients with Bipolar Disorder: Implications for Psychiatric Illness in the Offspring.” *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience* 270: 237-245.

- <sup>63</sup> Torvik F. A., E. M. Eilertsen, L. J. Hannigan, R. Cheesman, L. J. Howe, P. Magnus, T. Reichborn-Kjennerud, O. A. Andreassen, P. R. Njølstad, A. Havdahl, and E. Ystrom. 2022. “Modeling Assortative Mating and Genetic Similarities Between Partners, Siblings, and In-Laws.” *Nature Communications* 13: 1108.
- <sup>64</sup> Norris, C. J. 2019. “The Negativity Bias, Revisited: Evidence from Neuroscience Measures and an Individual Differences Approach.” *Social Neuroscience* 16: 68-82.
- <sup>65</sup> McWilliams, N. 2020. *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Edition*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- <sup>66</sup> del Valle, C. H. C., and P. M. Mateos. 2008. “Dispositional Pessimism, Defensive Pessimism and Optimism: The Effect of Induced Mood on Prefactual and Counterfactual Thinking and Performance.” *Cognition and Emotion* 22: 1-13.
- <sup>67</sup> See, for example, Di Bianca, M., and J. R. Mahalik. 2022. “A Relational-Cultural Framework for Promoting Healthy Masculinities.” *American Psychologist* 77: 321-332. The authors argue that “hegemonic masculine socialization” must be replaced with socialization that leads to “social change efforts at the social, community, and systems levels.” Such language suggests the authors are less concerned with male mental health than their personal agenda to shape society.
- <sup>68</sup> Benedetti, F. 2013. “Responding to Nocebos Through Observation: Social Contagion of Negative Emotions.” *Pain* 154: 1165. See also: Cannon, W. B. 1942. “Voodoo Death.” *American Anthropologist* 44: 169-181.
- <sup>69</sup> Pinker, S. 1997. *How the Mind Works*. New York: W.W. Horton and Company.
- <sup>70</sup> Lykken, D., and A. Tellegen. 1996. “Happiness Is a Stochastic Phenomenon.” *Psychological Science* 7: 186-189. The authors wrote, “Based on the retest of smaller samples of twins after intervals of 4, 5 and 10 years, we estimate that the heritability of the stable component of subjective well-being approaches 80%.”
- <sup>71</sup> Shapiro, D. 1999. *Neurotic Styles*. Basic Books.
- <sup>72</sup> Navarra, R. J., and J. M. Gottman. 2018. “Bids and Turning Toward in Gottman Method Couple Therapy.” In Lebow, J., A. Chambers, and D. Breunlin (eds.). 2018. *Encyclopedia of Couple and Family Therapy*. New York: Springer.
- <sup>73</sup> Lieberman, M. D. 2000. “Intuition: A Social Cognitive Neuroscience Approach.” *Psychological Bulletin* 126: 109-37. This paper reported that implicit and explicit learning are different processes that operate on different neural pathways. The author hypothesized that implicit learning is the basis of intuition.
- <sup>74</sup> Stevens, M. 2013. “Your Instinctive Genius.” *New Scientist* 220: 28-29.
- <sup>75</sup> Kahneman, D., and A. Tversky. 1973. “On the Psychology of Prediction.” *Psychological Review* 80: 237-251.
- <sup>76</sup> Kahneman, D., and G. Klein. 2009. “Conditions for Intuitive Expertise.” *American Psychologist* 6: 515-526.
- <sup>77</sup> For intuitive hunches regarding performance-based endeavors, you might follow intuition provided 1) you have sufficient experience in the domain to have developed an accurate nonverbal familiarity with its base rates, and 2) you have engaged in a tremendous number of trials for which you received immediate feedback. Otherwise, the better bet is to note your intuition but attend to the facts of the situation.
- <sup>78</sup> Karson, M. 2018. *What Every Therapist Needs to Know*. Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield.
- <sup>79</sup> Fisher, H. 2016. *Anatomy of Love: A Natural History of Mating, Marriage, and Why We Stray*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- <sup>80</sup> Jankowiak, W. R., and E. F. Fischer. 1992. “A Cross-Cultural Perspective On Romantic Love.” *Ethnology* 31: 149-155.
- <sup>81</sup> Walker, R. S., K. R. Hill, M. V. Flinn, and R. M. Ellsworth. 2011. “Evolutionary History of the Hunter-Gatherer Marriage Practices.” *PLoS ONE* 6: e19066.
- <sup>82</sup> Campbell, L., and T. J. Loving. 2016. “Love and Commitment in Romantic Relationships.” In *The Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology, Volume 1*, edited by D. M. Buss. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. The authors

wrote, “Over evolutionary time, increased infant dependency placed greater burdens on human mothers and increased the value of paternal support in feeding and protecting young. Given that men have a genetic interest in the survival of their offspring, fathers were able to benefit reproductively by forming committed, investing relationships that would have reliably increased the probability of offspring survival.”

<sup>83</sup> Rego, S., J. Arantes, and P. Magalhães. 2016. “Is there a Sunk Cost Effect in Committed Relationships?” *Current Psychology: Research and Reviews* 37: 508-519.

<sup>84</sup> Cohn, D. 2013. *Love and Marriage*. Pew Research Center, Washington, DC. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2013/02/13/love-and-marriage/>.

<sup>85</sup> Wu, Daolin, Fuwei Liu, and Shan Huang. 2022. “Assessment of the Relationship Between Living Alone and the Risk of Depression Based on Longitudinal Studies: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.” *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 13: 954857.

<sup>86</sup> Vegard, S., C. E. Bowen, A. Håberg, et al. 2022. “Marital Histories and Associations with Later-Life Dementia and Mild Cognitive Impairment Risk in the HUNT4 70+ Study in Norway.” *Journal of Aging and Health* 0: 1-13. The authors didn’t identify the protective mechanism of marriage. They noted that the number of children was a mediating variable, but health problems, social isolation, or mental distress were not.

<sup>87</sup> Aizer, A. A., M. Chen, E. P. McCarthy, et al. 2013. “Marital Status and Survival in Patients With Cancer.” *Journal of Clinical Oncology* 31: 3869-3876.

<sup>88</sup> Monk, J. K., J. B. Kanter, T. B. Jamison, and L. T. Russel. 2020. “Beyond Cold Feet: Experiences of Ending Engagements and Canceling Weddings.” *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 37: 1-20. This research examined couples who ended relationships just prior to marriage. According to the authors, couples who took time to visualize the trajectory of the relationship were able to slow the momentum of wedding plans and navigate premarital doubts. These couples examined tough questions about where the relationship was headed. They also found that family and friends were happy to help with logistics, such as canceling vendors and informing guests.