



Photo: Wayne Potgieter



It's never too late to say "I Do"



After an amazing wedding we think we can just get on with the “happily ever after.” This is seldom the case. Growing together is a lifetime project. Thank you Zuki and Themba for the inspiration and hope your story brings.

*T*hemba and I had a traditional marriage ten years ago in the Eastern Cape. But this was not my wedding dream—in the African culture the wedding belongs in every way to the elders who decide on everything—even what the bride will wear.

Like so many married couples in their married life, it is the wife who needs to make big adjustments, she leaves home, she changes her name—for the man he simply goes back to work—and for Themba, this was very demanding.

As a prominent member of the ANC he was always travelling and never home and an absent Dad to our lovely young daughters. Although he prospered financially, I began to feel that I would rather be living in a shack in Soweto with a husband by my side than lonely in a beautiful home. To make matters worse I began to believe that my husband was no longer faithful to me.

I was raised in a Christian home but it was only when I was disciplined that I recommitted my life to Christ—in the months ahead I was taught the Bible and it was then that I realised that God did not want me to endure a miserable marriage. I understood that God required that I be obedient to my husband, but I did not realise that God gave me permission to end an unfaithful marriage.



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So it was that 9 years after being married I confronted Themba. He didn't really take me seriously and after several months I informed him that I wanted a divorce. Realising at last that I was serious he asked me what he should do. Three things I told him; One—you need therapy to help you understand that you are not owned by your job or the ANC. Two—we need marriage counselling together; and three—the only thing that will save and repair our marriage is when you accept God into your life. Deep down he must have loved me dearly—he submitted to all three requests.

Over the next two months Themba honoured every one of my requests of him. He made a new commitment as a husband and father and adjusted his lifestyle to make time for his family. We went for marriage counselling and Themba embarked on his own search for God. He was disciplined just as I was, and I began to plan my dream wedding. Eleven months later, surrounded by our closest friends, our family and our children and in the presence of God committed our marriage to Him and our lives to each other.





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The power of a promise

By Justin Renton who married Zuki & Themba

“Friends, we have come together in the sight of God and each other to join together this man and this woman in marriage. This is a covenant relationship that is holy, honourable and ordained by God himself.”

Too often husbands and wives don't take their marriage covenant seriously. That marriage covenant is a promise to one another and to God to be faithful to each other “till death us shall part”.

When we were children and our parents offered us something magical or wonderful, or a friend told us something incredible or amazing, we almost all responded by saying “Do you promise?” Somehow we understood there is something binding about a promise. Something deeper and stronger in the words that are said. A promise brought with it certainty and security!

When any couple exchanges vows on their wedding day they are making a promise to each other. Not a promise to be a perfect husband or a perfect wife, that person doesn't exist. A promise to be faithful to one another, a promise to work through the difficulties of marriage, a promise to forgive each other when they blow it and apologise, and a promise to “do life together” through all its ups and downs.

A recent study on relationships showed that no-one person can meet your needs one hundred percent. Every relationship is lacking somewhere. Most relationships have about 80% right and about 20% missing. The promise we make at our wedding is to focus on the 80% that is right about our relationship. A woman was once asked by a friend “you are so in love with your husband, is he the perfect man?” She responded: “Oh no, he is far from perfect, but he is perfect for me!”

As you prepare for the big day and so much time is spent choosing the right colours, the right flowers, the food, the dresses. Take some time to prepare for the promise you are about to make to each other. The covenant relationship you are about to enter into. Prepare your vows with care, thought and prayer. Because remember there is power in a promise!



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