

# ***BEYOND BUBBLE BATHS***

**A JOURNEY TO WELLNESS**

**Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi  
and Sibho Hlabangana**



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**By Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi and Sibho Hlabangana**

**DEDICATION**

To anyone who has ever thought they were not worthy enough for self-care and self-love or been made to believe that was the case. You truly can only serve others when you take care of yourself first. Choosing you is something admirable. We celebrate you for choosing you.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**From Sibho Hlabangana** – Thank You Lord for bringing Ruramai and I together to make this book possible. I'm grateful for every person that gets to read this book and it helps better their life in some way.

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BEYOND BUBBLE BATHS – A journey to wellness.

By Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi and Sibho Hlabangana.

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# INTRODUCTION

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When writing, we like to treat it as a conversation between friends. With that in mind, you might want to know a little bit about who's talking to you. We are Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi and Sibho Hlabangana. Ruramai is a girl and women's empowerment champion, budding spoken word artist, digital content creator and medical scientist. She is passionate about purposeful and mindful living. She is a 43 year old wife and mother to four amazing children. Sibho is a dreamer, writer and speaker. She revels in encouraging people to believe for more in their lives and making sure they know they can create their dream life. She is the author of 5 books. She is a 39 year old single woman.

We are no experts where wellness is concerned. We decided to share our experiences relating to all things wellness because we've come to appreciate how important it is to prioritise wellness, especially right now, with everything that's going on in the world and in our lives.

We know you work hard, be it at home, at the office or anywhere else. You take care of business, whether alone or with your significant other. You do what needs to be done to keep your home functioning. You are the friend, the partner, the wife, the nurse, the driver, the maid, the chef, the mother, the aunt, the shoulder to cry on, you name it you're it. We bet you don't even know how many hats you wear. You've slayed dragons to get where you are. You've made sacrifices. You've had sleepless nights nobody knows about. You've fallen many times but still get up. You should be commended for this so we applaud you. You are a true queen and you should stand tall and proud. Take a bow. Our question is this: What are you doing to take care of YOU?

We decided to write this book specifically for you to say you matter. That love, care and compassion you give your loved ones, you deserve it too. You deserve to be loved, cared for and pampered and the first one you deserve all that from is YOU. You owe it to yourself.

At the end of the day you get to show people how to treat you. You train the people in your life how to treat you. That's why it's important to treat yourself how you would like others to treat you. They learn from you, even if you don't realise it.

Most importantly, you need to care for yourself because you can't serve others from an empty cup. You further deplete yourself. If you're full, you can serve others from the overflow. As they say on an aeroplane, put on your own oxygen mask first before helping others. We're sure you've heard that before but it's time we all took it seriously. You deserve to live a life where you prioritise your wellbeing.

Usually when people speak of self-care and wellness there's talk of bubble baths, spa days, facials and manicures. Although all those are wonderful things that we enjoy, we've decided to go beyond that in this book. We are on a journey and it's a journey to true wellness. It is an ongoing journey. We've found that it's not something you say "in 30 days I will be one hundred percent well in spirit, mind, body and soul." It's a process. One of eliminating old beliefs, adding new ones, discovering things about yourself you didn't know, adding new habits to your life and many other things. It can take months and it can take years and that's ok because lasting change takes time. You are after all, choosing to take care of yourself and love yourself and that ought to be a lifetime endeavour.

If you choose to embark on this journey with us, we hope what you find in these pages will speak to you in some way. We hope you will find something or some things that will make you feel like this book was written specifically for you. If that happens then this book would have achieved its purpose in our eyes. Now, make yourself a cup of tea or coffee or pour yourself some bubbly, relax and let's have a chat.



# PART 1

## SOUL THERAPY

“WHEN I AM DOWN AND OH MY SOUL SO WEARY, WHEN TROUBLES COME  
AND MY HEART BURDENED BE, THEN I AM STILL AND WAIT HERE IN THE  
SILENCE, UNTIL YOU COME AND SIT A WHILE WITH ME.” – JOSH GROBAN.

(SONG TITLE: YOU RAISE ME UP)



# 1. Feeding your spirit and nourishing your soul — Sibon Hlabangana

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It's very easy to find yourself in a situation where you're living your life as though nothing matters. To wake up every day and do the same thing. To wake up and not know what to do with yourself because you currently don't have a job. To go to that dead-end job you hate, to be in an environment that stifles you. You find yourself hating your life and in some cases you don't even realise that there's anything wrong with that because you tell yourself "that's life." Not realising that there's more to life. I used to be in that situation. This resulted in me throwing my life away, living a life with no improvement and turning to different vices to make myself feel better. I didn't have to live like that, neither should you. I'd like to share what started the process leading to my life changing, to me living a passion filled life, living with purpose and continually growing. I don't know what will work for you but I'm sharing the two ways that helped me.

## **Feeding your spirit**

Before any change could take place in my life, my spiritual life had to change first. If your spiritual life is suffering or is not being fed or your life is in contrast to it, you are not likely to feel fulfilled. You might blame it on other things but if the way you're living your life is not in line with your spiritual needs and values, it will cause friction in your life. Until you do something about it, you'll feel disjointed and lost but unable to pinpoint exactly what the problem is. You might even blame it on your circumstances, like I did for a long time.

For me, things changed when I turned to God. That's where I find my spiritual fulfilment. I had turned away from that and until I accepted that it was the missing link, what was causing discord in my life, I couldn't move forward in anything worthwhile. For me I felt found when I turned to God. I now have an anchor. I feel loved unconditionally. With so much uncertainty in life, this one certainty allows me

to face life confidently, well most of the time anyway. Find out what it is for you and do something about it. Feed your spirit and nourish your soul because without sorting that out first, it will be difficult to find fulfilment in your life.

I was going to leave this part here but Ruramai said "Why don't you explain how you turned to God and what led to that because for me, hearing someone else's story is what led me to a relationship with God and discovering He wasn't the authoritarian I thought He was. Listening to this person talk about Him made me wonder if she was talking about the same God because to her He was a real dad, He was love, grace, joy and peace; whereas to me He was this theoretical man in the sky who would punish you for your mistakes. So I said to her I also want to know God the way you know Him." Ruramai's words have encouraged me to share a little bit about that process for me.

In January of 2013 I wrote this in a very much neglected journal:

"I wish there was something or somebody to blame for what I've become and the things I have done, only I know I am to blame. I have let my life stagnate, with no improvement. In fact when I see something is bad for me then I go for it. Be it emotionally, sexually or otherwise. How did I get here? I wish I could go back in time and redo things, undo some decisions that I made and knew were bad for me. They were bad for me then and are bad for me now and yet I still continue to destroy my life. I am my own worst enemy! How do I deal with that? I feel broken and I don't know how to fix it. Maybe I know but just don't do anything about it. I want to change but keep going back to the same routine, to what I now know. What would have disgusted me in the past is now my life. I know I do want to change but I'm finding it so difficult. God, please help me!!!"

After writing that, I continued with my life the way it was. I didn't try to change in any way even though I was not happy with where I was and the life I was living. I had just given up. I didn't think God heard my prayer and felt my will power wasn't enough to help me to change.

A month later I felt driven to quit my job without another one. After months of looking for another job I was forced to leave the country I was in and go back home to live with my mother. At the time it felt like it was the worst thing that could happen, especially since I had just turned 31. Now I look back to that time and see that God was answering my prayer. He took me out of a situation where I had admitted I couldn't get out of on my own. Being back home was a sobering experience. I didn't see it at the time but through my circumstances, God moved me to where I needed to be, so He could minister to me, properly introduce me to Himself and bring me closer to Him in ways I never could have imagined. Now I have a relationship with God where I talk to Him, where I call Him Dad and I know He loves me no matter what. Through the Holy Spirit working in me, the Sib0 of 2013 and the Sib0 of today are two completely different people. Only God could do that.

I'm so glad I turned to God because I shudder to think where I would be right now and what I would be doing had I not cried out to Him. It took me a long time to turn to God because I felt unworthy to go back to Him. I thought that I was too damaged for Him to take me in. I erroneously believed that I needed to stop drinking, smoking, having premarital sex, among other things, before God could accept me. That was not true though because God took me in as I was. Over the next few years I stopped all my different vices without even trying because I wasn't doing it alone anymore.

It didn't happen overnight but I can safely say today I am a changed person and I am back to being proud of me. I'm still a flawed human being but I'm doing my best. It all started with a cry for help. If you're reading this and you need somebody to cry to, try God and He will definitely hear you. Sometimes will power isn't enough and you just need to reach out to Him as you are. As I said earlier, I don't know what will work for you but I'm just sharing my spiritual journey. The second thing that has led to change in my life is self-love.

### **Self-love**

Many people think self-love is some form of arrogance but without self-love it's near impossible to live a fulfilled life. We often want to treat the symptoms of a lack of this,

such as alcohol abuse or drug abuse without treating the root cause. Whether or not you love yourself will determine what you allow into your life and how you treat yourself. There are some things that if you loved yourself you wouldn't entertain. For example if you truly loved yourself you wouldn't do some things you consider normal at the moment but are symptoms of your lack of self-love. Examples of these are excessive drinking every night (not drinking for enjoyment or socially) or taking drugs.

Lack of self-love is a huge problem for many people but it goes undiagnosed that not many people realise they suffer from it. I know I'm talking about it as though it's some sort of disease, that's because it is. The worst kind because it's symptoms are what ends up being treated as diseases without dealing with the root cause. This results in the symptoms coming back and people don't know what to do anymore. You could be suffering from it without knowing it.

Look at your life right now. If you loved yourself would you be in the relationship you're in? Would you be spending time with the people you spend time with if you loved yourself? Would you frequent the places you frequent? Would you ingest the substances that you take that you know are damaging your body?

I'm not talking about something I know nothing about. It's only a few years ago that someone pointed out to me that I didn't love myself. I didn't think so but upon reflection I realised she was right because the kinds of relationships I got into showed a lack of self-love. The excessive drinking I did and the smoking I was doing was evidence of the same. I can't tell you if you love yourself or not, only you can honestly answer that. Take time to reflect on it and if you find that you don't love yourself, make a conscious decision to do so. It might not seem like much at the beginning but it will change your life because it will govern your decision making and what you allow into your life. You won't be alone on this journey because I'm still learning to love myself too. In later chapters we further discuss the journey to self-love.

I don't know what your life is like or what makes you happy or sad but I know if you're living a life that is not fulfilling you, you need to do something about it. Life is too

precious to spend it just getting by. I hope what I've shared so far will assist you in taking the first step to feed your spirit and nourish your soul.

## 2. Soul Therapy – Anecdotes for living whole – Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi

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Do you know what makes you happy? That's the question that startled me into contemplating what brought meaning to the days that filled the passing months of each year. I had several ideas, really good ones too. I grabbed a notepad and pen and began to write a list of all the things that made me feel incredibly and truly happy! I had to make my vision visible and writing thoughts and ideas down is one of the ways of bringing my dreams to life. The list grew longer. Simple, beautiful things like watching a fiery red horizon spreading in the distance as the sun dipped below the skyline or saving the world from a maniacal villain alongside my favourite super heroes on the big screen. I stalled as my pen began to slow down. I was at number 20. How many would be a good enough number of things to do in pursuit of happiness anyway, I wondered. I stared at the list and willed myself to keep writing.

I needed more time I thought. More time to chase my dreams. More time to love my children. More time to be happy. But I was constantly deferring happiness because I was pre-occupied with schedules, deadlines and bills. The reality was that I did not have more time, I just had today. The undeniable truth for all humanity is the fact that the present moment is all we ever truly have. I had to redefine happiness and take a moment to engage my heart and mind in seeking what made every day purposeful. It was time to re-engage with life. I could no longer live a distracted, fractionated life while deferring true happiness in the present moment for a distant mirage of happiness in the future. I was going to be happy now.

In 27 days I was going to be 43 years old. What if I could come up with exactly 27 happiness inducing reasons to celebrate my upcoming birthday? It could be a countdown to the day of celebrating my birthday. **27 days for 43 reasons!** That sounded catchy too, like a hashtag movement. Suddenly inspired, the pen flew across the page. The page filled up as the list lengthened. Now that I knew and understood why I was making a decision to seek happiness in order to re-engage with what made life worthwhile - connection, love, joy - I knew what to do exactly.

It's wonderfully easy to get lost in the details of what to do and how to do it once inspiration strikes. When the connection between purpose and provision is made, the planning falls effortlessly into place. Trying to navigate life without inspiration is like driving blindfolded in unfamiliar terrain from the rear seat of a vehicle. Asking what without knowing why can derail the journey to fulfilment and living whole. Many have been stranded by the enormity of asking what before defining the reason for pursuing the goal. What can I do to make more money? How can I get the body of my dreams? Greater success is assured when we understand why. Why do I want to lose weight? Is it to get more compliments? Is it to look and feel better in my clothes? Or is it to be healthy? Purpose always finds a way. The why becomes the navigation system leading to a certain destination.

I had 27 days to re-ignite the light which would reveal the beauty hidden in the distractions of living harried and busy lives. I was grateful to be alive! I had 27 days to celebrate through food, music, books and nature, all the things I loved dearly. Each day had an allocated activity which I looked forward to every day. One evening I brought out an old music collection which was more than 20 years old and I danced till my feet ached and my heart smiled. My children grimaced at the choice of my music but by the end of the evening they were on the dance floor with me. Happiness is contagious!

The days floated in a happy swirl of new memories. An indoor picnic, a foot massage session and serene sun sets were just some of the daily joys to look forward to. Happiness isn't expensive, it just takes a little thoughtful planning. I tried my hand at eating with chopsticks for the first time and new culinary flavours in an orange curry Thai chicken I prepared for my family. I read books, watched the sun rise and played a quick game of basketball with my son. It was not about what I did as much as it was about why it brought so much joy. I still had deadlines and I was stretched from work demands but something was different this time. I was happier; I smiled more and laughed louder.

What if we made the decision to go with happiness instead of anxiety fuelled lives? Consistently strengthening our desire for joy over despair. Committing to stay optimistic and hopeful because it fortifies our minds against the exhausting impact of



negativity. What if we permitted ourselves the vulnerability of feeling happy even when it feels easier to hold on to the familiar stirrings of doubt, fear and misery? And even if that choice to be happy lasted for only a moment, what if we made the same exact choice over and over again until it became second nature and we were habitually happy. What if we practised happiness and it became a habit. We're here! We're alive! Let's start there.

# PART 2

## THE JOURNEY TO SELF-LOVE

“YOU HAD A LOT OF MOMENTS THAT DIDN’T LAST FOREVER. NOW YOU’RE IN A CORNER, TRYING TO PUT IT TOGETHER, HOW TO LOVE.” – LIL WAYNE.

(SONG TITLE: HOW TO LOVE)



### 3. The most abusive relationship I've ever been in – Sibon Hlabangana

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The longest relationship I've been in didn't start very well and yet I let it go on longer than it should have. The person I was with didn't treat me the way someone who loves you should. I didn't see it at the time though.

The person told me I was not beautiful. They told me I was fat and therefore unattractive and unworthy to be loved. They talked me into abusing different substances. They taught me to check out when life dealt me something I didn't like. They never told me they loved me even though I craved that more than anything from them. They focused more on my shortcomings than what good they saw in me.

Would you not call that an abusive relationship? Well, that's the relationship I had with myself for a very long time. All the things I've just mentioned are things I did to myself and told myself. Things have changed and some still need to be worked on but the relationship has gotten much better. In outside relationships I went looking for love when the love I craved the most was from myself.

It's the longest relationship I've been in and it was an abusive one. If I told you some of the things I put myself through, you would have told me to break up with me. I've heard how people who are hurting are the ones who hurt others. That was true in my case. I was hurting, so I hurt myself. I turned to drinking and smoking, among other things, to numb the pain, all the while taking my frustrations out on me.

What's your relationship with yourself like? Have you ever sat down to reflect on it? Would you tell yourself to stay in the kind of relationship you have with yourself right now? If not, maybe something or some things need to change. I didn't like what I found when I put a microscope on mine so I'm currently working on it.

## 4. Self-awareness and self-acceptance that lead to self-love – Sibbo Hlabangana

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As I mentioned earlier, a few years ago someone pointed out to me that I didn't love myself. That surprised me at the time but after some reflection I agreed she was right. Although I didn't know how to go about it, I decided from then on I would love myself. It's been a process that continues to this day. I'll think I now love myself and find myself questioning it because of the way I think of myself or positions I put myself in. I'll ask myself things like "Is it possible to love myself and not love my body?" I knew there was something missing in my attempt at loving myself.

Then, a light bulb went on as I was re-watching the series "Breaking Bad." During one of the episodes, we find one of the characters, Jesse, struggling with something he did. At an AA meeting, the therapist starts talking about self-acceptance, something that Jesse finds difficulty in accepting. For some reason that was such an eye opening moment for me. For the first time I saw what the problem with my attempt at loving myself was. I was trying to love myself but I didn't accept myself as I am.

Now I believe self-acceptance comes before self-love. I believe you can't truly love that which you do not accept. To love yourself, you must first accept yourself. Realising that I didn't love myself was the first part, self-awareness. If you are self-aware, you can recognise what's happening with you. The next part is self-acceptance. You have to cut yourself some slack. You have to be kind to yourself and show yourself compassion. Only then, will the self-love be able to begin.

Self-acceptance doesn't mean doing nothing to improve yourself or to better yourself. It means accepting yourself as you are so you can help yourself or seek help from outside without judging yourself. Where you stumble, you can get up and keep going, knowing that it's ok to stumble. It's ok to fail. You just need to keep giving yourself another chance. Even if it means more and more chances every day.

I did a self-prescribed self-acceptance exercise that I found helpful. I wrote about things that I choose to accept about myself. Things that I don't like about myself or things that I would like to change. I see now that before that change can take place, I have to start with self-acceptance. After doing that I wrote myself a self-acceptance statement. I think it would be good to write your own. For now you can use mine if you'd like.

**Self-acceptance statement to myself:**

*At any given moment I accept ME as I am. I am human and like every human being I have my flaws. I don't have to run away from myself but accept myself as I am. I accept myself at every turn. Even on days where I've messed up. In fact, I will accept myself more on those days. I am after all, a work in progress. I know I can improve but I still accept ME as I am. I will undoubtedly improve but I still accept ME as I am, before the improvement. I am who and what I am and that is fine, I accept it all.*

I don't know if I will ever reach a point where I can state with one hundred percent confidence that I love everything about me but I believe I'm getting closer with each day as I accept myself as I am. What I do know is that I'm able to say and mean it when I say "I love myself." I wouldn't have been able to do so not long ago.

## 5. Living in the middle of a raging calorie-counting and calorie-busting war — Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi

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It was a cold June morning and the day had started off well. We've heard the adage "summer bodies are made in winter." I had successfully fought the urge to stay in bed curled up under the warm winter quilt to sleep for just 5 more minutes. I had braved the nip in the air and quietly struggled into my workout clothes in the semi darkness of my bedroom. Then grabbing my skipping rope and one wobbly hop at a time I skipped and as each hop became steadier and stronger I felt pride welling up in my heart that I'd done this! I had prevailed against the conspiracy of the winter season to increase the girth of my waist and decrease my almost visible thigh gap! So I envisioned my summer body as my breathing deepened and my chest pounded within me. I was smashing my fitness goals! I knew I was going to have a great day.

That was before I took a quick hot shower after my skipping routine and prepared to metamorphose into a magazine cover model. I slipped into a professional look pencil skirt, complete with a tucked in crisp white shirt. That's when things went awry. The skirt hugged my lower body in crevices I didn't know existed! When did that dimple get there! Were those hip dips? As for the tucked in shirt! Well let's just say my tummy protruded like a second trimester bump and the svelte image of my imaginary lean body in a power suit melted away like a chocolate sundae in the sun! I desperately needed to change the whole outfit and rethink what I was going to wear. With a sinking feeling I knew I was going to be late to work.

The reality was that I was a woman in her early forties, thick in the middle of a raging calorie-counting and calorie-busting war that had left me physically battered (pulled ligaments, aching muscles, stubbed toes, does a bruised ego count too?) I was fighting daily to bring back to line a body that was determined not to cooperate with my mind and the images that I constantly envisioned, which I thought reflected my vision of what I was going to look like (which much to my dismay were becoming more and more a past vision of what I USED to look like before the arrival of my 4 children in

aeons gone by!!!) And with each passing season I had to reacquaint myself with new fine lines etched into my face and added inches never previously encountered before.

I took another look at my reflection in the mirror. As I scrutinised myself it suddenly occurred to me that this wasn't a battle against a fat invasion intent on sucking the joy out of my life but that this was a battle against self-obsessive traits and perceptions that I'd held on to and come to accept as the truth that shaped my life. I was more than fine lines and inches! The gentle curve of my tummy represented the life I'd nurtured in the sacred haven of my body for nine months at a time. The cellulite and dimples in my hips, a reminder of the chocolates and wine shared without remorse and without regret with family and friends in carefree moments that defined the true meaning of life. The fine lines on my face mapped the smiles, laughter, and also the growing pains of a life lived with clarity and meaning; a life lived with an abundance of love and a much needed generous dollop of humour.

I made it to work and I wore that pencil skirt with my shirt tucked in. I embraced my changing body with confidence because I realised that wellness was much more than a number on a scale or the calories in a meal. Wellness was loving myself regardless of my flaws and holding myself accountable to my goals. I was not as slender as I wanted but I could do something about it.

Wellness is a dynamic process of self-awareness, accountability and growth. It is confidence in my fine lines and inches. It'll mean that each winter morning I have to win the battle against the dropping temperatures and when I do manage to crawl out of my warm bed on time, I'll skip a little longer, go a little faster, push a little harder. I am going to get this body to step it up and shape up one way or the other and although I may not enjoy every single moment of my fitness journey I am going to love this imperfect body through it all. After all, these are my fine lines and inches.

## 6. Offering yourself unconditional self-love

— Sibio Hlabangana

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As I've already mentioned, it's only recently that I've been on this self-love journey, one that's still in the process. Now that I know how important it is to love yourself, I'm doing everything I can to make that a reality in my life.

To me self-love means loving yourself as you are. It means being kind to yourself. Being forgiving of yourself. It means treating yourself with compassion as you would a loved one, instead of being hard on yourself.

It's important to love yourself as you are because if you wait until a certain time, what if that time never comes? You can't put conditions on your loving yourself. Real love is not meant to be conditional. Would you ever say to your child or someone you love "I'll only love you if you get certain grades" or "I'll love you when you're a certain weight?" or "I'll love you if you have a certain qualification." I doubt you'd ever say that to someone you care about. Why then would you do it to yourself? Are you not as valuable as the people you care about?

To me this was such a revelation because I had never looked at it that way. Realising that has made me think how crazy it is not to love myself. It seems silly now that I struggled with it so much, when I should love myself without conditions.

If you don't love yourself before a certain condition changes, I doubt you will love yourself when it does. You might think you do but it's conditional. For example, if you love yourself only when you've lost weight, what happens if you gain it back? I see all these people who've lost weight and I admire them for doing so. What concerns me though is when some say things like "now that I've lost weight I love myself." I wonder, do you really? And if you gain it back, will the love stay? I think it's also dangerous to make such statements because young girls and other people see this



and think I can't love myself as I am, I have to wait until I reach a certain weight or achieve certain things.

I think it's important to love yourself because it's difficult to fully love others and impact others if you hate yourself. If you don't love yourself it can affect your relationships, whether it's with family, friends or your significant other. With your significant other, if you don't love yourself you'll expect that love from them and that's putting unnecessary pressure on them because they can't make you love yourself. With your children, they learn less from what we say than what we do. If they see you not loving yourself, they'll learn to hate themselves too. You won't want that but it ends up happening. Show them a great example by letting them see it's a wonderful thing to love yourself.

It matters even more with girls. Tell them and show them you love them. Tell them and show them they are beautiful, before the world comes and tells them lies. Some of the things I'm dealing with now could have been avoided by being told certain things when I was younger. There is no need to blame anyone because our parents didn't know any better, but we need to do better for our children because we know better.

As part of a continuous journey of self-love and self-celebration, I asked myself how I see myself. I wrote down what I consider to be my best qualities. I then wrote down qualities that I would like to see in myself. Together they form how I now choose to view myself. The result was the below poem. I'm not a poet so bear with me, don't expect any rhyming or anything like that. I'm sharing it in case you consider writing your own poem about yourself.

**Sibonginkosi, African Queen** – *A self-celebration poem*

All hail the African Queen, Daughter of the Most High God  
 Made in the image of God, royal blood flows through her veins  
 A beloved daughter, Yahweh is pleased with her and she knows it  
 She has nothing to prove, in Him she is already approved

Known before she was formed in her mother's womb  
 Not only does she know who she is, she knows whose she is.

All hail the African Queen, Daughter of the Most High God  
 As she walks into a room with grace and poise, the atmosphere shifts  
 She is beauty personified, in body, soul, spirit and heart  
 A gift from God, as her name suggests, we thank God for her  
 With obedience and submission she serves her God  
 With her smile she puts a smile on the faces of all she encounters.

All hail the African Queen, Daughter of the Most High God  
 Connected to the Holy Spirit, her love of Jesus is infectious  
 When she walks into a room the level of faith shoots up  
 People believe because she shows them what belief can do  
 As she lives in her purpose, with passion, others follow suit  
 Her love of herself allows people to love themselves too.

All hail the African Queen, Daughter of the Most High God  
 She freely opens herself to be loved and receive that love  
 Resulting in her being loved by the God-sent man of her dreams  
 In her, he finds respect, honesty, loyalty, patience and faithfulness  
 Coupled with discipline, kindness, generosity and a forgiving heart  
 With her support and cheer-leading, her husband thrives.

All hail the African Queen, Daughter of the Most High God  
 If you ask anyone who knows her, they will tell you:  
 She is a loving person who loves even those seemingly unlovable  
 Her understanding and non-judgmental nature shines through  
 She is self-secure and exudes confidence everywhere she goes  
 Her great sense of humour melts even the toughest of hearts.

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## 7. Self-love through positive self-talk – Sibon Hlabangana

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### **What is positive self-talk?**

At any given moment, in our thoughts, we are constantly thinking certain thoughts about ourselves and talking to ourselves. Positive self-talk is speaking to yourself in a kind and loving manner, rather than being harsh to yourself. It's important because how we see ourselves or talk to ourselves determines how we view the world. If we are harsh to ourselves, we tend to see the world as harsh. In addition to that, our thoughts about ourselves end up being true in our lives even if they weren't to start off. The power of the tongue. We speak things into being. Henry Ford said: "whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right." I've seen this to be true.

### **Exercising positive self-talk**

Joel Osteen puts it this way "Whatever follows 'I am...' will come looking for you." So you have to watch what you say about yourself. It starts off with your inner world. Every second, you're talking to yourself in your head. Take time to hear what you normally say. Then listen to what you say to people about yourself. You might think it's ok to say "oh I'm so stupid." It's not, because even though it was said to you growing up, now it's you saying it and believing it. Replace that with something positive. Don't just remove what you normally say, replace it with something positive. So say only good things to yourself and about yourself. "I am beautiful. I am lovable. I am fun to be around. I am enough." Anything else you want to represent you.

### **Effects of negative self-talk**

Negative self-talk leads to feeling unworthy. You feel insecure and lack confidence. This is not good because if you're not confident then you don't show up in the world in the way that you could. Instead of shining and letting people see you and what you can bring to the table, you shrink and hide. I think that's really sad because we want to see you at your best. We want you to shine. We want you to inspire us to be brave and be ourselves.

To practice positive self-talk, I started to write letters to myself. I'm going to share 3 of those letters with you to give you an example of what that looks like for me, in case you decide to start writing letters to yourself. I'm also sharing them in case you find something in one that you can relate to. At the end, I share a letter I have written to you.

### **Letters to myself**

My love,

I started crying as I wrote "my love." I'm not really sure why. At a guess, it could be I haven't always thought of me as "my love," not really seen myself as someone to be loved, which if you ask me is sad. I am loveable. I am worthy to be loved. It's ok to love myself, in fact it is imperative that I love myself. I show people the best example of how to love me so it needs to be a great example.

I'm on this journey of choosing me, of putting me first, of loving me because I matter. In the same way that I believe others matter, I matter too. I don't have to feel bad for taking this time to not only work on me but to accept me as I am. I am a beautiful, kind, loving human being who deserves love. That love starts with me. Not me in a year's time, not me at a certain weight, not me after achieving certain things but me right now, as I am. I want to reach a point where I love my arms as they are, where I love my tummy as it is, where I love my hips as they are, where I love my smile as it is, my eyes as they are. To look at myself in front of a mirror and love everything I see.

Right now I feel like I have no support, no one that I can be truly myself with, without being judged or them having certain expectations of me. People around me have at one point or another rejected me when I was my authentic self so sometimes I make it a point not to give them that. I guess this is a way to protect myself. That's ok. I can love me and be authentic with me, without hiding any parts of me and accept me as I am and love myself as I am, without any conditions. As I do this, people will be drawn to that which I think repels others. The right people will come into my life who see me and love me as I am, people who offer unconditional love. Love is waiting for me out there but even more so, it is waiting for me in here, in my heart. I have to

open myself to receive that love. I allow myself to receive love. I'm opening myself up to be loved. It's ok to let myself be loved, to be loved without reservations, starting with me. This will make it easier for me to truly and authentically love others.

I know there is a lot to unpack but let me stop here for now. I want you to know, I aim to love you like you have never been loved before. When you list people who love you, I want to be at the top of that list. I'm gonna love you so hard you're gonna wanna scream it at the top of your lungs how much I love you. You're gonna look in the mirror and feel my love, you'll wake up and feel my love, there will be no time where you don't think of me and feel my love. My love will surround you and keep you grounded in the knowledge that I love you and will never take that love away from you, no matter what you say or do or how you look. Love with zero conditions. Please allow me to do this for you. Give me permission to love you this way. Let me choose you.

With love,

Sibo. August 30, 2020.

Morning beautiful,

I love you! I give you permission to receive this. It's really something special to love yourself, so it's ok to do it. I know you're weary of living in expectancy because it usually ends in disappointment but stay open to receive because as difficult as it is to believe right now, God wants you to receive from Him. It's ok to want to protect yourself from experiencing disappointment again. It's ok to accept that all those disappointments hurt and the thought of another one scares you. I know sweetheart. You don't have to expect anything right now, just be open to receive, knowing that God's timing is always right. Ignore the when and just focus on the fact that He is going to bless you so abundantly your head will swim! That is a fact. I don't know when and that's ok. I can still be certain without knowing a date because it's a done deal that God is going to make me successful and prosper me greatly.

I love you,

Sibo. September 2, 2020.

My love,

I'm so proud of you for opening yourself up to take this journey of processing, dealing with and working on the past trauma that you experienced. We've run away from it for so long but thanks to Tim and Debbie, it's time now. Even though I went through so many emotions yesterday and cried so much, I went to sleep feeling like a load has been lifted. Just making the decision to take this head on is making all the difference. I know there'll be more tears and plenty of emotions but I'm not hiding or running away from it anymore. I don't know how I know this but I feel it deep within me that as I heal, everything will be ok. I can do this. I'm strong enough to do this.

I know it's important to do this for my husband and my children but right now I'm doing this for ME. I'm valuable enough to deserve to do this for me. I matter greatly, more than I ever knew. I'm so happy that I know this now. Everything is going to be ok. I'm not alone in this. Spirit is with me always and where I need actual people, He will bring them to me, just like He did Tim and Debbie.

I love you MaHlabangana,

Sibo. September 16, 2020.

### **Now, the letter I promised you**

It is a letter I would have loved to have received on my "no so great" days. I hope it will say something to you that you need to hear or something that you think someone else needs to hear. Here's the letter:

### **My dearest significant woman,**

I don't know what you were told about yourself as a child or what you have been told about yourself as an adult. My question is this: What do you believe about yourself? I ask this because what you believe about yourself matters. What you believe becomes true in your life even if it was not true to begin with. If what you have been telling yourself has not been good for you, you might want to start telling yourself some truths.

**Here are some truths:**

**You matter.** No matter what anyone has told you, your being here on this earth matters. Your life is significant. You might not know what your purpose on this earth is, or you might know it, at the end of the day God will fulfil His purpose for your life. You don't have to worry about it because God has got it covered. All you need to know is that you are here on this earth for a reason and because of that no one else can do what it is that you are on this earth for. If you do want to know what your purpose is, ask God.

**You are enough.** I could qualify this in many ways but I don't know what made you believe you were not enough or question if you were enough. For me, I could write you pages of reasons. Whatever your reasons, I just hope you can let this truth sink in, YOU ARE ENOUGH.

**You are beautiful.** You were made in the image of God, your creator. He would never make anything that is not beautiful. No matter how you see yourself or how you think others see you, you are beautiful. It's not what I think but it's a fact that you have to accept because it is the truth. YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL! They say beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, you my darling, are the most important beholder of them all.

**You are able to achieve anything you put your mind to.** If you believe, anything is possible. We each have different abilities and ways of doing things and different ways of being creative. Those set each of us apart and bring out our qualities. One person might excel at one thing and someone else at another. If you don't already know it, find out what you excel at and be proud of that and use it to your advantage.

**Even in your weakness, you are strong.** The things you have endured and have had to put up with were not easy and yet here you are, still breathing. Even if sometimes it feels like you're barely breathing, you're still breathing. You are an overcomer. Be proud of yourself. You may feel weak sometimes but remember where you came from and how far you have come. You will get where you are going because you are a strong woman. Not because you never feel weak but because God says His

power is made perfect in your weakness. Remember you are not alone. In all that you do or go through, another woman is doing it and going through it or has gone through it. They came out on the other side, so will you.

**You can get through it.** Whatever it is that you are going through, it will pass and you will be on the other side proud of yourself. It might not feel like it right now but you will get to the other side. Even if it feels too much, nothing is too much for God. He has got this. Let go and let Him work. Whatever it is you are holding on to and trying so hard to make happen, give it to God and watch Him turn it around for you.

**Last but not least, you are loved.** God loves you. Yes even if you did that, and even that, He still loves you. There is nothing that you can do or not do that can ever make God stop loving you. Even if you don't feel it sometimes, God loves you no matter what. Even when things around you are not going the way you would like, there is a reason for it. You might not see it now but in time you will. Until then believe in this truth: GOD LOVES YOU! Let that knowledge sit in your heart and comfort you when you need to be reminded of it.

With love,

Sibo.



## PART 3

# SELF-CARE AND STARTING YOUR DAY WELL

“SO I TRY EVERYDAY AND I GROW A LITTLE BIT, READ A LITTLE MORE  
SO I CAN EDUCATE MY KIDS, EAT FOR MY SOUL AND CLEANSE MY  
SPIRIT, PRAY ‘CAUSE I’M READY FOR THE BLOOM OF THE SEED, PEACE  
AND SERENITY IS ALL THAT I NEED.” – CLEO SOL.  
(SONG TITLE: WHY DON’T YOU)



## 8. Using my morning routine as a form of self-care – Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi

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I believe how you start your day is important because it determines the rest of your day. As a result, it's vital to have a morning routine. This is what mine looks 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 of 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 indisputable 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.

## 9. Seeking serenity as a way of self-care – Sibo Hlabangana

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As someone focused on dream pursuit 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 and act on those, 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. At least, they usually do.

For example, some weeks back we went for 2 days without power/electricity (usually it's a number of hours or half a day) 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 days. 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. What I'm sharing is what I do the first 2 hours of my morning, before showering, breakfast

etc. I'm still working on perfecting my daily routine so it keeps changing and improving every few months. At the moment, it looks like this:

1. **Spending time with the Lord**, usually about an hour. Depending on the day, this could be quietly waiting on the Lord or reading the Bible or praying or watching a sermon or reading a Christian based book or any other way that the Holy Spirit leads me to that morning. I know God is with me throughout the day and I can communicate with Him at any moment but I've found it's important to still have daily time set aside because it's easy to get "busy" with life and before I know it I'm back to stressing and feeling like life sucks and things will never change and that God hates me. This happens when I step outside of this relational time with God, through the Holy Spirit.
2. **Doing different serenity seeking practices.** For the next hour I do some form of mindfulness practice to start my day well and allow myself serenity. Depending on the day this ranges from journaling to meditation to guided visualization to saying or writing down what I'm thankful for or any other similar practice.
3. **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. 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 awesome ways that God will use me to reach His sons and daughters. The great thing about this part is you can do it at any moment in your day. Whilst waiting for someone in the car, being in a queue, taking a break, or any other moment, you can just let your mind take you away for a little bit.
4. **To cover the physical body part**, I take a walk in the late afternoon a few times a week. This aspect of my life still needs a lot of work.

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 haven't been doing it for long. If you're not doing something to start your day well, maybe change that and find what works for you. Whether it's writing in a journal or taking a walk or anything else. If you have only 20 minutes then start with that. 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 anytime during the day. I now truly treasure my peace above all else. I hope you find your version of serenity so that you can be at peace as you live your life.

## 10. Chores and television shows — Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi

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Growing up in an African home it seemed that African mothers couldn't stand to see their daughters doing nothing. Well at least sitting down to watch television was perceived as doing nothing! You had to keep busy. Always! You'd do the morning chores, afternoon chores and still be at it in the evening. If you were fortunate enough to have a paid helper in the home, you'd soon realise that it was not your good fortune because she was your mother's helper and not yours! You still needed to cook, clean and do your own laundry!

When you'd finally find some free time in the late afternoon and settle down in front of the television to catch up on a show, that would irk momma so much! Next thing you're being called to chop, sweep or remove something that just couldn't wait. You'd be 15 minutes into an action packed show and let me remind you that there was no pause button on the remote control. In fact back then there was no remote control! "Can't it wait?" you'd rage inwardly but you'd get up and leave, sweetly making your appearance before momma.

You'd do whatever she asked calmly and quietly, only rushing when she's not watching you, but slowly and methodically when she'd turn to look at you. When you were done you'd walk back to the television in the living room as sedately as you could under her watchful gaze, only to see the credits roll up on the television. The show was over! Momma had done it again! She'd asserted her control and taught you an invaluable lesson, that a woman's work is never done!

Is it any wonder then that women struggle with rest in the home? Raised by mothers who only rested when they slept, we are the offspring of a generation of women who bore the brunt of the domestic workload. Sadly not much has changed today. The domestic burden is still heavy on the shoulders of women. The lockdown has only added to the growing and endless to-do list in the home as families spend more time in the home. Piles of dishes to be washed, meals to be planned, rooms to be cleaned,

laundry to be soaked, washed, ironed and packed away only for more clothes to pile up with each passing week. There is no respite to the cycle of work in the home!

Self-care is the trending phenomenon that emerged in response to the negative impact of continuous work in the home. We first saw it on social media in the images plastered on our timelines of well to do women with their feet up as their families served them. Initially dismissed by our mothers as the invention of a lazy '*makoti*,' we viewed it with suspicion too and yet secretly longed for it. That is, until we worked up the courage (and the brains) to demand rest as a well-deserved treat and not as a right. If it was viewed as a treat then it would mean our families would want to give us the treat and not be obliged to do it. It was perfect! And so the era of self-care was finally upon us. No longer a dirty word to be derided by our mothers as they too realised that our husbands and children could still thrive without our super powers for an afternoon or a day. We were onto something special.

Self-care has slowly become part of the schedule in our weekly or monthly routines. A nap, a walk, some alone time to read a book or watch a favourite show. It has taken on various forms as women settle down to recover from endless demands on their time.

Will the practice of self-care live on through the ages? I believe it's here to stay. It's a powerful lesson for daughters and sons who can see rest modelled in the home. After a season of goal setting and hard work comes the need for the intentional pursuit of the replenishment of our reserves in order to serve again when we get up for the next season. Self-care is no longer a luxury reserved for the well-heeled women (or men!) of society but a necessity for wellness for all human beings striving to stay sane in a busy world, that's rushing through life at a frenetic pace.

In the meantime, as I write this, it's self-care Sunday and I am going to enjoy a rerun of several action packed episodes of a crime series that I love to watch. This momma is in control now! Remote in hand and my feet up. It's going to be a restful day.



## 11. Using 'future journaling' to start your day well – Sibho Hlabangana

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In a book called "Key to yourself," Venice Bloodworth says: **"Your present conditions are the result of your past thinking. You will be what you are thinking today."** Read that again. Now consider what you think about yourself and your life. Is it something you'd like to see in your future? If it is, that's great, if not, then maybe you ought to change those thoughts. Your thoughts determine your future. When you realise how powerful thoughts are, it changes your whole perspective.

If I will be what I am thinking today, then my thoughts are going to be of the great things I want to see in my life. Before something can be manifested in your life, you have to see it in your mind first. What you think ends up happening in your life, whether or not you realise it. If what we think is what ends up happening then our thinking has to be in line with what we want to see in our future. Sometimes it's not easy to change beliefs or thoughts you've had for a long time. If things are going to change though, you have to change those thoughts.

It's easy to think about what's already happened in your life and what is happening in your life right now. What's difficult is thinking about your future and making it contradict your past as well as your present. Thinking of your future as being wonderful and you living the life you dream of, or for some, even beginning to dream because you've never thought to do that. That's the difficult part. And yet, that's what I'm suggesting you do. Not for me or for anyone else but for yourself. To give you something to look forward to. To give you hope.

A loss of hope leads to feeling bad about your life and about life in general and about a lot of other things. We might get hope from elsewhere but sometimes you need to give yourself hope. Telling yourself you have a bright future ahead of you is one example of that. It's a way of taking control of your mind. One way you can control

your mind is how you start your day because that will filter into the rest of your thoughts during the day. One way I make an effort to control my thoughts for the day is journaling in the morning.

### **Future journaling**

Journaling is part of my morning routine (which I've already shared.) I have different journals for different things. For example, in one I write about what's going on, especially things I think are worth noting, such as the Holy Spirit revealing something truly awesome. I also have one where I do what I call future journaling. The YouTube video I watched talking about it was calling it "scripting" but I prefer "future journaling." It's writing about your future as though it is happening or has already happened, basically dreaming on paper. I write as though the life I dream of is taking place as I write about it. Let me share one example. I wrote this in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, where I currently live. I say that, to show you that there is no evidence of what you're about to read in my current life. Yet I'm still believing for it. This is what the entry from this particular day says:

#### **March 23, 2021 future journaling entry:**

Thank You Daddy (God) for such an awesome life! My dreams continue to come true. Even ones I thought would take years. As I write this I'm at Oprah's house! What?! I literally pinched myself earlier because it feels surreal, but it's actually happening. I'm at Oprah's house! No matter how many times I say it, it still seems unreal.

When her assistant contacted me to invite me on behalf of Oprah, I thought I was dreaming. I had to ask if she was serious. Thank God she was because here I am. I feel so welcome here. I feel at home. I know this is exactly where I'm supposed to be at this moment in time. There is such alignment in my life.

Oprah has been so kind to me. Where she could have just interviewed me and ended it there, she invited me to spend the night at her house. I had dreamed and hoped

but didn't think she would ask. I of course said yes and told her about how I watched her Ralph Lauren interview and hoped she would ask me to spend the night.

Where I'm blown away by her brilliance and the kind of amazing human being she is, she is blown away by my crazy faith. She said she had to spend time with me because she heard about me, saw what was happening in my life, read my book 'Dreaming in Bulawayo' and couldn't believe how everything I wrote about was coming true. She said she just had to meet me. She said she sees some of herself in me. I see some of myself in her lol. I look at her and I see my future.

She and I are getting along very well. We get each other. We are kindred spirits. We spoke about love and she said she wants to be the first interview I do after I get married. I said yes and she said she hopes my husband will agree to be interviewed together. I said I'd make sure he does. She said she can't wait to meet H (H is what I call my husband to be.) I told her about my wedding and she invited herself to it. Steadman has been so great too. He's also coming to the wedding. I must be about to meet H because that wedding is progressing pretty quickly without him.

I have a huge smile on my face that I doubt will leave anytime soon. I feel so blessed and grateful for the life that I'm living, my dream life. I can't wait to wake up tomorrow morning and join Oprah for her morning routine. I do that with some people, to see what works for them and to learn from them. Thank You Jesus for such an awesome life!

### **Your turn**

If you choose to journal or future journal, you get to decide what it looks like for you. It could be about your thoughts and feelings, about anything really. Remember, what I just gave is one example. Some of my other entries talk about me having a new laptop because the one I have now is acting up and affects my work. I'll describe what it can do and the things I get to do with it, how fast it is and how it has a name of a fruit. So do it your own way. Future journal according to what will help you shift your

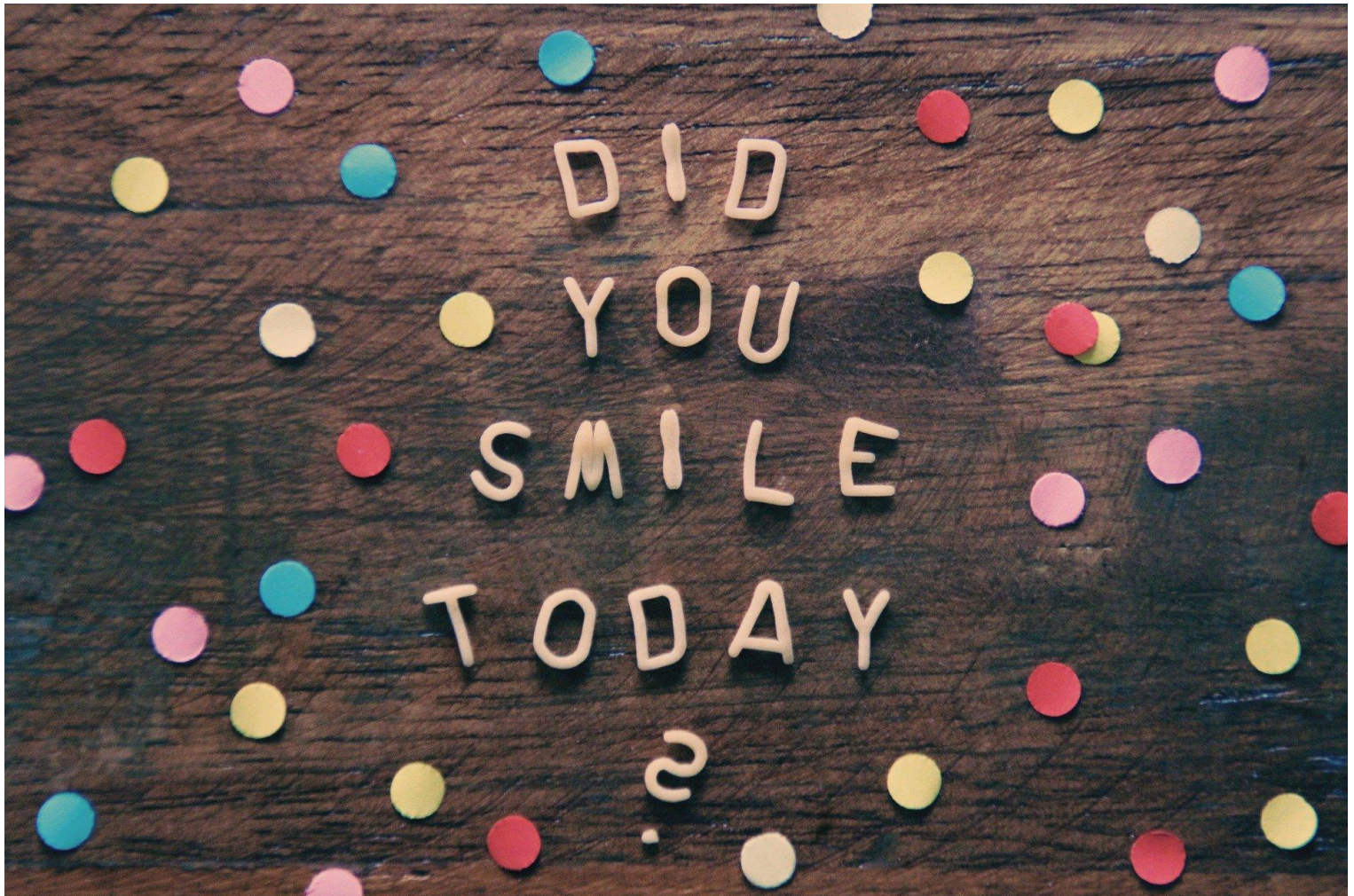
focus from past problems and current crises to focusing on the fantastic future that you're believing for.

# PART 4

# HEALING HEARTS

"I THOUGHT I NEEDED SOMEONE I COULD RUN TO, BUT I NEEDED  
HEALING." – ARLISSA.

(SONG TITLE: HEALING)





## 12. The need for healing — Sibon Hlabangana

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I don't know if you can relate to this but I grew up without an earthly father. Although my mother loved me and provided for me I still felt rejected. For a long time I harboured feelings of rejection and being unloved and ultimately unlovable. It was therefore difficult for me to love myself. This filtered into all areas of my life. My actions showed that I didn't love myself.

I remember growing up I couldn't watch anything about an absentee father and not get angry or feel hurt. When I turned to God a few years ago I started dealing with forgiveness and reflecting on people I needed to forgive. After the way God took me back with open arms, no questions asked, I wanted to do that for people I was still angry with or still felt hurt by. My father was one of them.

I told myself to be understanding because I'm a flawed human being and so is he. I even wrote him a letter venting and saying how I felt, without sending it. I forgave him, or at least I thought I did. Then in 2018 I went for a sort of retreat with a few friends and there we spoke about many different things in our lives. There was lots of crying, heart to hearts and relaxation, a very much needed get away. I'd advise you to do this every once in a while, it makes a huge difference.

Whilst there we were talking about our weddings (that are yet to be lol) and one of my friends asked if I would invite my father to my wedding. I said no, I hardly know him and have no relationship with him. She said "But he's your father." I lost it. "My father???" I asked her. "I didn't grow up with him, he's never done anything for me, he lived in the same city as me..." I went on and on.

Then it hit me, I was still angry and hurt. I was surprised because I genuinely thought I had forgiven and forgotten and all that. My reaction showed me that I still had issues on the father front. So I did the only thing I now know to do, I turned it to my heavenly Father, God. I told God I didn't realise how angry and hurt I was and asked Him to heal me of the pain I was feeling. I did this because I know how poisonous those

feelings can be, especially for my future husband and children. They would be the ones suffering the consequences.

Because God is such a loving Father who hears our prayers, bit by bit He started to work that anger and hurt out of me. Our retreat ended on a Sunday afternoon and that evening one of my friends invited me to attend church with her before I went back home the next day. I did and the message that evening was titled "The good, good Father." It was about how God is our father and a good father at that. It reminded me that now God is my Father, so I don't ever have to feel fatherless or rejected or unloved.

That same week, I watched a sermon by Stephanie Ike on healing and it ministered to my heart. Some days later I attended a book launch that I believe was meant for me. I say so because whilst there this verse was mentioned by 3 different speakers and performers: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." Jeremiah 1 verse 5. A poet also performed a poem called "Good, good Father." I left there feeling loved because God used the event to speak to my heart and minister to me.

For weeks since finding out about the anger and hurt issue, God showed me in so many different ways that my identity was found in Him and that He truly loves me. There was lots of crying and letting go of certain feelings but at the end of it all, God took away my hurt and anger. I didn't have to do it myself. I asked God to do it for me because I knew 36 years of hurt and anger wasn't going to disappear overnight if I tried to do it on my own.

After God worked in me, I was able to write a letter to my father telling him that I loved him and that I forgave him. I didn't send it and didn't plan on doing so but it freed me. Carrying all that hurt and anger would have been bad for me and the people around me. I didn't feel any anger anymore.

Then as I told a friend about the experience, she said maybe I should tell my father that I forgave him. I didn't think it was necessary and said as much but she said maybe he needs to hear it. I prayed about it and felt the Holy Spirit convicting me to

do it. I searched for his contact details and messaged him the letter I had never intended to send. As I reread it I realised I meant every word. It was a miracle because hurt and angry me would not have been able to write that letter and send it.

His reaction told me it was good to contact him because he needed it. What I hadn't considered is that it would be good for me too. We met for lunch. I got to find out things about him that I never knew that explained a lot about him. I saw him as just a man who got dealt a bad hand in life and like me was trying to live his life the best way he knew how. Anger and hurt would have clouded me from seeing that.

I wrote and shared the above in 2018 for a women's ministry I was part of. At the time I didn't see how the experience would matter 3 years later. My father recently passed away and although I cried, reflected and am still processing, there is no hurt and no anger because of what happened in 2018. Not only that, I invited him to a Women's Day event I was speaking at last year (2020) at the beginning of March and he came, something I greatly appreciated. If I had held on to anger, I would never have had that experience to hold on to now.

Choosing to work on healing in this particular case (there is more healing I'm still working on) helped me. I believe if you have issues of forgiveness, anger, hurt, that require healing, it is important to address them. Not for the other person or people involved, but for you. It might not look like my experience but however you deal with, reflect on or process things, do that where healing is concerned. I don't know what will help you. For some of you what is troubling you requires seeing a therapist or for some, something entirely different. I'm just sharing my experience to express how necessary healing is and how it can help you.

Sometime last year, whilst being interviewed by Tim Ferriss, Brené Brown said something that got me thinking. She said we each in one way or another need to heal from past trauma. She said if we don't, the effects of the trauma manifest themselves in different ways in our lives. Tim Ferriss likened it to Pandora's Box that we don't want to open. To this, Brené Brown said what people don't realise is that you might



not open the box but you're actually inside the box yourself! You're still affected, you just don't realise it.

A later interview by Tim Ferriss on his show made me finally take a step towards healing in another aspect of my life. I saw the need for it and saw that I'm not alone and finally felt like I could do it without it killing me. I've started that journey. It's not easy, lots of tears are involved but I've started and it's making all the difference. I hope what I've shared shows you that whatever you need healing from, healing is possible and that you're not alone.

## 13. Healing hearts – A little care for the soul, body and mind – Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi

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*"If you want to heal your heart's wounds, start healing your thoughts..."* Alexandra Vasiliu.

Our wounds affect our lives long after the event. Our analytical minds capture the trauma and embed it deep into our psyche where we relive the pain of the experience over and over again until it becomes one with us and it merges with our identity. We become the betrayed one, the neglected one, the abused one, the unloved one, the lonely one and the wounded one. It becomes a cloak of protection and a shield of defence. It's the instinct of survival which kicks in which propagates the cycle of memory, emotion fuelling memorised pain until our body recoils in dreaded anticipation of the trauma.

Even when the light at the end of the dark tunnel of our pain is just beyond the horizon we find cold comfort in the darkness because it is familiar and we withdraw from the light instead of reaching out for comfort and hope in spite of our wounds. This is how our heart protects us from falling into the same deep hole of emotional anguish, by holding back from the uncertainty of healing, by reminding us of the very thing we would rather forget. If we forget, we will open our heart again and this invites the possibility of getting hurt again and so our pain dominates our thoughts and fuels our bodies with negative emotion drawn from our memories and experiences and soon this takes centre stage in our lives. We become our thoughts - angry, frustrated, fearful, depressed - and instead of getting stronger we only get weaker.

The mantra *'Your pain is your power'* holds true if only we would change the way we respond to the memory of what caused the trauma in the first place. Our pain will not magically become a position of strength and power through sheer self-will alone. The process of turning our trauma into triumph and what broke us into freedom lies in our ability to reframe our perspective regarding our experiences. This process starts in the mind because the battle for our healing starts one thought at a time. To start the

journey to wholeness we must be committed to confront the thoughts we have accepted as an indelible part of who we are. We must challenge the thoughts that have shaped our identity and governed our actions. It's the phenomena of the groove we've etched into our brain with the constant replay of the scenarios we are most afraid of; loss of health, grief, betrayal, failure, humiliation, shame.

Healing is messy because it looks like a demolition zone with all that is familiar falling down all around us before the rebuilding can start. It's a rebuilding which requires tearing down preconceived thoughts about our powerlessness and incapacity which have caused us to become passive. Instead, to take responsibility for our own healing, even without acknowledgement or justice from the people and systems which have wounded us. As we rebuild we take ownership of what we are creating anew and restore the balance of power in our lives.

Make no mistake, our healing will cost us. It requires sacrifice. We will have to give up the familiar rush of emotions of self-loathing, judgement and negativity brought on by fear, anxiety and anger in response to the triggers that lead us on a downward spiral. Our thoughts are triggered by our perceptions of the environment or the memories we carefully preserve. We must analyse those triggers and make adjustments to the power we yield to the past.

We will also have to make room for the uncertainty of hope, courage and love as uncomfortable and unfamiliar emotions of self-acceptance and self-love, are stirred awake and usher us into a new realisation of our greatness and power. It will not happen overnight. Significant gains will be diminished by regression into the old way of doing things as our mind resists change. Frustration at the snail pace of our healing must yield to compassion instead of frustration as we haltingly make our way back to a place of self-awareness devoid of shame and fear. Our healing will require illumination of our deeply intimate thoughts which we cannot bear to let rise to the surface because it will feel like exposure. Our healing will cost us our vulnerability.

As we begin meditatively contemplating our thoughts we will finally be able to reveal the cause of our dysfunction and misalignment with the divine purpose of our lives. It may be a deep rooted sense of unworthiness or irrational fear of failure leading to

insecurity in ourselves, emotional dysfunction and even physical infirmity. Whatever the cause of the brokenness the effect will be evident in our decisions and behaviour.

However we will be able to regain control of our mind first, one thought at a time and finally come to terms with our beauty and light. As our perspective changes, so too will our body and our environment as the light in us grows brighter. Our challenges will seem less infinite and our conditions less despair filled. Possibilities and opportunities will emerge and hope restored in a future we thought we were once denied. The past will lose its stranglehold on us and our healing hearts will once again beat gently to a rhythm of a new melody of grace and peace.

# PART 5

# FAITH REFLECTIONS

“YOUR FAITH WAS STRONG, BUT YOU NEEDED PROOF.” – LEONARD  
COHEN. (SONG TITLE: HALLELUJAH)

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sky is a deep, vibrant red, with a bright yellow sun partially obscured by the horizon. The water in the foreground is dark, with a shimmering reflection of the sun. The words "FAITH HOPE LOVE" are written in a large, bold, black serif font across the middle of the image, appearing to be reflected in the water below. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

FAITH HOPE LOVE

## 14. Faith in the time of COVID-19 – Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi

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The New Year always starts with such great promise and 2021 was no different, especially after the peculiar hardships presented by the global pandemic in 2020. I was feeling positive about the New Year and I was particularly excited and hopeful to accomplish some amazing things along the way. My affirmations were posted right across my bed. I was determined and focused. 4 days into the New Year my confidence was shaken. On the 4th of January 2021 I was diagnosed with COVID-19. What I thought was a simple case of tonsillitis turned out to be something more sinister. I braced myself.

I had watched the news, read the articles and was well informed on the physical manifestation of the disease. At this point I only had a sore throat and my whole body ached. I knew what to expect next; the fever, headache, loss of smell and taste as well as the persistent dry cough. I gathered the necessary supplies and apparatus to get me through the fight ahead – a portable nebuliser, vitamins, pain killers and antibiotics. The next 10 days were going to be critical. I made the decision not to share this diagnosis with anybody else outside of my family. I did not want my friends to worry unnecessarily. They had their own struggles (who didn't, 2020 had been a difficult year!) Besides I was confident that I would soon be well. I had everything I needed to get through this. I was ready.

What I was not prepared for was the emotional tumult that descended. My husband had to move out of the bedroom and for the first time in our marriage of 18 years we were under the same roof but sleeping in separate rooms. My children could not access me physically and to speak to me they had to wear masks and keep a safe distance from the deadly infection I carried. Isolation was necessary but it left in its wake a trail of loneliness and fear. As the symptoms appeared and intensified, the fear escalated. In desperation I tried homeopathic 'remedies' and so began a gruelling regimen of medication, nebulisation and steaming. Already physically battered and drained, I struggled to stay afloat mentally.

What had happened to the positivity I had felt at the start of the year? Why was I slowly giving up? It was only the 8th of January. What about the awesome things I had intentions of achieving before COVID-19 showed up? I still had dreams and plans and they were real and valid. I took another look at the affirmations on my wall. I read one sentence out loud.

**'Let your faith be bigger than your fear.'**

I was letting fear win. I had to remind myself that I was bigger than the disease. Even if it took me out, I was not going to go down scared and cowering in fear. I wish I could say I was immediately inspired and that my motivation changed the disease progression. In fact the very opposite happened. The next day I struggled to breathe and I felt like a train wreck. Not surprisingly fear showed up to taunt me.

**'Where's your faith now?'**

**'I'm alive aren't I?'** I responded.

That is all I needed. To stay alive and to see another day. Faith is not about feelings. Or having all the answers. It is not about the absence of challenges or danger lying in wait in the shadows. Faith is about trusting that you will get through, even when you do not see how. And so as the days passed I remembered to be thankful for seeing another sunrise. I held on to the promise of life and health through prayer and worship.

I also reached out to my friends, realising that my earlier decision to keep the news to myself only further isolated me. I needed their support and they showed up; calling daily and sending messages which kept me hopeful. I leaned heavily on the support of family and friends. The wars we fight in life are best battled in the company of those who know us best and love us without reserve. That's why isolation is the hardest battle to overcome in the management of COVID-19. Although I could not touch my children (and they counted down till the day they could hug me!) they surrounded me with love. I would never again take a hug for granted.

My parents prayed and held the faith for me when my own faith wavered. The battle raged on. Some days were good and I could eat a little but other days I could barely walk and I would lie in bed in complete despair. Fighting is not easy but in the end we all won. My husband. My children. My family. My friends. All of us. Together.

I'm still giving my body time to recover from the trauma of this disease. I still get tired easily and I am building up to the level of strength I had before. I find it difficult to do simple tasks I could do before without getting a little out of breath. But there is one good thing I've noticed since my recovery. My skin is glowing. Maybe I'll continue with the steaming after all.



## 15. Faith that results in peace — Sibò Hlabangana

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Do you ever think you know something and then you discover some other aspect of it that makes you realise you didn't know much at all? For me, one area where I feel that way is faith. Just when I think I've got it down, something happens that makes me wonder if I've ever even had any faith at all or had any idea what it really is.

In 2018, in answer to a question of what I would like to be known for, I said "I want to be known as a woman of faith." On a visit to Johannesburg in 2019, I got prophesied over by two separate people and both said "You will be known as a woman of faith." I was excited because it's what I've always wanted.

When the second person said it, I expressed my excitement and she said "I don't think you realise this but there's suffering that creates faith." I should have listened to her because since then I've had experiences that have made me wish I hadn't asked God to turn me into a woman of faith. I've sat down and said "It's ok Lord, I don't need to be an example of having faith, I'm fine with just being me, now please make it stop." All this in the hope that my circumstances would start to mirror the vision I have for my life. Alas, we're not there yet. Throughout this period though, God has been kind enough to teach me more about faith and allow me to see it with new eyes.

I've recently come to a point where I've discovered that faith leads to peace. I started to experience peace as a result of faith after having gone through some difficult times. Now that I believe the bright future ahead of me I'm relaxed, knowing that it's a done deal and it's only a matter of time before I live in it. My circumstances haven't changed but my perception has and that has made all the difference.

I was talking to a friend about how much peace I was experiencing in my life. She asked how that came about and I told her it happened when I started to truly believe God's promises for my life and not doubt. Prior to that I thought I had faith but I was living in doubt without being aware of it. I started to explain to her my understanding of the connection between faith and peace and I found myself using an analogy I hadn't thought of before.

I explained to her that it's like giving in notice at work. You would have been dreading going to work. Wanting nothing but to leave. You just can't take another day at that place. You hand in your notice and suddenly everything's okay. You don't hate going to work anymore. You feel good about life. You're still at that job. Nothing has changed except how you feel about it. The knowledge that you're leaving, that it's a done deal, allows you to breathe easy. That's the peace that comes from faith. After I told my friend that, she said "I like that, you should write it down somewhere." (Thanks Lyuba, I did write it down!)

Because I'm so sure of what I'm hoping for, even though there is no evidence of it, I am still assured that it is on its way. I've handed in my notice from life as it stands and now simply serving notice until the new life that awaits me comes my way. I hope you can allow yourself to believe despite what your circumstances say and find peace as a result.

## PART 6

# RETREAT, REST, RELAX - THE THREE R'S OF SOUL-CARE

“GO AHEAD AND LIVE YOUR DREAMS, TO ME YOU’RE STRONGER THAN A WHOLE TEAM. I KNOW YOU CAN’T RELAX, AND YOU DON’T WANT ME TO KNOW THAT. I SEE YOU WORK REAL HARD... I WANNA SEE YOU SMILE.” –

CLEO SOL.

(SONG TITLE: WHY DON’T YOU)



## 16. Wellness, wisdom and wholeness – A retreat for the soul – Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi

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There is something psychologically exhilarating and stimulating about the beginning of the year. Our minds are captivated by the thought of new possibilities and the restraints of old limits seem to effortlessly fall away. There is an air of invincibility in the way we take on new challenges and set sail for new frontiers. High on positivity and determination we are filled with excitement at what lies ahead. New Year's resolutions! We've all made a few. Lengthy to-do lists filled with an array of feats to be accomplished within a specific time frame as we dream of more – more health, more wealth, more influence.

We spare no thought to the fact that life usually gets in the way of our carefully laid plans. After all, by establishing resolutions and winning in our daily goals we have managed the impossible, procrastination has been served notice! Inspired by similar antics of friends, family members and colleagues, all in pursuit of grander goals as the year starts, we rush headlong into the New Year with high ideals and vibrant hope.

All is going well until we confront our first hurdle. Unprepared for the obstacle we may struggle and even falter. Faced with temptation we give in to a sugary treat instead of staying the course and eating healthy meals or perhaps we linger in bed longer than we should have and derail the rest of the day's itinerary and we feel defeated. And so life happens as it so often will and procrastination pays a customary visit for a day or two before moving back in and setting up permanent residence in our lives, AGAIN! At this point we may continue to strive after our objectives but those goals may have begun to lose their appeal and lustre. This is when we begin to rationalise that it is not necessary at this juncture to take on such a lofty goal; besides we have more time, we reason and soon we stop altogether. There is always next year. Our time will come.

In the midst of the uncertainty of the times we live in, the Covid-19 pandemic has only served to make it even more difficult to sustain hope and patience in our ability

to reach our goals. We are living in unprecedented times where the only certainty is that everything is changing faster than we can blink our eyes. The cult phrase 'the new normal' being bandied around is simply a metaphor to describe the changing landscape of our existence. Reeling from the fast pace of technology driving changes in culture and social trends, the world came to a grinding halt in 2020 as we scurried into isolation in an effort to wait out the ravaging effects of the virus.

Emerging from the lockdown we were thrown back into a pressure vacuum in the continuing dizzying pursuit of more – more security, more wellness, more holidays, more resources to splurge on ourselves, more success – all the while denying the realisation that we have to contend with less – less time, less joy, less comfort. Physically drained and on the verge of emotional bankruptcy as the world clamoured for more, the truth confronted me; I could no longer give what I did not have. It is true, an empty glass cannot quench thirst. I had to be replenished in order to be able to give what was required of me as a mother, wife, daughter, sister and friend.

I had to slow down in order to catch my breath. We all do. Slowing down in order to catch your breath and redirect your efforts after reflective contemplation of what your priorities are, is not only healthy but very necessary in maintaining wellbeing. Goal setting at the beginning of the year is a worthy and noble enterprise and so is purposeful and introspective analysis of the relevance and necessity of your goals periodically as the year progresses. Just blindly pursuing your goals without re-evaluation may lead you astray from what truly matters and is of utmost importance to your purposeful contribution.

We are living through historical times not just because of the pandemic that has dramatically changed the way we live but also because running parallel to this global health crisis is another crisis of a social context – the 'Not enough' pandemic tearing through our lives. Not rich enough, not popular enough, not attractive enough, not influential enough and so on, the list grows. Our worth is measured in likes, followers, shares and re-tweets. And this is how we lose our way as we look outward for impact and miss how important it is to remember that our meaning is internal and the goals we set have to be aligned to who we truly are. It was almost June 2021 and I needed to do some re-evaluating.

In the military there is a time for re-evaluation. It is called 'retreat' and it is the withdrawal of troops during an excursion or battle to a more strategic position in order to escape a more formidable foe or after suffering a loss in battle. Contrary to popular opinion, to retreat does not necessarily imply defeat but an operation designed to give the troops ample time to recover from their loss and regroup in order to launch an offensive. It is acknowledging apparent and imminent danger and reassessing how to achieve desired goals in light of the hardships presently experienced. It is no way the same as accepting defeat! I decided to take a step back in order to take a leap forward. It was time for a retreat.

A retreat affords us the opportunity to reconnect with ourselves in order to ensure that our goals are aligned with our values. In a distracted world, chasing metrics and algorithms that do not authentically reflect our purpose, it is easy to get hitched onto the bandwagon of the majority and lose sight of our own individuality. Invariably when we do fall off the bandwagon of what is popular we rarely find the energy to get back on the wagon because it never did represent who we truly are. This is distinctly not the case when we are in pursuit of what ignites our creativity and passion. When we find our enthusiasm waning, retreating in solitude and quiet allows us to fan the flames of our passion once again.

When we enter another new year, may we, in addition to a litany of amazing resolutions, also carve out room for a retreat for our souls. The world needs more love and less distraction, more connection and less division and we can do that if we can rediscover ourselves again in solitude. And if we find ourselves feeling discouraged as we close out the year or perhaps standing at the crux of the other half of the year, may we find the courage to retreat to a place of privacy, peace and quiet as we define what it means to be truly alive.

## 17. Allowing yourself to relax — Sibio Hlabangana

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I was watching a commencement speech given by Neil Gaiman and he said something that got me thinking. He said he had achieved something and Stephen King told him to enjoy himself, to enjoy the moment. He called it the best advice he ever got that he didn't follow, because he was always worried about the next thing or the next book.

I realised that that's what I do. Instead of appreciating the moment I'm in and fully enjoying it, my mind's already on to the next thing. Only about 2 months ago I finished writing and publishing 2 books and already I was thinking it's time to finish the wellness book Ruramai and I am putting together. I tend to move on to the next thing before appreciating what I've just finished. There'll always be a next thing. There'll always be something to worry about. If we don't follow the above advice, we'll never enjoy things as they happen. It'll only be when we're looking back that we'll say "Oh that was a great time."

Stephen King's advice to Neil Gaiman reminded me of some advice that Oprah gave when she was asked what she would tell her younger self. She said she would tell her to relax. So simple and yet so profound. We're always worried about something. Whether we're good enough at something, what people think of us, if our dreams will come true, and many other things. Rather than trusting that everything will be ok, we stress and usually about things we can't change. Oprah says relax and I think she knows what she's talking about.

So to you (and me,) who's worried about being the right height/weight/complexion, whether you'll succeed at what you're doing now or if you'll meet the love of your life or wondering if things will work out, RELAX. Things will work out, you will get to the other side of whatever's worrying you right now. If you don't, you'll look back and see how much time you wasted worrying when you could have been relaxed and been enjoying the other experiences you were having at that time.

I don't know about you but I hope going forward I'll follow Stephen King's advice to Neil Gaiman and Oprah's advice to her younger self. *\*She says, as she starts to wonder what's next after this book.\** What can I say, I'm still learning lol.

Thank you for joining us on this, our journey to wellness, one that still continues. We're leaving you with a poem from Ruramai titled "Everything about you is beautiful." We hope it speaks to you. We love you.

P/S: If you enjoyed this book or received some value from it and would like to show us some love, you can send this book to your friends and family and/or buy yourself a copy or copies of our other books, which are listed on page 67.





## 18. Everything about you is beautiful

Poem by Ruramai  
Nyadzayo-  
Mugwisi

Everything about  
you is beautiful,  
Your words, telling  
of your losses,  
your pain and

gains, painful victories,  
Powerful wisdom that shines like a light in the chaos.  
Your words, strong and flowing yet barely more than a whisper at times,  
Lifting and soothing the wounded, brokenness in me.  
Resonating with my pain and yet elevating me to be,  
Transforming my mindset, my focus until I see,  
That I am more than the sum of my failures, my weaknesses and regrets.  
I see it now, my heart believes, grasping within my reach.  
Accomplishing what I only dared to dream,  
Because you overcame.

Everything about you is beautiful,  
Your scars which you wear so well,  
A testament to the struggles you've fought and prevailed  
Your scars an imprint of history, a mark of time,  
A symbol of encounters they thought would destroy you, would break you down,  
But all the while establishing the ground,  
On which you'd one day stand and shine.  
A glimmer of hope for my triumph over self-defeat,  
That kept me prisoner to a definition of self,  
That was powerless, hollow and uninspired.  
But finally breaking free, because of you!  
Because you overcame.

Everything about you is beautiful,  
 Your tears, which you cried on the bathroom floor,  
 In the dead of night so you'd not awaken the slumbering souls,  
 Oblivious to your hurt and deepening yearnings.  
 Your tears which fuelled your determination, rising and burning,  
 To get up and try again, yet again and AGAIN,  
 Even though your heart was heavy and your mind ached.  
 Your tears shed for yourself, for your loved ones,  
 For your hopes, for their dreams and yours,  
 Dwindling in this discouraging place,  
 And yet a smile still finds its way on your beautiful face,  
 Such beauty, such grace, a reflection in you,  
 Because you overcame.

Everything about you is beautiful,  
 Your mind, assailed by anxiety and doubt,  
 In the face of a history that threatens to rewind,  
 A repeat of the past – the guilt and blame, the torment and shame,  
 And yet rewriting your future in the present,  
 With the ink of strength, the ink of forgiveness, healing and self-love,  
 That offers renewed redemption,  
 Till the full bloom of purpose glorious in its truth and authenticity,  
 Flourishes defiant in the midst of distraction and uncertainty.  
 Liberty for you, yes freedom for you as finally you break free and rise!  
 And for us as we  
 rise too, to  
 celebrate you!  
 Because you  
 overcame!  
**EVERYTHING**  
 about you is  
 beautiful.

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 Mugwisi, 2018



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi** is a girl and women's empowerment champion, budding spoken word artist, digital content creator, medical scientist, wife and mother to four amazing children. She's a devoted Christian and passionate about purposeful and mindful living.

**Also written by Ruramai Nyadzayo-Mugwisi:**

- [A Seed in the Dust - An African Memoir.](#)

**Sibo Hlabangana** is a dreamer, writer and speaker. She is the author of 5 other books. She is also the creator of *Inspiration by Sibó*, a dream pursuit, travel and wellness blog. She currently lives in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, a landlocked country and dreams of living near the beach and doing lots of travel.

**Also written by Sibó Hlabangana:**

- [Dreaming in Bulawayo - Evidence of faith or a crazy woman's ramblings?](#)
- [Listening with your eyes - Trusting a God who speaks to us.](#)
- [Letters to my daughter to be - Life lessons to a young woman.](#)
- [When feeling lost - Finding solace in God's unconditional love.](#)
- [Do you have an H? - Having a relationship with God and growing your faith.](#)