

Joni & Ken

Joni Eareckson Tada and Ken Tada (Zondervan)

When Ken Tada met Joni Eareckson, he was smitten by a Christian woman with an attractive appearance and a striking personality. But that's not all—Joni, as she's known worldwide, was a quadriplegic. Still, Ken committed himself to her, and the two took their marriage vows July 3, 1982. In *Joni & Ken: An Untold Love Story*, written with Larry Libby, the two disclose the hardships and joys they've experienced in their 30-plus years together.

Ken first saw Joni in person when she spoke at a Young Life banquet in Burbank, Calif. He had read her biographies, watched her on Billy Graham crusades and seen the movie about her life. Joni wondered if Ken understood just what a long-term relationship would be like with someone so well-known: "Was he marrying the persona or the real person?" she writes. "It felt at times like he was walking into marriage with an idyllic view."

Early on, however, Ken learned what it was like to live with Joni. She ran an international disability ministry—with a full schedule—while Ken was comfortable in his own world as a high school history teacher and coach. Ken was also part of Joni's ministry activities at times, but as a couple, they began to grow apart.

"They could still move in and out of each other's worlds, but it wasn't happening as often, or as joyfully, as it used to," they write.

Life with his wife's never-ending needs led Ken into a depression. By God's grace, he began taking part in a men's study focused on John Eldredge's best-selling book *Wild at Heart*. Ken learned that men desire "an adventure to live, a battle to fight and a beauty to rescue."

In June 2010, he got his big chance to rescue his beauty when Joni learned she had breast cancer. And Ken stepped up to truly be there for Joni. In fact, they write, her cancer became a “gift” that helped to transform their relationship.

In a personal note at the end of the book, Joni admits that while their marriage may not “meet all the family-counseling criteria for ‘a happy marriage,’ ” there is one thing she knows for sure: “Home is with Ken Tada. ... Home is wherever we are together.”