



Rusty Labuschagne

Rusty Labuschagne is new to the professional speaker circuit, but one is immediately struck by his sincerity and humility as he delivers a dramatic account of his transformational experience.

“Bitterness, anger, hatred and a desire for revenge ate away at me, even though my captors had long forgotten me. In the end, I was only hurting myself - forgiveness was my salvation! Wholeheartedly forgiving. I now know what Nelson Mandela meant by forgiveness.”



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Unique Speaker Bureau

☎ +27 11 465 4410

✉ paul@uniquespeakerbureau.com

🌐 www.uniquespeakerbureau.com

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Labuschagne has been through a trauma few others have. In 2003, this successful Zimbabwean businessman, who ran a safari outfit, flew his own aircraft and had a fishing resort on Lake Kariba, was framed by a poacher and wrongfully convicted of murder. He served 10 years of a 15-year sentence including horrific times in Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison in Harare. He lost everything – including his freedom.

Today, Labuschagne inspires those faced with challenges when he speaks passionately about what it was like to share a prison cell of 13m x 3m with 78 other inmates and what it took to overcome the horrors of his situation. Subjected to conditions that most people would find unbearable – no running water, one dirty toilet, sleeping on cold concrete floors, lice-ridden blankets – he had to dig deep within himself to survive. During a three-year drought, each prisoner was allocated just one plastic cup of water a day and most men bathed only when it rained. Labuschagne watched many people die around him, the prison guards treated him brutally and his fiancé abandoned him, but he did not lose his faith in humanity.

Labuschagne’s keynotes are profound reflections on a number of life lessons that everyone can learn. The most

important of these is forgiveness. In the face of tremendous challenges, one needs to have a positive mental attitude and be able to cultivate resilience. Rusty also believes that a sense of gratitude and humility are vital – too often, we take for granted what we have.

His message to audiences is that everyone is faced with challenges, but

“Cultivate a positive mental attitude and learn to be grateful, and you will survive anything.”

it is who you are, and the depth of your determination, that will get you through life’s darkest moments. He shows how one can harness one’s inner strength and let go of what one cannot control. A compelling and passionate speaker, Labuschagne says you are the only person who knows your own value and nobody should be able to take that away. He also believes that forgiveness is bigger than anything we can achieve on our own, and credits inspiration from the Divine. His story, ‘Living in Chains – and Lessons Learned!’ brings a personal, transformative, authentic message of hope to any gathering. ■