

## About Sharon

Many have asked me how I ended up being a wedding coordinator.

It was not something that I set out to do but rather something that evolved from a set of circumstances that unfolded like dominoes set in motion.

My husband, Dennis, had always wanted to open a business. He thought about a paint and wallpaper shop because he loved to remodel older homes. We had, at that time, an older home that we had turned into 4 apartments for students since we lived in a college town. He had a little bit of knowledge but his first idea was not practical since our town already had 2 or 3 outlets for paint and wallpaper.

### Serendipity

One day, while visiting with my parents, my Mother had some silk flowers that she wanted to put into a "chocolate pot" which is an antique porcelain container to serve hot chocolate. He started playing around with the stems and ended up with a really beautiful arrangement. We were all amazed at how creative he was. It was more like he "constructed" the arrangement much like an architect would draw out plans.

The arrangement was seen by my cousin a few weeks later which led to a phone call from her asking us to do her wedding. He was flattered but hesitant. After asking a few questions, he agreed and we set out on a year preparation to make her wedding memorable. I played the organ and Dennis did the decorating. Sometime in the middle of the year, he announces to me that we were going to open a business. I laughed and said, "Yea, right". The wedding was beautiful and I thought that was the end of that.

### The beginning

Dennis enrolled in a floral design class the fall of 1985 and also began remodeling the front apartment of the old house that we had rented out. It was a very small studio apartment. We bought one pair of candelabra, found a round oak table in my parents old shed, and Dennis began making silk flower arrangements. We took the shower head out of the shower and placed shelves in the shower for silk flowers. We had to climb on the commode to get the greenery on top of the shower. We used less than \$1000 to start up our business.

Georgia Turpin is a big part of this story. All I knew about her was that she liked to do crafts and that she always complemented our music. Dennis and I were the music directors at Georgia's church for about 9 years. When we needed bows, we had called Georgia to tie the bows for my cousins wedding. They were beautiful!! She had laughed and said that she would work for us if we opened up a business.

I failed to mention that Dennis and I were both school teachers. All of this preparation went on while we were both teaching. Dennis taught Special Education and needed to see more immediate success than what he saw with his students. I taught music and was use to putting on musicals. We had main characters, backdrops, music and a script. Weddings have main characters, backdrops music and a script. I was a trained director to put on shows. Georgia had just retired from teaching first grade for over 30 years. I truly feel that God's hand was in all of this preparation. God's timing is so perfect. It is hard to see that as one walks through the tunnel of life. Sometimes the tunnel is curved so that we can't see what is ahead but God knew "The Added Touch" was meant to be and would also be to His glory.

Georgia set out the "open" sign for the first day of business for "The Added Touch" around the middle of March, 1986. We took on anything that came our way. I remember telling Dennis that I really didn't want much to do with the business. He said that was fine. That is until I would get a panicked call from him to come over and help out for awhile. Those calls got more frequent.

Reluctant business partner

We also had gained more and more brides. We wanted to specialize in weddings but we took in everything so that we could make enough money to keep the doors open. One of our first brides had had several planning sessions with Dennis but she wanted to talk with me. I had tried to stay away from getting very involved. I answered the phone and delivered messages and flowers but was not convinced that we would be in business more than 6 months. She wanted to know if I would direct her wedding. I was floored. She had a Mother, 2 stepmothers, 3 aunts and a grandmother all telling her what to do. She said she needed somebody to take charge and tell everyone else what to do. So I was "hired". I really didn't know what I was doing but I did know how to put on a show and I had played the piano or organ for weddings since I was 13. I found that I knew more than I realized. I made lot of mistakes but with each wedding I learned for the next.

I joined the Association of Bridal Consultants where I participated in their correspondence courses. I found that I truly enjoyed being a wedding director and consultant.

## The morning in June

On June 12, 1996, my life suddenly turned upside down as Dennis was tragically killed in a car crash. My first instinct was to close the shop. It was never my idea to have a business. I set out to do just that &ndash; close the shop. I had the idea that I would start with a 10% sale and just continue adding the savings until I was finally out of business.

One Saturday morning in July of '96, I was in the shop, set on my task for the day of making sure there was a price tag on each and every item. I heard a customer, saw it was a young girl and sized her up as a bride. I rehearsed in my head what I was going to say to her: leave, go away, we are going out of business. I can't help you. She turned to face me and she was crying. I was shocked and quickly sat her down and gave her some tissues.

She said, 'I wasn't going to do this.' Not knowing what she meant. I said 'Do what?'

'Cry' she said. All of a sudden, my focus changed. I was turning outward, not inward for the first time in over a month. She continued, 'A year ago, my Mother and 2 of my sisters were killed in a car accident. I have no one to help me with the wedding. Someone that I worked with suggested that I come here. She said you did weddings. Do you do weddings?'

At that moment, I became angry. How dare God ask me to do weddings? How dare my pity party come to an end? How dare God ask me to continue the shop that I didn't even want in the first place? How dare He send someone into my life that actually needed me? Didn't I have enough to deal with?

## A new beginning

I clenched my teeth and said, 'Sit down, I can do a wedding.' She didn't have a church, reception site or any idea of flowers. She did have her dress. After she told me about the wedding, I told her I had just lost my husband in a car accident. She grabbed my hand and said, 'I know where you are.' I don't know who saved who at that moment. I saved her wedding and she just may have saved my sanity. I could almost feel her Mother and my husband telling God what to do. 'My daughter needs someone

to help her.&rdquo; &ldquo;My wife needs to keep the shop.&rdquo; I am as convinced that God sent her to me and me to her as I am that the sky is blue. At that moment, my healing began. I changed my mind about the sale of the shop.

12 years have gone by since that day. I can honestly say that I am very glad that I did not go out of business. I am now a retired school teacher but am still a wedding coordinator and I enjoy every minute of it. My calling is from a Higher Power. Jesus performed his first miracle at a wedding and I feel He continues that practice to this day. All of my life experiences have trained me to this point to be a wedding coordinator.

The rest of the story

After following God&rsquo;s lead to keep The Added Touch, I had a lot of things to consider. The focus of the shop had been &ldquo;flowers&rdquo; for the last 10 years. I wanted the focus to change slightly. For me it had to be &ldquo;weddings&rdquo;. That meant the direction of the shop made a slightly different turn. For 10 years, we had make flower and balloon deliveries for all occasions. I wanted that to stop. We had made Christmas and Valentines Day huge successes with large sales. I had never enjoyed Valentines Day sales except the fun of deliveries. If you have never been in the business, you have no idea how hard those days can be with very little sleep and lots of maps &ndash; it was before GPS&rsquo;s.

I was now single. I needed to be in the shop until 10, 11, 12 or even 1 o&rsquo;clock in the morning. I was not comfortable leaving late at night and returning home. When I was home, I wanted to be at the shop. When I was at the shop, I had to calculate when I would need to leave to feel comfortable. I began to look around for a new building for the business. I found a house that I thought would be perfect located not directly downtown. It was a lot smaller than the present location but I planned to reduce inventory.

The realtor mentioned that the house next door was also for sale. It was a large house and more than I felt like I needed or could afford. I went through it. If a house could hug, I felt hugged. The second that I stepped through the door, it felt like home. I just couldn&rsquo;t see any way that I could afford it. I even told my parents about it. They just said that was an impossible move. I could not get the house out of my mind but at the same time, I had no way to buy it or make that move happen.

I had not been anywhere since the accident so I asked one of my girlfriends to go to Florida with me. While there, I received a call that my insurance agent wanted to see me. Since Dennis&rsquo;s accident, I had dealt with a lot of things with the IRS, lawyers and insurance companies. I thought it was over. I told him, I would see him when I returned. When I got back, I had no idea what it was all about. It had been over a year since the accident. Wasn&rsquo;t it all over? I had to keep re-living it each time

Even while he was speaking, it was hard for me to wrap my mind around what he was saying. It seems there was another insurance policy that had been overlooked which would be paying off. It was going to be enough to allow me to purchase the house that had hugged me. God had provided again. Each time that I set out to prove to God that the business wouldn't work, God said &dash; Oh yes it will. Just watch what I can do!!

That house had a back yard that was unbelievable. It had been landscaped with a little stream, a waterfall and a small fish pool. The house was big enough for my living quarters as well as rooms that could house the shop. It was perfect. Every time that I felt lonely and wanted to mourn Dennis's passing with tears, I would walk to my Secret Garden in the back yard and the tears would not come - Only smiles that God was taking care of me. How could I look at where I was living and working and not know that my heavenly father was taking care of me.

Located directly behind The Secret Garden was an old warehouse. The lot was full of lumber and steel and housed building materials. The owner came to me wanting to sell. My mind began to remember that Dennis and I had talked about having a reception hall. This building could be used as a reception hall or wedding chapel. I took a leap of faith and purchased the warehouse in 1999. It would sit vacant for 6 years.

In 2000, I met a wonderful man, Gary Osborne. We had our first date on Feb. 2, 2000, became engaged on Feb. 2, 2001 and married November 24, 2001. The meeting and marrying was miraculous in and of itself. My new partner in life suggested that we begin to turn my dream into a reality of a reception hall. An architect and builder were hired and we opened for business June 18, 2005.

I named my reception hall June Morning Hall for several reasons. The last time that I saw my first husband was on a June morning. June was also the month for brides. Morning was a time of new beginnings. It all made sense.

I feel this is not the end of the story. God is in control and He has blessed me beyond anything I could imagine. If I have learned anything it is that one never knows what lies just around the corner. To God is the Glory.