

The Wedding of TQ & Debbie



November 1, 2011

The Wedding of TQ & Debbie, 11/1/11

TQ and Debbie enter.

TQ:

Today is an auspicious day! Today is the day that Debbie and I are going to pledge to spend our lives together.

It's been a long time coming. We met in the early summer of 1970 at a party. I saw her and thought, "She's the girl for me." She saw me, and, well, you can ask her what she thought in private. Let's just say that our first moments together created an impression that provided a bedrock of truth that is being fulfilled today. I saw a beautiful girl with spirit, generosity and a sweet smile. We went on to spend a few raucous years having incredible fun and proving to each other that we loved each other passionately.

Debbie:

That day, at the party, I saw this skinny boy. He was wearing gym shorts and no shirt in the summer heat. When my so-called boyfriend at the time to go do something without me, TQ was quick to offer a ride. For the rest of the summer, he seemed to always be sitting next to me. Always quick with a ride and somehow, always closer than that other boy.

TQ:

With her bright eyes, silky brown hair and gorgeous smile, I knew that I wanted to be close to this girl. I knew that somehow, I needed to take her away from that guy. And I did. The very last entry in the last assignment notebook of her youth, she wrote:

TQ & Debbie together:

TQ and I are one.

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Debbie:

TQ followed me to college and when I left, we spent about three years in wild, youthful, sixties delight. We were crazy and we were in love.

TQ:

We've never been able to pinpoint when or how we drifted apart but, all we know is that we didn't see each other for the next 37 years.

Debbie:

The thing is, that was a very good time. Accepting the transition is hard but, in both our cases, our previous marriages represent growth and improvement, maturity and completion.

TQ:

And so, we both feel that it is important to express this truth, our marriage is not a repudiation of our past. We both had wonderful times and raised wonderful children with our previous partners. Today we express a love that we feel is unique but, we have often said that neither of us was ready to love this way without the experiences and contributions of our previous partners.

Debbie:

So, TJ, Kelly and Rick, I want to honor the man that cared for you and supported us for all those years. I want to thank Rick Rice for helping me to understand what love is and isn't. For a lot of fun and a great family. I am a better person for knowing him and am very grateful for the time we spent together.

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TQ:

And so I feel about Kaye. Not only is my life enriched by my darlings, Emily and Addison, but she taught me the importance of friends, supported me through an amazing amount of fun and helped me become the loving man I am today. I am very grateful for the time we spent together.

(Judge Ellen moves into position)

Judge Ellen:

One of TQ's favorite ideas is that, "If you think you are doing something important, something that is going to be exceptional and good all by yourself. You are *wrong*."

By highlighting this for today's ceremony, we emphasize that a person alone is incomplete. That each of us has strengths that are undermined by weaknesses. Contributions that are incomplete. Virtues that are exaggerated. Needs that are unmet. That we are people who are unable to make the best of life as singles. TQ, I'm told, is chaotic and inconsistent, cannot pay attention to details, and is flighty and disorganized. Debbie, can be overly worried and can lose herself in minutiae. She tends to see the trees, not the forest. Both are sad when they are alone. Both have needs that they, alone cannot fulfill.

Marriage, one hopes, is the joining of two lives to make a whole that is better than the sum of the parts. In a complex and fragmented world, two people commit to each other so they can help each other, both to do the work of life and to make joy more meaningful by sharing it. It provides the trusting relationship for two people to, in the context of committed acceptance, come to know each other deeply, to fully understand the shortcomings of each other so that they can better know how to help.

With a goal of permanent loyalty, TQ and Debbie are preparing to embark on the project of making one perfect unit of love, each ac-

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cepting the other, each committed to supporting the weaknesses and honoring the strengths of the other.

Marriage is as much about community as it is about love. Two teenagers sneaking in a basement can have love (and I understand that's not a bad description of these two in younger days) but that love can be ephemeral.

Marriage is about setting a context which two people can present a united front on which they, and others, can depend. No one is able to be perfect every day. Disagreements happen. Anger and disappointment are part of every life. Marriage is a way that two people take love and commitment, bring it out into the open and ask for the help of their loved ones to make sure that the promises they make come true.

(a pause)

We are gathered here today to witness and celebrate the joining of two lives. We are here to witness a contract being made between two people who love each other so much that they want you to know about it, and want to make vows to each other in your sight so that you can know what they promised and so that you can hold them accountable if they weaken. Today we are here to help form a bond that we all hope will last for the rest of their lives. We are here to share in a ritual, almost magical, where TQ and Debbie utter an incantation in the presence of witnesses that will turn love into something tangible and permanent.

Debbie, why do you want to marry TQ?

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Debbie:

I have loved TQ since that summer late in 1970. During some difficult times in my life, I have thought, "If only I was with TQ, my life would be better." I have held him in my heart as the standard of a good, loving man for forty years.

When we reunited, after that email exactly five years ago today, I found that I was right. He joined my life and has been a warm loving partner. He takes care of me and is sensitive to my needs. He accepts my foibles with generosity and kindness. He cooks for me and cares for me. He is happy when I walk into the room and I know he loves me.

I have dreamed all my life of being accepted for who I am. I know that, at last, I have found a partner who loves me. After a lifetime of thinking, "If only I was this or that, then I would be loved," I have finally found a man with no 'ifs'. I know TQ loves me and I love him. That is why I want to spend my life married to TQ.

Judge Ellen:

And TQ, why do you want to marry Debbie?

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TQ:

I love love. In my life, I now see that I have spent much time trying to prove to the world that I was clever and generous and sociable and threw good enough parties and could do everything in the world. I spent much time trying to prove that I was worthy of love.

With Debbie, I don't feel like I have to prove anything. She treats me with kindness and never causes me to feel insecure. She understands that I am a weird person and accepts it with humor and generosity. She helps me with the detailed organization of life and is never condescending when I tell her I can't find something in the kitchen that was right there on the front of the shelf it was supposed to be on.

When Debbie walks into the room, she always smiles at me and makes me feel like the king of the world. She is lovely, loving and sweet. I see her walking around the house in her eccentric little way and I am filled with adoration. I know Debbie loves me and I love her. That is why I want to spend my life with Debbie.

Judge Ellen:

Each of you witnessing this event is a person that Debbie and TQ feel close to and plan to know forever. You have been invited here to become part of this commitment and this relationship. At the end of the ceremony, we will *all* proclaim them "Husband and Wife!"

Marriage is, fundamentally, a contract between two people and contracts have conditions. In a marriage, we call these vows. As the officiate for this ceremony, I require that TQ and Debbie agree to the permanence of their bond. That they agree that this covenant continues under all conditions, good and bad, hard and easy, and that they commit to working together to fulfill the goal of nurturing each other with energy, flexibility and kindness. When they say, I do, they are committing to do those things.

But, TQ and Debbie are mature people with much life experience and

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a shared understanding of what it means to make their life together meaningful.

Debbie, would you please recite your vows:

Debbie:

TQ, I love you and I have dreamed of being with you for so many years. I have little to give but all of it, I give to you. I promise to accept you for the nutball you are. I know that you are a strange and mysterious character and you know that I find that challenging. I promise to accept you for who you are.

I promise that I will be kind to you and I will love you with all my heart forever. If you get sick, I will care for you. If you have needs, I will support. When you come home at the end of the day, I will be there for you to listen to your stories and appreciate your triumphs.

When life is difficult, I will help and not judge. When life is joyful, I will celebrate with you. I will love you and support you to the end of my days. I will make you feel secure. I promise that, come what may, you will have love.

Judge Ellen:

And TQ, would you please recite your vows:

TQ:

Debbie, I love you with all my heart. I have spent my life searching for acceptance and kindness. I have little to give but all of it, I give to you. I promise to be protective when you are afraid and helpful when you are confused.

I promise to love you for who you are and to honor you every day. When you walk into a room, I will always smile and be happy. I promise to be a loving ear when things are complex and to be kind when things go awry.

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When life is difficult, I will not judge. When life is joyful, I will celebrate with you. I will love you and support you to the end of my days. I will make sure that you are aware at every moment of your life that I appreciate you and love you with all my heart.

Judge Ellen:

Grant, I believe that you have rings with which to symbolize this commitment.

(The five year old gets them out and hands them to TQ who hands one to Debbie.)

Debbie, tell TQ about the ring:

Debbie:

TQ, this ring is a symbol of the perfect completeness of my love. I put this on your finger as a bond. As I do so, I pledge my heart and my life. As this ring encompasses your finger, so does my love encompass your life. I give myself to you as your wife, to love you forever.

(places ring on tq's finger)

Judge Ellen:

TQ, tell Debbie about the ring:

TQ:

Debbie, this ring is a symbol of the perfect completeness of my love. I put this on your finger as a bond. As I do so, I pledge my heart and my life. As this ring encompasses your finger, so does my love encompass your life. I give myself to you as your husband, to love you forever.

(places ring on Debbie's finger)

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Judge Ellen:

Inasmuch as you have accepted the vows which bind you together in your love, and the giving and receiving of the rings, you have pledged yourselves each to the other in the presence of this company, under the power of the law vested in me by the sovereign State of Minnesota, I now join this company in declaring you

(gestures to the crowd for a group chant)

Assembly:

Husband and Wife!

Judge Ellen:

I present to you, Mr and Mrs TQ White.

(TQ stomps the goblet);

(cheers and celebration ensue);

“Ellen (Washington Judge) Maas”

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