

# SIBO - LIFESTYLE

ISSUE NO. 9 JANUARY 2021

FROM FEELING INVISIBLE TO  
DISCOVERING FREEDOM IN HER PASSIONS

## RURAMAI MUGWISI



### **Wellness:**

Seeking serenity to help start the year on a good note.

### **Dreams/Vision:**

What does the dreamer's journey have to do with Ted Mosby?

Living from strength. Finding solace in the secret.



Hello Diamonds,

Welcome to the January 2021 Issue of *Sibo-Lifestyle Magazine*, where diamonds emerge. Happy New Year! I read this conversation on one of those cartoon pictures on someone's Instagram: "Why so optimistic about 2021? What do you think it will bring?" "I think it will bring flowers." "Yes? How come?" "Because I am planting flowers." This cartoon knew what he was talking about lol. No matter what happens in the year ahead, we get to decide what we are planting.

On that note, in this month's Issue of the magazine, we discuss ways to seek serenity this year. We also look at the dreamer's journey in correlation to a hopeless romantic and find out how reading the book "The secret" affected someone's life. The *Living from strength with Joyce Mutangara* section this month delves into the "Competition" strength.

Our diamond of the month is Ruramai Mugwisi, a businesswoman, writer and spoken word artist, with a medical diagnostics background. Her numerous work ventures, extensive travel and varied life experiences make her someone I believe could inspire us to follow our many dreams and know that we can get to live those dreams.

If you would like to receive a monthly copy of the magazine or contribute to the next Issue of the magazine, you will find details on page 37. Comments and suggestions are welcome, using the contact details to the right. If you discuss or share about the magazine anywhere on social media, please use the hashtag #SiboLifestyle so we find it.

With love,

Sibo Hlabangana  
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

JANUARY 2021

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SIBO-LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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Dreaming big, having a vision for your life,  
continual growth, pursuing success, development

# DREAMS AND VISION



## What does the dreamer's journey have to do with Ted Mosby?

By Sibio Hlabangana

I've been re-watching some episodes of the series "How I met your mother." I found myself as a dreamer relating to the character of Ted Mosby in particular. If you haven't watched the series, Ted is a hopeless romantic who after years and years of failed relationships whilst in search of "the one," continues his search despite circumstances telling him chances are it's never going to happen for him.

I found myself relating to Ted because as a big dreamer, my experiences aren't too far from those of Ted. With every heartbreak or another false start or other painful moments, he keeps believing it will happen for him, as crazy as that might seem to outsiders. In the same way, in the pursuit of your dreams, things will happen that will break your heart, that will make you want to give up, that no sane person would keep going. If you're a dreamer you know you have to keep going no matter how crazy it seems. Like Ted, you have to be willing to look crazy to those watching from afar.



With each disappointment or yet another thing not working out or things not going according to plan, like the hopeless romantic that is Ted Mosby, you have to try again. You may give yourself time to recover or grieve or whatever it is you need to do but you have to get yourself back out there. This you do, knowing you're opening yourself up for another heartbreak but hoping this time around, you may have just found "the one." Offering your heart to someone with the hope that they will handle it with care but knowing they might choose to trample on it instead and giving it to them anyway. What if she cheats on you? What if he gets tired of you? What if they're using you? Asking these questions and still offering them your heart. As a dreamer that's your journey too.

What if things don't work out? What if I believe and it doesn't happen? What if I start and it doesn't work out? What if I fail? All these things might not happen and then again they may all happen. It could be through someone else's fault, your fault or due to circumstances beyond your control. Your partner might leave just when you need them the most, you might self-sabotage at a crucial moment

### Reminder

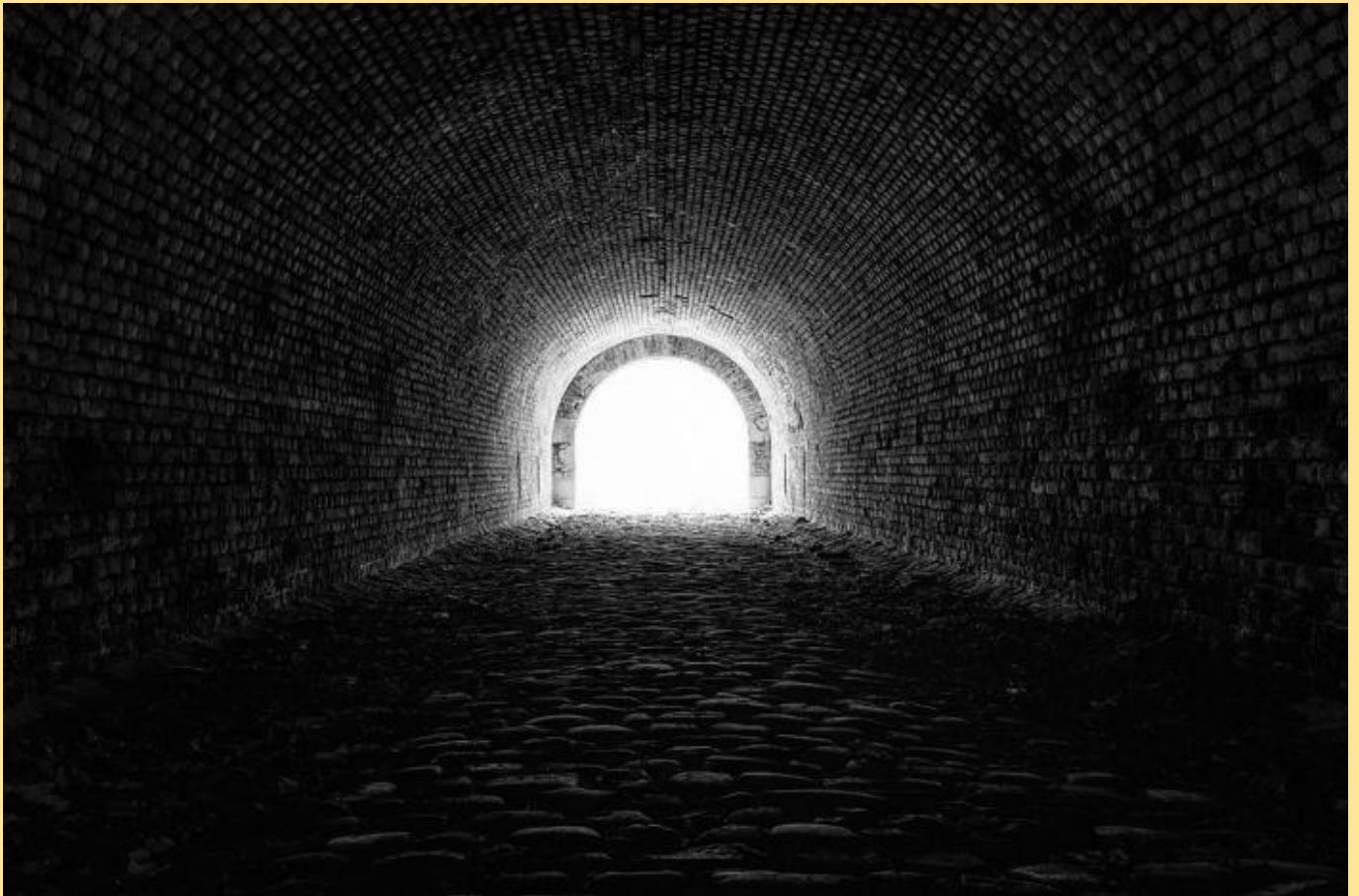
In any dream pursuit and entrepreneurship, there will inevitably come a point where you want to give up. Be ready for this and have ways to remind yourself why you should keep going.

*Sibo Hlabangana*

or something you didn't anticipate like COVID-19 happens and derails all your plans. The cause may be different but you find yourself back where you started. Are you going to give up or "Ted" it out?

For my part I'll tell you this, it's not easy. Sometimes I wonder if my life would be better if I didn't dream as big as I do and if I didn't believe so much. Would I undergo less disappointment? Most probably. But I couldn't live with myself if I didn't keep dreaming, believing and acting in pursuit of those dreams, no matter how much I get knocked down. I'm choosing to be Ted Mosby. I'm choosing to keep putting my heart out there, knowing it might

be trampled on but hoping against all odds that this time around, it will be handled with care. So why share all this? I guess to admit that dream pursuit is not easy. I love it but it takes a lot out of you. But, but, but, it will all be worth it. There is light at the end of that tunnel.





## Living from strength with Joyce Mutangara – Competition

Everyone is born with talents. Talents are our natural way of thinking, feeling and behaving that can be productively applied. When we invest and develop our talents, they then become strengths. A strength is the ability to consistently do an activity to near perfection. It is about the WAY we achieve success, and all of us have a 'way.'

There is an assessment called Strengths Finder, and it takes about 45 minutes to do online, answering various questions. Once you are done, it then sends you a strength report. There are 34 strengths in total, and the assessment calculates your most dominant strengths from number 1 to number 34 in sequence of their dominance. You choose whether you want the report of your full 34 or just your dominant first 5 strengths.

In this Issue we are going to look at the strength of COMPETITION.

“Competition is rooted in comparison. When you look at the world, you are instinctively aware of other people’s performance. Their performance is the ultimate yardstick. No matter how hard you tried, no matter how worthy your intentions, if you reached your goal but did not outperform your peers, the achievement may feel hollow. You like to win. You like other competitors because they invigorate you.” *Tom Rath, StrengthsFinder 2.0.*

My second daughter has Competition in her top 5. She loves to win. It is being measured against a measurable that motivates her to push and do better. People with Competition as a strength need something, or someone to do better than. A level or record to be broken, or something someone said they can’t do. All this is fuel for her. During the lockdown she taught herself the basics of gymnastics, and the more we tell her there are no gymnastic schools in



Zimbabwe, the more she perseveres, comparing herself with the girls she watches on YouTube.



At school she was the youngest and smallest in the hockey first team. Her coaches love her belief of winning no matter the odds. Her siblings have had to understand that it's not about her wanting to put them down and humiliate them. She is naturally wired to try and do better than the measurables around her. Time and experience is teaching her she can't win all the time...but there will be a next time. The drive to win will never leave her, so she has to accept it as the strength that it is which pushes her to work harder and think smarter.

People with this strength help their teams be aware of competitor performance, so that they always have a slight edge.

In the next Issue, we will look at the strength of **Connectedness**.



## Finding solace in the secret

By Sibò  
Hiabangana

Have you ever been through what you'd consider a trying time? For me, one of those times was having to move back home due to unemployment. The first few months of being back home were the hardest. I felt like I had failed. I had left home to go to university and never imagined I'd ever have to go back and live there again. I visited once or twice a year and loved it because I knew I was going back to my life.

Now I was back for who knew how long. It didn't feel like home anymore. Everything seemed so foreign. I felt like a stranger.

Someone gave me a copy of the book "The Secret" by Rhonda Byrne. I had read it some years back but couldn't remember its appeal. I read it and was reminded that you are what you think. I was reminded that I could choose to either wallow in my misery or to be positive and take control of my life.

I was reintroduced to the law of attraction, that like attracts like, that you attract what you focus on. A spark started building in my heart and I slowly but surely started to regain my lost positive attitude. The young girl who believed anything was possible was being reborn.

Before I knew it my life was starting to make sense. I hadn't yet found a job so I started volunteering for the kind of organisation I'd always wanted to work for. Because I had nothing to lose and no rent to pay or any other rat-race kind of stress, I could choose where to

volunteer. I enjoyed getting up in the morning to do something I enjoyed. After almost a year of volunteering an ideal position opened up and I was hired. I was now getting paid to do work that I loved.

With things changing for the better I was reminded that God was working in my life and he had never abandoned me as I had believed he had. I was becoming a person I could be proud of again and I was happy. I realised that God had answered my prayer by taking me out of a bad situation and into a place of being at peace and knowing he loved me and always had even when I didn't feel it.







# DIAMOND OF THE MONTH



## From feeling invisible to discovering freedom in her passions – An interview with Ruramai Mugwisi

By Sibò Hlabangana

In each Issue of Sibò-Lifestyle Magazine, we celebrate individuals that dream big, pursue their dreams and are pursuing success on their own terms. I'd like us to learn from them, to see how like us they are or how they differ from us. For us to see what we can do differently or continue to do to pursue our own dreams and success. This month we have the honour of hearing Ruramai Mugwisi's journey.



With a career in the medical diagnostics field, being active in the social entrepreneurial space, a businesswoman, a writer and a spoken word artist, Ruramai Mugwisi is proof that you do not have to limit yourself to doing only one thing or pursuing only one of your passions. In addition to the pursuit of her dreams, in her own words, she is “a busy mother of 4 children, a wife to a man who believes in her as much as he loves her, a daughter to a mother who instilled compassion (as well as much needed discipline) and a father who nurtured

the dreamer in her.” Her numerous work ventures, extensive travel and varied life experiences, make her someone I believe could inspire us to follow our dreams and know that we can get to live those dreams. I mean she has met the Queen of England! How many of us can say that? So put on your seat belts and let Ruramai tell us about her adventures in life.

### **Where did you grow up and what was life like growing up?**

The second child in a family of 6, I was the eldest girl and I quickly took on responsibility for the welfare of my siblings. I loved to read and I spent many evenings regaling my parents with concerts and musicals that I directed, produced and starred in! Surprisingly I was also an analytical thinker and my love for science led to a career in the medical diagnostics field. I studied to be a scientist, became a businesswoman, as well as a social entrepreneur while the romantic idealist in me blossomed into a certified lover of travel in hopes of seeking adventures worthy of the fairy-tale I had enjoyed reading about growing up.



I received my education in 3 primary schools and 4 high schools! We led a rather nomadic life largely due to my father's frequent transfers to establish and oversee accounting departments in newly acquired or struggling satellite business units in the beef industry all over the country. I was always the new girl in school and I quickly found my self-esteem dwindling with each move to a new school. I developed ways of becoming invisible, becoming more introverted as I turned to silence to calm my rising self-doubt and loss of confidence. I was willing to sacrifice my voice in a bid to remain unseen and unheard.

The bible tells us not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewal of our minds. We've all been handed a script by our circumstances, our parents, our teachers, our friends and by society. Life has conspired to limit us with a preconceived script detailing what we can and cannot do based on insignificant determinants such as age, gender, level of education, family background and geographical location. I used to read from that script.

Attaining my Bachelor of Science degree in Medical Laboratory Sciences from the University of Zimbabwe did little to change my self-confidence. In fact I felt as though I was undeserving of my achievements and somehow I would be found out as an impostor. I've since discovered that studies reveal that women tend to struggle with impostor syndrome more than their male counterparts. Married soon after college I became a wife and then a mother. That is when I realised that in spite of ticking all the right boxes on the list of having it all (degree, marriage, family) I was still unfulfilled. I had a voice that wanted to be heard, albeit quietly in my head initially but to be heard nevertheless. I could no longer remain invisible.





### **Have you had what you consider a notable moment in your life?**

I did have a notable fairy-tale moment when I met Queen Elizabeth the Second, the monarch of England. I remember the day vividly, it was a rainy Sunday morning in April 2011. It had been a weekend filled with networking with Commonwealth scholars debating on various academic issues. After attending the celebration of Mass at her Majesty's Windsor Estate, I stood outside the stone building zipping my jacket and bracing myself for the short walk in the rain, back to Cumberland Lodge which was located just off the Windsor Estate. That's when I saw her, standing under an umbrella which was held up by a smiling burly man in a suit. She was less than 4 feet away from me! Unfortunately official security protocol did not permit cell phones on the Estate so I have no pictures to share of that historical moment.

However to this very day I can recall how, as I averted my eyes (apparently its bad manners to stare at royalty!) I couldn't help but notice how petite and delicate Her Royal Highness was, all the while desperately trying to remember how to curtsy without falling over! I am an African woman after all with no previous experience in curtsying as required by British protocol when meeting royalty.

### **Do you have dreams, goals and a vision for your life?**

I have dreams which come to me in the form of ideas. So many ideas! Some of which I implement and some that I don't. But I'm always in "creative mode." Jesus Christ came to give





us life and life in abundance. There's no shortage of opportunities to do more, to be better and to live fully. I believe that I'm blessed so that I can be a blessing. However there is a shortage of those with the right mind-set to tackle the problems of unemployment, youth delinquency, depression, gender inequality and inequitable access to healthcare; issues I'm innately drawn to. I'm passionate about creating an environment that allows me and others to seize the opportunities to do more and effect change. I also realise it's a collaborative process. We need each other.

In order to have any kind of impact we are made to believe that we must have access to a vast supply of resources in order to achieve what we dream but I believe that **ALL I HAVE IS ALL I NEED**. That's a truth I've come to understand and accept over many years of waiting for the right opportunity to come along. I don't need more time. I need to put to better use the time I have been given. I don't need more talent. I need to harness the innate talent bestowed upon me and to develop it with greater discipline and diligence until I achieve mastery status. I don't need more money. I need a better relationship with the treasure I am called to steward over and realise that my job is not to secure it or hoard it but to allow it to move freely to meet the needs that I have, the needs of my business and the needs of those around me.

Often times the treasure we have is not material or monetary. Sometimes it's just an idea, a simple idea with great capacity for application in wealth generation. Each one of us has these three: time, talent and treasure. The only finite resource among those three is time. But even that's debatable. If we value time and use it wisely it can be an infinite resource, in the sense that we leave a legacy that will outlive our physical form. If we misuse it we will lose it and the potential benefits to be derived from it. I value my time. I see it as a finite resource that I



protect. My mortality is a clear indication that I don't have a limitless supply of time on earth. "Redeem the time" is a scripture I live by.

The greatest threat to our potential are distractions and procrastination. Technology has been both our greatest blessing and our biggest curse. We need to spend more time in silence listening within and without, living mindfully through each experience and encounter, conscious of our thoughts and feelings while tapping into the creativity and power resident in each one of us, which are the cues to the greatness we seek.



I have always had a deep yearning to connect with women and through concerted efforts I wanted to change the narrative of social injustice primarily affecting girls and women. In 2014 I joined Total Woman Forum, a newly founded organisation in Chiredzi and I took on the role of programme coordinator, a role which I still fulfil to date. I am involved in various community engagement initiatives including raising funds to cover school fees for disadvantaged girls. I also help to facilitate workshops and conferences that address the different challenges women face; awareness of the law and access to legal assistance, health and wellness, personal development and the role of entrepreneurship in breaking the cycle of poverty. My foray into social entrepreneurship has helped me to take a decisive step towards discarding the script I was handed growing up. The projects I've been blessed to be involved in have stretched me and resulted in growth in ways I never thought possible. I have evolved and with consistency and daily commitment to dismantling all my assumptions and disrupting my tendency to seek comfort in the familiar. I know I will keep getting better.

### **What drives you in life? What keeps you going?**

“Life begins where your comfort zone ends.” I read that in a book, *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne. I read a lot of books. My current favourite reads include *The 5am Club* by Robin Sharma, *Lean in* by Cheryl Sandberg, *Jewish wisdom for Business Success* by Levi Brackman, *Dare to Ask* by Simcha Natan, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey, *Talk Like TED* by Carmine Gallo and *Becoming* by Michelle Obama. I am committed to growth. I deliberately choose to put myself in a disruptive environment that challenges my comfort levels.

While growing up, despite my shyness and poor self-esteem, I deliberately auditioned for lead roles in school plays and speaking spots on the Public Speaking team in High School. Camouflaged in the characters I played on stage or emotionally immersed in the topic of discussion in debate sessions, my fears, insecurities and doubts would fall away briefly and I would be free to express myself without fear or restraint. I came alive to a





deep love and respect for the arts and their portrayal in any form; music, dance or speech. Today I still integrate an intentional and purposeful disruption to comfort in my life. Sometimes it means waking up early every morning to exercise for 30 minutes. Other times it means taking on projects I feel will challenge me intellectually. It also means reading something each day that enlightens my self-awareness, increases my insight on current affairs or issues surrounding my faith. I've recently completed an online course as a teen mentor and am currently studying a digital content creation course. Each day presents an opportunity to learn something new.



**What are you doing now and what are the lessons you've learned from your ventures?**

I established a medical diagnostic services business in 2012 with my husband. Several years later I had to close down the business largely due to escalating rental costs. I thought I was an anomaly, a failure. This is despite the fact that 50% of businesses don't make it past the 5 year mark for

various reasons; poor business strategy, low cash reserves to sustain operations, lack of a sound pricing practice and a harsh socio-economic climate. It wasn't until I evaluated the data accumulated from the years in existence as a business and analysed the fatal flaws in our operations that led to our closure that I marvelled at the wealth of knowledge to be gleaned from our time in business. That is when it dawned on me that what we perceive to be failure is actually an opportunity to learn something new, relevant and timely in order to formulate



winning strategies. The failure becomes the resource that informs my initiative for improvement in the decisions I make next.

It wasn't always that way. I used to worry about disappointing my family, myself and those who believed in me. Not to mention the humiliation of trying and failing publicly. I remember when I travelled to South Africa to sit for an examination in Financial Management as part of the requirements towards completing the MBA degree programme I was enrolled in. To say that was the hardest module is an understatement! To this day I have a profound respect for financial analysts.

As I sat on the train heading back to my friend's house in Pretoria I bawled my eyes out at the prospect of failing after traveling all the way to South Africa. Yes I did! I cried in a public place! On a train nonetheless. That's how deep my fear of failure ran. Thankfully I passed the module but the experience was a process of self-discovery. I realised that even if I had failed that examination, I could still have returned to South Africa to sit for it again and the second time I would have been better informed on how to prepare for it because I was not ready to give up the dream of getting that qualification.



Failure is not missing the mark or not achieving the goal. What constitutes true failure is when you give up and stop trying. Failure is living life within a safety net that leaves you with empty

days filled with wishful thinking and a legacy of regret at the end of it all. Failure is blaming and not taking full responsibility for where your life is. Success is an inside job. It's not the cars, money or house. If I fail, which I do a lot (I lose my temper, I get impatient, I cave in to the seduction of instant self-gratification and veer off budget and buy yet another pair of shoes. My love for shoes is legendary and a story for another day!) Anyway my point is, if I fail, I remind myself that it's a refinement process. It's a process that reveals the limitations of my capacity and motivates me to keep pushing past the challenges I encounter in my life. I'm currently rebuilding the business and the lessons learned will be invaluable in sustaining our next phenomenal season. The best is yet to come!



**Have you ever not achieved what you hoped for or been disappointed after not being chosen for something? If yes, what happened and how did you handle the situation?**

In February 2010 after a gruelling round of interviews I was awarded a Chevening Scholarship funded by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office to study for a Master's degree in Health Care Management at York University. In May 2010 the Labour Party lost the British election and David Cameron of the Conservative Party assumed office as the Prime Minister. His administration came with wide sweeping changes which included a significant cut to funding for international students. I

received the email in June. The scholarship I had been awarded was withdrawn three months before my departure. I was devastated! I wept for two days straight! On the third day I got up and gave thanks for God's all-knowing wisdom in my life, acknowledging that He knew what was in my best interests. Besides, I had to get up because it was a Monday morning and I needed to get to work!



When life kicks us in the teeth the urge is to retreat and nurse our wounded ego while brooding over the loss. But the cycle of life must continue. Hours slip into days and days merge into weeks. Time doesn't pause to give us room to nurse our flagging confidence back to strength. Hurting, wounded and discouraged I needed to bounce back and try again. That required renewed faith and self-belief. To quote Robin Sharma, *'You'll never rise higher than your personal beliefs.'* After taking a hard knock I had to reaffirm my belief in myself. Needless to say I was not going to fret over it. I still had a life to live and a lot more to accomplish.

Ultimately I knew I had to wait upon God's leading and trust Him through the pain of delay. He had promised. As it turned out, delay was not denial. In the ensuing 5 years I was a recipient of not one but two more awards! The year after my revoked scholarship I received



a fellowship award to intern at the world class Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital in London as well as undertake specialised professional training courses in quality management in the UK. 4 years later I was awarded a Canon Collins Trust Scholarship to pursue my Master's degree at the Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh which I successfully completed in 2019.

**Do you have a morning routine and what is it like?**

I wake up at 5am and the first thing I say is *'Thank you for.....'* Some days I don't have anything

specific I'm thankful for so I'll wake up and say *'Thank You God for a new day.'* The words *'Thank You'* are the first words I speak each day. It's a force of habit. I try to be grateful on a



daily basis. Gratitude calms me when I face challenges. We all have hard days. I have days where I struggle to smile but when I start the day off with gratitude and I mentally run through what I'm most grateful for; usually for my life, my health, my family, my friends and God's provision, I catch myself smiling at some point during the day or feeling expectant for something good to happen. It's a huge pick me up. Gratitude begets more gratitude.

After my customary gratitude session which lasts about 5 minutes at most, I get up and wake my children up to get ready for school. As they bathe and dress I return to my bedroom for a few minutes in silence. I use the time to clear my mind and filter every thought. It's not as easy as it sounds because quieting the mind is one of the hardest things to do. According to a study undertaken by Psychology students at the Queens University in Canada, humans have about 6,000 thoughts every day. That's an average of 375 thoughts per each waking hour. Try stemming the flow of 375 neuron pulses in your mind!

There are countless undisputable benefits to be found in the practice of meditation on mind development especially in attaining greater consciousness and awareness of oneself. I focus on one thing like joy or love and I allow the emotion behind the singular thought to capture me. I have to put a disclaimer here and emphasise that I'm a novice and that I'm still learning. However on days that I am successful in my mental endeavour to harness my mind to stay on track as I meditate, I find I am more focused and productive. On other days I use the time to visualise my day or if something is weighing on my mind I visualise an expected positive outcome. The bible proclaims that *'As a man thinketh so is he!'*



After my meditative (or visualisation) excursion I turn to a devotional study, cross referencing study notes with my bible for about 20 minutes. After bible study I do my affirmations (audibly) and then I pray. By now it's 5:45am and I get into my workout clothes for 30 minutes of exercise. After my workout I have to drive my children to school. If my husband is available to do the school run I can check my messages briefly before heading into the shower and getting ready for work. On weekends I still follow the same routine (minus the school run.)

It's not the amount of time spent in a routine that's important. We all don't have the same amount of time available. For some 10 minutes of quiet time plus exercise is all they have.



For others a morning routine may be a quick word of prayer with a workout scheduled later in the evening. No two routines are identical. We all have different needs and our focus is shaped by our need. The critical thing is to remain consistent and committed to nurturing yourself in a holistic manner. Even if it's for just 5 minutes each day. I'm learning to stay committed to instilling discipline and consistency in my life.

### **What is the role of travel in your life?**

I love travelling and I am immensely blessed to have experienced the different cultures of cities around the world including the eclectic

allure and glamour of London and the quiet aura of history and power of Washington DC with its imposing Washington monument, majestic Lincoln Memorial and commanding White House. I immersed myself in the energy of New York's bustling streets, buying hot dogs across Madison Square Garden from a street vendor (just like a typical New Yorker as seen on TV



shows!) and twirling in the middle of the New York Times Square just because that was the most natural thing to do!

I fell in love with the romance and diversity of Paris, the beauty of Cape Town's pristine, white sandy beaches, the glitz and opulence of Dubai's commercial extravagance and the oriental flamboyance of tropical Manila in the Philippines. But I especially loved the sedate charm of Frankfurt in Germany. With trams on rail



tracks running on the main roads in the city centre, parks on street corners and pretty corner cafes, I always felt like I was in a time capsule, in a time untouched by the mad rush of technology that has overtaken the world.

### **What did you love about the places you've travelled to? What was the food like?**

German breakfasts are simple as they are legendary. I'm a huge bread eater and the breakfast mostly comprising a wide selection of breads is mind boggling. Germany has over 300 varieties of bread, the largest in the world! Served with a complementary spread of delectable jams and choice cheeses, it leaves little room at the end of the meal for anything else except a slice of spicy coffee cake and a cup of freshly brewed coffee.





While I was in Frankfurt I visited an Ethiopian restaurant and for the very first time tasted Injera, the Ethiopian staple dish comprising a flat bread served with various spicy vegetables and meats. I loved it so much I made sure to eat there often during my stay. The restaurant owners, a married couple originally from Ethiopia were also very friendly and made us feel welcome each time we showed up. It felt like we were visiting their home and we belonged to their large international family. I also had my first taste of Thai food while in Frankfurt and I loved the blend of exotic flavours, especially the dessert selection. As a result of my experience there I have Thailand down on my bucket list just so I can have another taste of Thai food!

Frankfurt was a beautiful blend of Eurocentric culture and diversity. The people are very friendly even if the language is rather guttural, intimidating and difficult to understand. They smile often and they compliment random people on the streets. Malls close early and they do not open on public holidays. Commerce makes way for family time and bonding. They also have one of the best working conditions in the whole of Europe with both parents getting substantial maternity or paternity leave when they have a child.

My favourite pastime when traveling apart from sightseeing and eating is a spot of shopping. London and Paris stand out as my preferred shopping getaways. The French have a distinctively chic and timeless fashion sense while London fashion is unique, bold and larger than life. I am a frugal shopper and both cities also offer unique thrift shopping experiences which were memorable.





## What does success look like to you?

That's a very important question and one that I believe doesn't have a universal answer. I believe in a personal definition of what success is for oneself. For me success is happiness. And what happiness looks like to me isn't necessarily the same for somebody else. For me it's preparing a huge brunch for my children and watching their eyes light up when they see the

food laid out on the table. It's watching the sunset with my husband from our backyard sitting on our striped green and white camp chairs while the sky darkens and retreating indoors when the mosquitoes make their undeniable appearance. It's reading a book on a sunny afternoon under the shade of the mango tree in our front yard, falling asleep occasionally and waking up to the sound of my children loudly asserting their presence. It's laughing often,



loud and hard, sometimes till I cry. It's a call from a friend and talking about everything and nothing for hours. It's a tight hug from my mother and a softly spoken 'I love you too' from my very traditional African father.

I imagine that I'm living a life in pursuit of the infinite. The infinite is limitless and the possibilities endless. That's how I can be a scientist and a creative. That's how I can be a



mother and a businesswoman. God Himself is without end. He is without limit. He is from everlasting to everlasting. We all can and should live outside the box. Never inside the box.

### **Any last words of advice?**

Firstly we've all heard the advice to go with your passion. But I strongly believe that before you jump onto the bandwagon of what consumes your every waking moment ask yourself this question; does your passion embrace the need to help others and a desire to connect to something other than self? Purpose is bigger than self. It's bigger than material gain or wealth. What do you obsess about that you lose track of time AND at the same time you get a deep sense of fulfilment? That is an expression of your authentic self. Believe in yourself first and then **PURSUE THAT!**



Secondly find a tribe of believers. They should be believers in themselves and their destiny and they should be believers in you too. Although loyalty is a prerequisite for those who will surround you and have a voice in your life, they must also have the integrity to be honest with you always, especially when they think you're losing your way. They must be able to hold you accountable to ensure you stay true to yourself. This tribe will become your inner circle and your inner circle is critical to the success of your dreams. Who you're with now determines your future.

Lastly, I used to read the features on “diamonds of the month” in this publication and I'd marvel at their stories wondering where such phenomenal women were found. Then I

realised that diamonds are everywhere. They are every day women (and men!) the unsung heroes in our midst. They are mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and friends. They are regular people who triumphed because they dared to believe in themselves in spite of the odds stacked against them! We all have stories. We all have scars. Some we show and others we hide. But at the end of the day it's the flaws in a diamond that lend the jewel its exquisite sparkle. Our lives, the whole sum of it, the good, the grand, the bad and the not so pretty parts, have shaped us to become who we are and there's no shame in the scars we carry and the stories we tell about our journey. Own your scars. Wear them well. Tell your story.







Taking care of spirit, mind,  
body and soul

WELLNESS





## Seeking serenity to help start the year on a good note

By Sibò Hlabangana

As someone focused on dream pursuit, living expectantly and working towards the life I dream of, there can be a lot of waiting involved, or a lot of disappointment or hoping for things to change. All this, if unchecked can lead to being dissatisfied with things as they are and hating current circumstances because more often than not they contradict the life you dream of or the life you envision for yourself. I've found to curb this you need some sort of mindfulness practice or some way of finding and keeping peace within yourself.

Each person gets to decide what that looks like for them. Although I'm such a big dreamer and have many goals, one thing that is now top of my list is what I call "seeking serenity." By this I mean making sure I am at peace. I use the word serenity because I found it encompasses the exact state I want. The Oxford dictionary defines serenity as "the state of being calm, peaceful, and untroubled." I've found that if I feel serene then circumstances around me don't really matter. I know they exist and I know how they affect me but they are just an outside factor that I can choose not to allow to take away my peace or to cause me stress, no matter what they are. Things that may have stressed me in the past, pass by without much effect.

For example, about a week ago we went for 2 days without power/electricity (usually it's a number of hours) but I didn't lose it. In the past that would have been so stressful for me, no internet?! Not this time. I didn't like it but I didn't let it affect how I felt or how I went about my day. I let the time on my hands give me something to do, to focus on.

As I said earlier, each person gets to decide what seeking serenity looks like for them. For me it's starting my day well and letting it set the tone for the rest of the day. After thanking God for allowing me to see another beautiful, amazing and awesome day, I begin by:

1. Listening to self-love affirmations and saying them out loud, from a video I found on YouTube. This I do because self-love is something I'm currently working on.
2. Reading the Bible (at the moment Psalm 23 and Luke 12:22-31 daily.)
3. Writing down what I am thankful for or what's making me happy.
4. I read through a summarised version of what I see in my future.
5. I read through a list of Bible verses on faith and how you can ask God for anything that I compiled.
6. Listening to wealth & prosperity affirmations and saying them out loud. I also found these on YouTube. I do them to shift from a mind-set of lack to one of abundance. (Doing the above 6 things takes only the first hour of my morning.)
7. The final thing is I visualise a part of my future, as in I use my imagination to play out in my mind something I look forward to in the future. This I do at some point during the day or bits and pieces throughout the day. I wrote a list of things and each day I choose one. For instance one day it could be living in an ocean view home, another day it could be seeing myself speaking at an international event or another time it could be travelling to different places around the world.





I've shared what's currently working for me to seek serenity and I can tell you it's making a huge difference in my life even though I only started less than two months ago. If you're not doing something to start your day well, maybe change that this year and find what works for you. Whether it's writing in a journal or taking a walk or anything else. Something else I've found works for me is, I found a YouTube video of the ocean with the sounds of the water. I watch and listen to that sometimes because I find it calming. I also have pieces of classical music (something new to me) that I listen to if I'm starting to feel agitated. I now truly treasure my peace above all else. I hope you find your version of serenity this year so that you can be at peace as you live your life and pursue your dreams.





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JANUARY 2021

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