

Who presents this woman? This woman? But she's not a woman. She's just a kid. And she's leaving us. I realised at that moment that I was never going to come home again and see Annie at the top of the stairs, never going to see her again at our breakfast table in her nightgown and socks. I suddenly realised what was happening. Annie was all grown up and was leaving us, and something inside began to hurt." —Steve Martin as George in *Father of the Bride*.

We asked our brides and their dads to allow us to share the essence of the very special relationship at the moment when he gives his daughter away.

Dads



Leo & Yolandi—6 November 2009

I was fine until I saw my dad. I felt sad that I would not be his little girl anymore, but also so excited to start this new chapter in my life. I will always remember walking to my future husband with the man that protected me my whole life, guiding me this last time, was so special.
—Yolandi

I was very proud of her for arranging such a stylish event and for looking so radiantly beautiful, but sad that this marriage announced the end of an era. Though my heart was bursting with pride, it was a tearful moment for me. My prayer is that her marriage to Leo will be blessed and prosperous in every way.—Dad

Photo: Just Shoot

& Daughters

Photo: Beyond Photography



Keith & Diana—27 February 2010

Amazingly enough, I wasn't nervous—I had my dad right next to me. I felt so special having my dad walk me down the aisle and being surrounded by so many special friends and family.
—Diana

“I was extremely nervous and worried that I would trip over Di's dress or walk too fast. Half way down the aisle all these fears disappeared, replaced with a feeling of pride and happiness and in a strange way a feeling of loss. However, when I saw the look of love reflected on the faces of Di and Keith, everything felt just right.—Dad

Photo: Irene Quist



Andries & Sulette—17 April 2010

Dad was so supportive and enthusiastic with all the wedding plans and it was wonderful to see how he also enjoyed every second of our wedding—an unforgettable, emotional experience. —Sulette

It was wonderful to see Sulette so happy and it was a privilege to 'give her away' to a man whom I know will look after her very well.—Dad

Photo: Karen Agenbag



Eon & Monnique—1 October 2009

Having my father present on my wedding day was a blessing and a feeling that I will treasure for the rest of my life.” He has and always will be the one person I look up to. He has set such a beautiful example for me on how to live my life and bring praise to God. Who better to walk me down the aisle than my hero.—Monique

As I walked arm in arm with my beautiful daughter through the splendid surroundings of Oakfield to give her away, I was filled with alarm. But as I handed her over to Eon, I realised that I had truly gained a great son and my loss is now my gain.—Dad



Photo: Open Image

Donovan & Tracy—19 February 2010

I didn't realise that I would be so overwhelmed with emotion and was so grateful to have my dad at my side as support and encouragement. As I walked down the aisle it felt as though I wasn't touching the floor—I couldn't feel my feet but dad was calm and whispered to me to slow down and to breathe! I can't imagine what it would have been like without him there.—Tracy

Walking my only daughter down the aisle was a very proud and moving moment for me. Seeing the beautiful woman that she has developed into, made me realise that she will be a wonderful wife to her new husband, Don. I was told afterwards that I was beaming from ear to ear as I accompanied her down the aisle. I will always treasure the memories of her very special day and feel privileged to be a part of it.—Dad



Photo: Pharus Photography

A Dad's Perspective



Pete McIntosh's two daughters, Pam and Sam, both married within three months of each other. Having had the privilege of attending Pam and Chris's wedding at Oakfield, it was abundantly clear that here was a Dad who had a very special relationship with his girls. As an introduction to our feature we asked Pete some hard questions.

Both Pam and Sam got engaged within a week of each other. What was your reaction?

When I watched *Father of the Bride* with Sam when she was in her pre-teen stage, I cried. I was petrified that I was going to give my child away to a 'plonker' some day so the first feeling was one of relief. I always warned my girls that one day when they met the man they wanted to spend the rest of their lives with, I would make my expectations clear. They were to love their wife as Christ loves the church—and of course we know that Christ died for the church. The irony was that both the boys, Chris and Dylan needed no speech.

Secondly the thought of giving my daughter away was very frightening. Girls have a dream which they express, dads have a dream for their daughters that most find difficult to express—but their happiness means everything to me. This was the final step and I realised that bonding and getting to know the men into whose care I was entrusting my daughters was really important. The relationship you build before the wedding is very important. It is incumbent on the Dad to build the bridge and get to know these guys. Think of them not as a son-in-law, but as your son and your friend.

How did you manage to fund two weddings at once!

My daughters, after Gwyn, are the most precious things I have, so I wanted the best that I could afford. Given the

nature of my job where the income is only as good as the next contract, this was not in the course of a few months going to be easy, but I was determined to honour their dreams. My girls wanted very different weddings and so we tried really hard to understand their individual priorities. We needed to be clear in our mind so that there were no surprises that could cause tension amongst the family further down the line.

We had a meeting with both sets of parents prior to the wedding and ironed out all the budget issues. We were completely transparent as to what we could afford and that which we couldn't. This is important because different families have different expectations and different resources. We determined a budget from day one with a cash flow forecast. It is vital to make sure that there will be no surprises or hidden costs. If you know what you are in for, you will enjoy the ride—it is money well spent.

Moms are often regarded as 'interferers' in the wedding—what is your take on this?

Actually the moms and dads must have a 'no interference policy'. This of course is much harder for the mum who will be inclined to re-live her wedding day. This





Photos: Pharus Photography

will create bitterness and of course, is very selfish and will definitely be resurrected in the future during an argument. Gwyn sometimes felt very frustrated—as though she was cut off at the legs and I had to help here. She had done so much for the girls for so many years, she felt she had the right to be involved. Gwyn’s greatest contribution was to take the boys on board as her own sons and become passionate about their interests. It is wonderful when a wedding is a family affair but it must be driven by the bride and her fiancé. It is their day.

What was the key moment for you?

The seminal moment at both weddings was walking down the aisle and lifting the veil. When I handed my girls over I did not shake hands. I hugged Chris and Dylan—this felt like the most natural thing to do. At the reception, I handed an aluminium tube to each of the guys in which I had placed photographs of the girls and their artwork as youngsters. This ‘passing the baton’ was a symbolic a moment for me—it was probably more important to me than the guys.

Your last thought?

Dads must remember that the wedding is no less



significant for you than for your daughter. Seize the moment as this is for you and your daughters a once in a lifetime day. If you don’t, it will be just another day.

Dads, your contribution is way more important than the funding. Your participation and enthusiasm will ensure that the day is great. Live the day. Live the dream and help your kids get the best shot at a wonderful marriage.





Photo: Pharus Photography

It was clear in our interview with Pete that as much as Pete had a message for all dads, he had a special message for his children which we felt we should share.

The essence of it all —A message to my children

By Pete McIntosh

I found out from my future son-in-law's mom that his favourite dish was, not as I had assumed, my daughter, but chicken and sauce! The reason for this intelligence gathering was not to give my daughter a head start on marital bliss but to find an illustration for a short message that I had prepared for the wedding service.

I was honoured and privileged to be asked to deliver a short message at the service. I suspect it was so that my daughter could exercise greater editorial control over content than just letting the minister cut loose and be hit with a 45 minute diatribe and 120 very bored and very hungry guests. And since my other daughter was scheduled to launch her marital career three months later (two daughters and two weddings in three months, this truly is the age of instant gratification)! Naturally this caused me to ponder upon what would be the essence of marriage. For example, what would chicken and sauce be without chicken, surely chicken is the very essence of the dish.

The word essence conveys the very intrinsic nature of the thing. Something that will determine its precise character that is indispensable to its construction. So what would be the essence of marriage? Jesus gave us a clue when He said: "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." Matthew 19:6. The essence of a marriage is right there. It is a work of God. Notice Jesus says: "what GOD has joined..."

It struck me that when my daughters and their new husbands shared their vows, they were not just making promises to each other but they were making vows to the Creator of the universe, as an affirmation of His purpose for them; something that He himself had ordained before time itself. Now that's an awesome concept.

Contrary to the testosterone charged philosophy that most grooms believe, that they have wooed and won the heart of their bride (a philosophy that most brides will dispute anyway, asserting that the whole relationship is the fruit of their labours) marriage is a work of God. Indeed, The Lord will use the efforts of both the potential groom and bride to bring about the union, but ultimately marriage is a work of God: "...what God has joined." This is a universal truth and holds no geographical, cultural and social bounds.

In the last 12 months, apart from my two daughters' weddings, I have been involved, in various degrees, in five other wedding services and this principle consistently holds true. Whether you are getting married at Oakfield Farm (a blessing in itself) or in your garden in Pofadder, in a fantastic ceremony in Cape Town or on the steps of the Sydney Opera house, God is there; pleased with the fulfilment of His purpose and ready to bless the union of His obedient children.

When Pam and Chris and Sam and Dylan stood before the congregation and shared their vows, they did not just promise to each other, more importantly, they promised to the living God. This is His purpose for society, that a man and woman should leave their family, cleave unto each other, the two become one, and together they live in union under His guidance and fulfilment until death do them part.



Steve & Lyn
16 October 2009

A tribute to a Dad

How do we determine what is possible or not? Sydney Assor, impaired both physically and mentally by the curved ball of life, rose to the occasion to walk his daughter down the aisle. We dedicate Lyn's touching story to all dads who must at some time let their precious daughters go.

What an awesome moment—standing at the fountain, looking into my Dad's eyes and saying: "Are you ready?" This frail man was mustering up all his strength and courage to walk me down the aisle, as straight as his bent back and willpower could make it.

There wasn't a dry eye in the congregation as they saw the pride on his face and his gentlemanly manner. Most people knew the history and those who didn't surely felt the enormity of a story which runs deep and must be told as the determination of Sydney Daniel Assor was there for everyone to see.

You see, not only is it a miracle that my dad survived the massive accident that took place in 1981, which caused him to be unconscious for over a month and left him brain damaged, but he has continued to thrive and touch people's hearts. His cheerfulness, continuous gratitude and loving nature keeps attracting everyone to him, leaving them envious of his secret recipe for joy and fulfilment.



My parents truly showed us what real love was all about. They were childhood sweethearts and meant every word of their marriage vows. My mom was so strong and courageous when he had the accident. She prayed that he would live—regardless of what that meant, because she just couldn't be without him. Years later, their roles were to be reversed as he looked after her daily while her memory deteriorated due to Alzheimer's. I remember how it drove me dilly, watching him at her bedside as he would say over and over "I love you, I love you, I love you..." until she eventually slipped home prematurely at age 59.

Now at 76, he would finally walk me down the aisle. This was the wedding day that I waited for my whole life. It has taken me all this time, while trusting God, to find a soul mate who could measure up to the high expectations of a man that my dad set for me.

Our journey started down the aisle towards my dad's proudest moment and my soul mate, waiting to whisk me into the greatest adventure of my life. What an honour and privilege it is for me to have my Dad by my side at a time such as this.

