

# Theo Venter

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## *22,000 Volt Electric Shock survivor*

Theo Venter was born and raised in a small-town called Nigel in South Africa, where sport was the highlight of every day.

Fresh out of school he became an apprentice electrician working for the same company as his dad, he started his beautiful family, settled into his life and then received the offer to immigrate to Australia.

Six months after he arrived in Australia and three months after his wife and kids arrived on 13th February 2006, he didn't think he would see the light of day ever again.

Specialising in working on live power poles he found himself in an elevated work platform about 11 metres in the air with live 22,000 volts buzzing around him.

As he was trying to replace an insulator but could not get the nut undone, he was faced with a decision that would impact his life as he knew it forever.

His choices were; taking the time to reassess his risks and come up with another plan as to replace this insulator or just remove his protective insulated gloves for a second to remove the nut, THE CONVENIENT CHOICE.

He removed his gloves and moments later he found himself being exposed and uncontrollably contorted by the beast. Boiling up from the inside with over 1000 amps rushing into his left arm, through all his soft organs and heart and out his right wrist onto the steel cross-arm. He lost consciousness after being hooked on for at least 2 1/2 seconds and his lifeless body dropped straight down into the bottom of the basket.

He was raced to hospital that day knowing that no one has ever survived anything like this and with a broken heart he started saying goodbye to his beautiful family.

By some miracle, he pulled through the first 5 days and was told that although both his arms were severely injured, he was going to survive. After a marathon of 17 surgeries in just over the first month removing all the burned and dead tissues and tendons, he was released from hospital in less than 5 months.

Little did he know that by coming home his toughest battle has only begun. Being totally dependent on being fed, washed, and looked after, his once self-respect and strong temperament



very quickly plummeted into a mental heart-break. He found himself sitting in a dark room and with the constant pain and fatigue finally took the last bit of dignity out of him. And after a few months his first thoughts of suicide became very real.

Through an enormous amount of hard work, dedication, and resilience, he started feeding the white dog in his head so that it could beat up that black dog that was trying to kill him.

Just as he thought he had it under control another setback came in the form of a broken 17 year marriage with his wife. That showed that the stresses on their relationship was just overbearing.

He started dedicating his life to discover why we make these opportune choices in the workplace and in our lives. He needed to find out what it is that drives us. He looked for different ways to overcome those instinctive keystone habits. In 2010, he created his own business to inspire others to learn from his mistake.

Over the next few years, he spoke to hundreds of thousands of employees, senior leaders as well as executive leaders. Through experiencing hundreds of incident investigations on multiple sites around the globe, he founded the concept of making sustainable and autonomous change in the workplace.

His purpose was clear. Saving others from having to experience something so horrific by telling his story to the point where an audience can understand his deepest sense of physical and emotional battles.

More importantly, giving them the tools to not only prevent it from reoccurring but coaching them to know what to look out for, triggers.

He has formed the six bedrock foundation pillars, extricated from his story, that will transform a workplace culture on a deeper cellular level.

Today he is the co-author with Ken Roberts of *Get Real* and *Convenience Kills*. Their combined experiences are captured in these two books. Our ethos and philosophies confronted the face of common beliefs.

Although Theo has never been sensitive to fate and destiny, today he unreservedly believes that he was raised, prepared and put through the test to fulfill his purpose.

He understands that some people's path is harder because their calling is higher. He was severely tested and has made a difference in hundreds of thousands of lives.

## Client testimonials

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“ Theo’s presentation is very honest and hard hitting with all who attended. The impact on our field staff was immeasurable and has assisted us to positively take our teams further along the safety journey. I can’t thank Theo enough for sharing this very painful experience with us all.

**- Thiess Services**

“ I can’t thank Theo enough for sharing his story with us. It had such a big impact on all our staff who attended. Theo brings home the consequences to himself and his family associated with not following procedures, in very human and emotional way. The painful journey Theo has had to travel in his recovery from his injuries strengthens the impact of his message. Hopefully many others will now not suffer an injury such as this because of Theo’s presentation.

**- SEWL**

“ Theo’s story is a journey of courage of how several lives were changed in one instant when an avoidable mistake was made. His story that was truly inspiring. For days after attending Theo’s presentation, I couldn't stop thinking about what I had heard. I felt truly enriched for the opportunity to listen. Theo’s presentation sparked several discussions within my own work group about the importance of safety in the work place

**- Ergon Energy**

“ Theo delivered exactly what we wanted and made it clear to the audience that taking shortcuts is not worth the risk

**- Aroona Alliance**

“ I’ve heard so much positive feedback including that if we can continue to use this calibre of speakers then it makes the day worthwhile and very memorable when we get back to work.

**- DownerMouchel**

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