One of the things that make autobiographies stand out from memoirs and biographies is that subjects are expected to reveal all. Whether it’s interesting or drab, good or bad, it doesn’t matter, readers just want all the details to come out in an autobiography. And that’s exactly what Eyebags and Dimples (An autobiography) does. Described as “Bonnie’s shockingly naked account of how her depression almost robbed her of her shine and how she continues to fight this darkness” the book is indeed a naked account of the short life she’s lived up to so far.

Bonnie Henna is well known for being a child star back in the days (as a TV presenter) and a well established actress. From the age of 13 years she managed to pull a happy face on our TV screens as if all was well back home even though she came from a very troubled and unhappy household. But all was actually not well. She has always been followed by darkness right from her childhood up to her adult life. Moving to America to try and pursue her acting career in Hollywood, Bonnie terribly fails to make it into being a “star” she left South Africa hoping to become. As things don’t work out the way she expected them, profound depression settles into her and she’s pushed closer to the edge. But luckily she’s diagnosed on time with clinical depression before falling and losing herself completely.

It’s almost difficult to believe that she wrote the book herself because it is so well written. And I don’t mean that in a patronizing way, please. What I am trying to say is that it is not quite common to find TV stars moving from doing their TV work to writing their stories in such a compelling manner and with such ease. Each and every chapter in Bonnie Henna’s book is totally absorbing and almost leaves a lump in one’s throat.

In the book Bonnie doesn’t blame anyone for her “illness” but rather asks this fundamental question: Having endured the most heart wrenching and depressing period of your life, how do you then own your story and move forward peacefully when you finally find out what the problem is? And as much as Eyebags and Dimples is not a self-help book, anyone with a troubled soul can use Bonnie Henna’s story to acknowledge their pain, deal with it and move on.

The way her mother treated her as a child is horrifying and one gets the feeling when she wrote certain parts (if not the entire book) of the book she was in absolute tears. The stories of abused children are quite common in our societies and even though one is vividly aware of such stories Bonnie Henna’s story will still make you shudder with utter horror. The experience is profoundly excruciating.

Published by Jacana, Eyebags and Dimples is R156.00.

Follow me on twitter @MrSkota
True Love magazine journalist and bestselling author of Smacked — a book about her addiction to narcotics and the hard road to recovery — Melinda Ferguson, took upon herself a risk most would have strayed away from. She wrote the story of an addict. It was a risk because, like me when I first saw a copy of this book, she asked herself: What could people possibly want to know about Kelly Khumalo?

Kelly Khumalo, once a rising star and sadly, more than for her musical talents, a girl who had come to be known for virginity claims, weave fights and legal battles, drug use and standing in support next to a man whose head the country wanted to see hang for playing a fatal role in what has been dubbed “The Mini-cooper massacre”. She was a picture of how young South Africans today chase the “bling” life and get spiralled into a world of money, drugs and scandal.

In this book, The Kelly Khumalo Story, Melinda (alongside Sarah Setlaelo, Kelly’s once manager turned enemy turned manager again), takes us through the journey of a young woman with a dream. Having been raised in rural KwaZulu Natal, in Nthinini, where she had to fight for bread and love with equal vigour, among the other kids who were also shipped off to her grandmother’s place because of the hardships of Apartheid South Africa. We learn how Kelly has always seen the world as a war zone. Her feelings of abandonment from early childhood, of not being good enough, of the relationships she had with men, would later in life lead her to make all kinds of wrong decisions when it came to money, relations with men (and women), and what she falsely thought was love.

Kelly’s story is not unique. A lot of South Africans grow up in poverty with nothing but a dream. But not all of them have the talent and sultry voice that we first heard on our TV screens on a gospel talent show back in 2003, in the form of Kelly Khumalo. Her story does however breathe some light into the hearts of similarly dark situations. Kelly is an example of courage and strength to get up from the worst of situations, leaning on whatever spurs you on, which in this case was Kelly’s God and her connection to Him through Gospel, and the hope for a better day.

Melinda Ferguson took Kelly and brought her to a human level, so we see more than just wasted talent, but a daughter, a sister, a mother and a girl who just wants to be the best she can be with what talents God has given her, and once again a rising star.

The Kelly Khumalo Story is published by Jacana Media and sells for about R189.95
One of the challenges that fiction writers face is to make their readers believe their stories. They have to absolutely make sure that their readers see truth in each and every sentence of their books and relate to the story in the end. Also, fiction writers have a responsibility of making readers lose themselves completely in their books as if they were telling a true story. But in this book one often gets the sense that J K Rowling isn’t mastering that skill, especially in the beginning of the book. For instance, when Barry Fairbrother (one of the characters if not the main character as the story revolves around him) dies, the entire community of Pagford is in shock. Excuse me but where I come from death is quite common (even sudden death), people die each and every single day. So one community member’s death is of course not celebrated but it also doesn’t affect the entire community as it does in The Casual Vacancy. But then again, Pagford is in Britain and I am in Africa.

Set in a very small English town, Pagford, the Casual Vacancy is J K Rowling’s first adult novel. And it’s extremely dark and dull. One character dies right in the beginning of the story, sudden death. Soon after he dies the whole town is in turmoil as people are fighting over his seat with each person hoping to win. His death not only creates a Casual Vacancy on the parish council but it also reveals a town full of dark forces and strange citizens with strange lives. Not only is the small English town at war but individuals are also at war, with themselves. Children are at war with their parents, peers, school teachers and everybody else. Husbands are at war with their wives, children and even their best friends.

Pagford is a dreadful, horrid, and maybe drug-ridden community. One doesn’t seem to envy any of the character’s lives while still reading the book. But J K Rowling’s writing will stay with you forever. The book has a very depressingly slow beginning and it might make you throw the book away and storm into your nearest bookshop out of desperation for a “better” read. But as soon as you get down and dirty with the story, every single detail becomes so incredibly vivid that you automatically become part of Pagford. Every single event is detailed to the core. Rowling does not omit anything; she is very descriptive, even when she shouldn’t be. There is a rape scene in the book and Rowling wrote it so clearly that it is shockingly disgusting yet it is so banal I almost pulled my hair out while I was reading it.

There is dark humour throughout the book and if you’re a weirdo like me you will keep giggling uncontrollably while pinching yourself because you know it’s hugely inappropriate to laugh. There are strange but laughable scenes. They are almost hilarious but not quite because they are very dark. For instance, one family’s life is characterised by sexual violence, appalling living conditions, extreme drug usage and addiction but the strong language and the way the family speaks will definitely leave you laughing so hard you almost break your neck! And this is possibly the most entertaining family out of all the million families in this giant novel.

There are tragic events, death, sicknesses, filth, rape, broken homes, backstabbing and all sorts of abuse you can think of and the story will stay with you long after you’ve finished reading the book! And the book is definitely not for kids.

Published by Little, Brown, The Casual Vacancy will cost you roughly about R270!

Follow me on twitter @NthAsia
Ebrahim Harvey’s book on deputy president Kgalema Motlanthe, should have been named: Kgalema Motlanthe, A NECESSARY biography, instead of "A political biography"

To some people (read: me) Kgalema Motlanthe appeared in our collective South African lives as the guy who was willing to be the "stop-gap" president when the then president, Thabo Mbeki, was unceremoniously recalled from his presidency following his defeat in Polokwane back in 2007. People really had little or no idea who the man was.

This book takes to rectifying that. It methodically peels off the layers of this seemingly mysterious and very reserved politician. Harvey, the seasoned political writer he is, thoroughly researches his subject and really gets to know him.

He obviously talks to a lot of people - Motlanthe's family included - about the man our deputy president is. He takes all this information and structures it in a story telling way that takes the reader through the journey of spirituality, political involvement and family dynamics that shape the man we have come to (only) know as Kgalema Motlanthe. As well as, and very importantly, his role in the ANC and the apartheid struggle as a whole. I actually feel, I have to say, how Harvey must have struggled with "too much information". It shows in the book, but he finds a way to make it work.

Kgalema Motlanthe's story is interesting to those who want to know about the ANC's inner workings; who Kgalema is; what he believes in and the reasons why he chooses to approach his politics the way he has. His reserved nature leaves a lot of people (again read: me) feeling uneasy about his ability to stand up for his beliefs, or what those beliefs are. He comes off as timid. He is undoubtedly quite a curious character. Because who in this world rises to presidency - stop gap or not- by being timid, right?

Ebrahim Harvey writes this story without himself holding back on his own views when it comes to certain issues. This is done tastefully without taking focus off of his subject.

Kgalema Motlanthe: A political biography is a necessary read for the South African who wants to know about their very potential future president. It is published by Jacana (?) And goes for R287

Follow me on twitter @MrSkota

Review a Book

Send us a Book Review of the most recent book you finished or an all time favourite
Welcome back to Janice Honeyman!

Firstly I cannot (read won’t) pretend that I am an expert in the arts. I won’t pretend that I know long lists of local playwrights, and which of their art they’ve shared with us, and how many pieces, and also in which years. But surely, I do believe that I am equipped to respond in the most human of ways, and laugh and cry – or in this case probably laugh crying - like the best of them (read you).

As I sat down ready to go on a little Jack in the Beanstalk adventure at the Joburg Theatre, I really could not have known what to expect.

Lights, camera, action, and very suddenly we were transported into a true nether world of colour, and dance; and mostly talent which for almost two hours tickled us in the most intimately human ways - South African ways possible.

The very first delight of the evening was the opening song and dance scene that had me reaching for my jaw on the ground. If you ever thought there was any truth to the sentiment “White girls/boys can’t dance”, that thought will very quickly get knocked out of your head. The Village Square scene will prove how wrong anyone is to even such blasphemous thoughts, proven most especially by the sultry National School of the Arts graduate Diana Gerndt.

The band, made up of Musical Director Clinton Zerf, Raymond Verster, drummer Theuns Botha, guitarist Neil Higgins, as well Gerda Stander and Ross Dorkin do an exceptional job in keeping up with the cast. Perhaps even keeping a step ahead of them and ready, willing and able to percolate every last beat into the humour portrayed.

Raymond Verster’s theatrical (formal) career spans over a decade, having once been a residential musical director for the People’s Theatre at Joburg Theatre itself.

One of the biggest feats of Jack and the Beanstalk is the superb and quite exact references to South African pop culture and mainstream subject matter, managing to smoothly toss them around throughout the play without ever missing a beat.

A cast of novelists who manage to keep the audience on their toes as well as their laughing bones without much effort, Tobie Cronje, and Desmond Tutu standing out without a doubt.

As Desmond Tutu makes his first appearance on stage
with the Sesotho greeting “Dumelang” he makes it clear that this is a panto with a difference.

Desmond Tutu is to my eyes an absolute legend after this performance. An accomplished actor who has mastered the art of carrying his role fully, hand gestures, face movements and all, and delivers a rare form of genuine, hearty and sometimes stitch-inducing laughter. Whether he’s singing “Umshini Wam” or swaying back and forth in the “traditional” African woman way.

Carly Graeme is also a wonderful surprise in this cast. Diva with a voice of gold and a feast for the musical senses, she sings for her dinner plus desert.

For South African Idols’ fans there is the talented Bongi Mthombeni (who played the main role as Jack) who was a finalist in the sixth season of popular singing competition. Though Bongi did not win in that year, this platform exposed and introduced him to South African audiences, and opened many doors for his now flourishing theatrical career.

Nandi Nyembe was also a great to see on stage, as the robust BEE mother (of Carly Graeme’s character Raspberry Rose) and tax collector of the town.

One of the most endearing portrayals of the evening goes to Louise Saint-Claire who plays Fairy Femla-Fabbadabba-doozy (the fairy godmother of the play). Louise owned this character in - out, and back and forth with her utterly cute fairy voice and often ludicrous stage antics.

The performance of the evening though, goes to veteran actor Tobie Cronje, who played the part of the hilariously delirious villain Henry Hideoa, who might I add, has the most uncanny nimbleness.

The South Africanisms achieved in this play are what makes it so accessible to audiences, and this accompanied by a superb cast of natural comics, makes Jack and the Beanstalk a pure win.

Janice Honeyman threw it all out there, and then pulled it all together into an almost uncriticisable stage piece which I wish all South Africans would go out and see.

Credit not only goes to the creative minds behind this effort, but also to the set designers and costume makers; as well as the stage hands who blew the audience away with some seriously magnificent stage costumes and set, and seamless work.

Jack and the Beanstalk is on at the Joburg Theatre until 30 December 2012.

Thank you once again to Nyakallo Lephoto and ILWIW for such sweet little (and not at all in a small way) experiences. Bowled over is what I was by the fantastic abilities of my fellow South Africans.

A special mention to sponsors BANKSERVAFRICA, MNet, Jacaranda FM and Your Family Magazine.

Follow me on twitter @Mokebe
The Market Theatre joined forces with Metro FM this year to bring some seasonal sizzle to comedy and music fans (which we would assume would be the majority of the Jozi population). For between R75 and R200 a guaranteed good time in the iconic Market Theatre on a week night could be yours.

After arriving ever so slightly late (I swear it wasn’t my fault) we decided to grab the seats on the left hand side of the theatre since it seemed less disruptive, and unfortunately, so did our fellow late comers. This off-side movement caught the eye of the hilarious Alan Committee who was on stage at the time. After that he exclusively labelled the seating on the left (his right) of the room "the poor seats". This was of course hilarious (even to us) who were victims of his fantastic (thankfully) sense of humour throughout his act.

The side-splitting performance given by Alan was a fantastic introduction to Market Theatre Comedy Fest! Next up on the stage was Mark Banks who is one of the more recognized and respected South African comedians of his time. He’s been in the industry for over 25 years and boasts at least one new one-man show each year, or so says his PR machine. It’s true that anyone in comedy is only as good as their last show, and Banks proved himself more than worthy of his accomplishments as he set the stage alight with his off the cuff antics. His ability to grab an audience with his quirky voice and even quirkier accent, and “don’t give a damn” jokes is incredible. His satirical style, and ability to poke fun at everyday situations and especially to pick out audience members and make a memorable (but hardly offensive) mini stand up show out of them (and you can ask Stan who was in the audience on this particular night) is epic.

Mark’s reputation for indifference amongst some of his biggest critics has thrust his desire to push the line even more, and show the audience that this man is a no holds barred comedian, who is not on stage to pussy foot...
around his audience, but to instead
give them a damn good laugh (which
he did). Also on the Comedy Festival
circuit, Siv Ngesi, Eugene Khoza, Trevor
Gumbi, and Tumi Morake. If you’re up
for a great weekday tickle (with result-
ant roaring laughter) in one of Johan-
nesburg City’s most renowned ven-
ue’s, make your way to the Market
Theatre to catch a night of comedy
with heavy-weights - Mark Banks, Alan
Committie, Siv Ngesi, Eugene Khoza,
Trevor Gumbi and Tumi Morake who
are guaranteed to deliver humour that
will leave you begging for more with
their take on the state of the nation.

And if you also have a taste for music,
the Festival of Classical Music brings
you some of South Africa’s most ac-
complished musicians in that time:
Opera Africa, Soweto Quadro, and
Inferno Opera, and for those of us with
more mainstream tastes, you can hit
up performances by the likes of Lira,
Thandiswa Mazwai, Zahara, Oliver
Mtukudzi, Kwaito prince Trompies, sis
Rebecca Malope and more.

The Market Theatre is the place to be
from 13 November to 09 December
2012.

Follow me on twitter @Mokebe
Government communications and information system (GCIS) in Limpopo wishes you and your family a merry Christmas and a prosperous new year. Let us end our year with the spirit of hosting the Orange AFCON early next year (2013). Let’s all arrive alive.

There are 21 centres in the five districts of Limpopo. The centres offers a variety of government services and can create the much needed convenience when it comes to people accessing services during the festive season. The following centres will be operating during the holiday seasons. The centres are spread like this: If you are in Waterberg, You have Mabatlane in Valwater, Babirwa, and Mapela all in Mogalakwena. In Vhembe you have Mtititi,Makuya, Musekwa,Madimbo , in Mopani there’s Bulamahlo,Lesedia, Relela, Makhuva, Selwane ,Maruleng ,In Sekhukhune use Mapodile, Kgautjwane,Leboeng,Fetakgomo/Atok and in Capricorn please use Eldorado, F.S Mothudi and Botlokwa Thusong service centres.

You are encouraged to use the centres for your communal activities, your wedding and other celebrations. In some of this centres there’s still office space for community and other projects and businesses.

“The pulse of communication excellence in government”

For more info go to: www.gcis.gov.za, www.thusong.gov.za and follow the programme champion @mmaphutiernet on twitter or Mmaphuti Mathatho on fb, for gallery and daily activities at the centres search for any of them on FB. You can also call us at 015 291 4689
No better gifts to give your loved ones this Christmas than stories of healing, love and light.

Endings & Beginnings
Redi Tlhabi

When Redi Tlhabi is eleven years old, two years after her father’s death, she meets the handsome, charming and smooth, Mabegzo. A rumoured gangster, murderer and rapist, he is a veritable ‘jack-roller’ of the neighbourhood. Against her family’s wishes, she develops a strong connection to him. Endings & Beginnings is Redi’s emotional journey back into her past to finally humanise this man whose hollowness mirrored her own and who was hated and abhorred by so many when he was alive.

Eyebags & Dimples
Bonnie Henna

In this beautifully written work, Bonnie makes a remarkable transition from actress to author with ease and flair. Eyebags & Dimples is Bonnie’s shockingly naked account of how her depression almost robbed her of her shine and how she continues to fight this darkness. In this searing, unflinchingly honest book, Bonnie recounts the intricate journey that her life has taken her on.

From Me to Me
Samantha Page (editor)

If you could send a letter to yourself aged 16½, what would you say in it?

From Me To Me: Letters to my 16½-year-old-self is a collection of just such letters written by South Africans, ranging from newsmakers to ordinary people and everyone else in between, to their younger selves and published with photographs of them as teenagers.

Available at all leading book stores

We publish what we like

JACANA  Fanele  Stonebridge
Business Day reported you on Wednesday (3 Oct.) blaming Implats for the wild and seemingly out-of-control strikes we've seen since early this year. You saw the company's recent wage agreement - the somewhat second in 2012 - with its respective employees' representatives as a "grave error".

My dear minister - if you worked in the mining industry you would understand. As a shareholder in Lonmin, I think Cyril Ramaphosa is probably the best person worth listening to because of his shareholding in the industry. It is further worrying that NUM, too, puts the blame of the country-wide strikes at the door of Impala.

The now-not-so-popular giant mining industry union and the federation union, Cosatu, claimed mine employers, particularly Implats bosses, "must take full responsibility for all the strikes that are spreading in the mining industry". While I agree with this claim to a certain extent, I, however, need to add that had it not been very worrying reports against NUM in the mining industry and its fight with the new-kid-on-the-bloc AMCU this mess of strikes would probably not be at the current level: uncontrollable.

So, unions, as much as government are to blame. In fact, you (government, unions and mining companies) are all in this mess together and blaming one another - mine bosses, that is - will not make go away the current situation where people are striking because they want what Cosatu and affiliated unions believe is a "minimum living wage".

Minister, to want to blame Implats - unlike Lonmin where the situation got so out of hand and out of control and even made worse by your government's deployment to the mine of the security forces and the military - is just bullshit! In fact, I am of the opinion that Implats did what it thought was best and wanted to avoid 'another Marikane' as has been promised by other striking unions.

You further accuse Implats of having negotiated out of the wage agreement of about two years (if I remember well). This, you were quoted as saying, was to "undermine" the established agreements in place. "You can't agree on a process and then immediately move out of that process. That is why we have this challenge now", you said. It now appears to be this "unilateral" decision by Impala and the mine industry in general which you seem to have a problem with.

While you have as much right to freedom of expression, I think your concern is ill-informed because this - negotiation outside of the established wage agreements - is exactly what happened at Lonmin following its illegal strike that went on for over a month.

At the time of its negotiations outside of these established wage agreement of mostly two years - no-one said anything. In fact, many government officials - the President of the country, NUM and Cosatu, among others - were very happy at the settlement reached.
It is worth noting that this settlement was reached without the assistance of neither Cosatu, NUM or even AMCU. It was the employees themselves (through outsiders party to the established wage agreement of about two years or so) that negotiated with Lonmin management. So to now want to call Impala's agreement a "grave error" is, in my opinion, simply ridiculous.

Need I remind you of something, dear minister. Your dearest Cosatu has called of some miners to open the negotiations even before the agreed and established wage agreement lapses. What do you call that?

Why appear to blame Implats for allegedly negotiating outside of the established wage agreements while keep quiet about Cosatu's demand to some industry members that negotiations be opened now?

I think Implats response was the best it could do at the time and given the experience of an illegal strike it experienced early this year.

Furthermore, and lastly, I agree with Implats that you probably have no idea of the "extremely complex and multifaceted" environment and condition under which mining companies operate (emphasis added). As a result, you should probably stay out of this one.

IMPORTANT: Although I have been working in the mining industry for about full four years but not specifically underground - I think my response is well informed. Well, you're welcome to differ, though. Oh, I don't work for Impala.

Follow me on Twitter at @AkanyangM

The unbanning of the ANC and the subsequent release of Nelson Mandela was a result of a combination of factors; PW Botha suffering a stroke and FW de Klerk seizing power without a mandate, the fall of the Soviet Union which symbolised the death of Communism and outside pressure on the Apartheid government's insistence on labelling the ANC a terrorist organisation.

Consider yourself a demigod if you knew who Thabo Mbeki was in 1993. Chris Hani and Cyril Ramaphosa were next in line, after Madiba, in accordance with the original succession plan. While Cyril stepped aside, Chris was martyred.

A sacrifice made to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the West. We were made to look like an organisation with Capitalist values, when, in fact, we owe most of our identity to Communist fundamentals.

Would Madiba have been such an iconic figure had his second-in-command been a staunch Communist?

Hamba Kahle Mkhonto.
There have been calls by some that Public Protector Thuli Madonsela should resign/be sacked. This after she was accused by the ruling ANC of "rubbing shoulders" with DA when she addressed its Women's Network event in Port Elizabeth this past Thursday during Women's Day.

While the ANC saw this as "ill-considered" because she now opened her office to "perceptions of political bias" - it would seem it is only the ruling party that seems to hold such "perceptions" about the PP because she was invited to address a Women's Network of an opposition party.

The ruling party says the PP needs to be "independent, impartial and to exercise her powers without fear or prejudice" as is constitutionally requested. But, it warns, attending and giving keynote addresses at such political events of political parties "has the potential to compromise these basic constitutional principles, which the Public Protector is enjoined to uphold and promote". Given this perception of the PP's "closeness to the [DA]" party, claimed the ruling party, "members of the public will be justified to ask how she will in future treat complaints against the administrations under the DA".

It is not clear which "members of the public" the ANC is referring to because as much as not all political parties represent the public, neither does the ruling party despite it being the governing party (but that's a debate for another day, isn't it?).

The ruling party accused the PP of not using "an impartial platform to pursue its public interaction with programme" given the significance of Women's Day as a national event. As a result the public "will be reasonably suspicious of a head of a state institution supporting constitutional democracy electing to attend a political party-organised Women's Day rally over an impartial government Women's Day event".

But Madonsela denied claims that her independence has been or would be compromised. Through her spokesperson Kgalalelo Masibi, she said her attending the DA's event "was in fulfilment of her constitutional obligation of being accessible to all persons and communities as espoused [in] the Constitution".

Madonsela said her attending the event such as this was incorporated into the national stakeholder consultative dialogue that she launched in July which included giving "special interest groups" opportunity to interact with her. She further emphasised that her speech was not politically-aligned as claimed by the ruling party (emphasis) but that it "focused on the constitutional promise to women and people of South Africa, and ensuring that the mechanisms are in place to assist the people to hold the State accountable".

She said the "main thrust" of
her speech was "on [her] role as one of the public accountability institutions", adding that people were given the opportunity to asked questions and lodge complaints. "A lot of the complaints related to RDP housing challenges," said Madonsela through her spokesperson.

She said people were encouraged to advise others to lodge RDP and other service delivery complaints, adding that she does not decline requests by community groups that require her services.

While I agree that no law bars Madonsela from addressing any event as long as it is not meant to paint or portray other parties - whether governing or not - in a bad way, it is important that she makes an informed decision whether to accept such invitations. She should also bear in mind that she will always be accused by some opportunists of being "bias" and all that non-sense.

What I do not agree with is calls by some - on the social networks specially - that she resigns or be sacked because her appearance at an opposition party's event compromised her office and its independence. Those who say this speak as if her independence and impartiality would not have been brought into question had she accepted an invitation to address the ruling party event. So if the ANC really "supports" the PP's National Stakeholder Consultative Dialogue, it should therefore trust her judgement - just as it has done with her reports on corruption and related investigations that her office had been asked to probe.

While I find the ANC questioning the PP wanting, I, however, agree with the party that in these PP events and many others that are to come - Madonsela should just "make sure that such initiatives are not open to abuse by political formations" not only by opposition parties but by the ruling party itself (as it now seems to have done) in order to "advance their political agenda" - whatever it is.

But as friend of mine noted just before publication of this article, it is indeed the PP's "the integrity of the public office that is in question rather than her right as an individual". Regards,

Akanyang Merementsi

Follow me on Twitter at @AkanyangM
When former President Nelson Mandela’s wife, Winnie, reportedly said in an interview with The London Evening Standard newspaper in March last year that the old man “had let us [black people] down” and that he apparently agreed to a bad deal for us black people and that nothing seems to have changed as “economically, we [black] are still on the outside” and that “the economy is very much white” – many people said that was not true. But come on, really? What has changed anyway?

Ever since Winnie denied granting the newspaper’s journalists, Nadira Naipaul, an interview – allegations that journo repudiated, saying Winnie was not telling the truth in an interview with City Press newspaper – not much has been said or rather, interrogated as to whether Mandela indeed did sell us out black people during the negotiated settlement with the apartheid government or not. Nothing, or at least not to my expectation.

Assuming what Winnie said was true, if not close to the truth, I agree with her that Mandela indeed “had let us [black people] down”. What is worse is that even after he had left the presidency, taken over by former President Thabo Mbeki and now by Jacob Zuma, I still think that many of us black people have even been let down worse than we were by Mandela himself. I also believe that, yes, the economy is still in the minority white people and that will continue to be like that until...

But of course this was before she denied the allegation in an interview or having agreed to it or denying having had any interview with Naipaul that “had caused so much confusion” in the country with the ruling African National Congress which Mandela is still a member of and which at the time said it was still to verify “exactly what [she] said”. And it was only on her return from the US that she denied having granted Naipaul an interview and remarked as she has been reported.

Winnie denied what Naipaul claimed she said in an interview with The Evening Standard newspaper, saying the alleged interview was “an inexplicable attempt to undermine the unity of my family, the legacy of Nelson Mandela and the high regard with which the name Mandela is held here and across the globe”.

Writing the Sunday Times denying allegations that she told The Evening Standard newspaper that she said “This name Mandela is an albatross around the necks of my family”, that we “all must realise that Mandela was not the only man who suffered”, that “there were many others, hundreds who languished in prison and died” and that “many unsung and unknown heroes of the struggle, and there were others in the leadership too, like poor Steve Biko, who died of the beatings, horribly all alone” – Winnie “categorically” denied this as “completely false”. She said she “gave no interview of any kind to Ms Naipaul” and that it was “therefore not necessary for me to respond to the far-fetched content of a fabri-
cated interview”.

Winnie, according to the foreign newspaper, said Mandela “did go to prison and he went in there as a burning young revolutionary. But look what came out”. She criticised the South African media for picking up the story and publishing its “verbatim” which she found “even more disturbing”. She asked: “Does it mean that because they could not reach me they would give a distant journalist and a paper known for its sensationalism the benefit of the doubt, and not me?”

The Evening Standard newspaper quoted Winnie as saying she “cannot forgive him [Mandela] for going to receive the Nobel [Peace Prize in 1993] with his jailer [FW] de Klerk”. “Hand in hand they went”, she is quoted as saying of Mandela and De Klerk.

Winnie apparently asked if we thought “Klerk released him from the goodness of his heart” and went on to say “the times dictated it, the world had changed, and our struggle was not a flash in the pan, it was bloody to say the least and we had given rivers of blood”. She said she “had kept it alive with every means at my disposal”. Winnie’s denial of the interview reminds me of what I said of our media a while back that they write crap on a slow news day.

But being a reasonable person that I believe he is, I suspected Mandela must have been hurt by Winnie’s remarks, if they were ever true, despite her denying them. And assuming that this fabricated interview is anything to go by, I would have agreed with a couple of her points though, that:

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a “charade”. This was confirmed to a certain degree by a Constitutional Court ruling that input of the victims, relatives and family members of the those whose loved once were victims of apartheid crimes and have applied for presidential pardons must be taken into account. As she apparently put it: “How does it help anyone to know where and how their loved ones were killed or buried?”

Mandela may have let us down not just for the fun of it but because at the time it felt “the right thing to do for his people and the country at large”. I have always maintained, and still do, that despite how many of us – if not the whole world view and envy Mandela and appreciates what he had done – he must have done something terrible wrong that if we are to know of it “all the adoration, love and respect and everything good he deserves and we think of him right now would all go away in a second if were are to know nothing but the whole truth about the ‘negotiated settlement’ for our freedom and democracy. What I am trying to say is that Mandela must have done something terribly bad we do not know of to this day and which we probably will never know. But good for him that we do not know that or lucky to those that do know but will dare not tell the world. And if letting us down or cracking a “bad deal” for us was the only option he had at the time, then so be it.

Mandela has been and is sometimes turned into a “corporate foundation” which he has “no control (of) or say any more (in matters that relate to him or the foundation itself)”. Even more sadly, as Winnie apparently put it: “He is (abusively) wheeled out globally to collect the money and he is content doing that [and] the ANC have effectively sidelined him but they keep him as a figurehead for the sake of appearance”. And this is quite true. We have seen this before during and before last 2009 general elections.

Lastly, we have somewhat “biased” media coverage here in South Africa for important things that should receive more media coverage but do not, and that things that are not in the public interests get the most coverage. And this is
same point I have addressed before.

But whatever the case, and assuming there is any truth to the 'fabricated' interview, here in South Africa one is certainly entitled to express a constitutional right to freedom of opinion and expression irrespective of where in the world one is.

Sunday Times reported that Naipaul “could not be reached for comment” while the newspaper’s managing editor Doug Wills told the SABC two days prior that “the interview did take place, and that [Winnie] posed for a picture with Nadira and [his husband] after it”. But City Press then quoted Naipaul as saying: “... [Winnie] should stand by her controversial words and show the great leadership for which [she’s] become know”.

The Evening Standard journalist told City Press that she stands by the “contents of the interview” which was conducted in July 2009 when she visited Winnie’s home in Soweto with Mandela. Her insistence on having interviewed Winnie came after Winnie denied granting her the fabricated interview when she visited South Africa in the year alleged.

What is also surprising and which to date has not been clarified by neither newspapers (City Pres and The Times) is Naipaul’s claim to City Press that the alleged fabricated interview with Winnie took place in July 2009 while The Times on the other hand reported the interview to have take place August that same year. Who is fooling who here?

Mandela is a symbol of reconciliation and peace. But he is also a potent symbol of Struggle over oppression, has become an inspiration to all people who suffer oppression, and has demonstrated that one can wage a just war to achieve freedom and people's power, Winnie wrote of the former and first democratically elected president.

Bruella Gila wrote to the newspaper asking “why then would a person of [Winnie’s] stature resort to fear and denialism in fear of reprisal by fellow comrades or even worse being declared an outcast in a party [she has made her home since her youth]?”.

In her interview with City Press, Naipaul said she “took notes during the interview”.

Many fellow bloggers and opinionated South Africans, like Khaya Dlanga, wondered “what it is that maybe Mandela could have done” to Winnie that may have led to the alleged interview. Dlanga suggested that Winnie was “mistaken” on Mandela because she spoke of him “as if it was not the ANC collective that made the decisions that caused her to complain about Nelson Mandela by [placing] all the blame squarely on his shoulders”.

Winnie, said Dlanga, acted as if she was “not part of the NEC that agreed to the principles that would lead to the formation of a new South Africa”.

Another fellow blogger, also an opinionated South African, Sipho Hlongwane, like me, wondered if indeed Mandela had sold us out.

So, what is your take? Were we black people sold out by Mandela?

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At some point, in our not so distant past, men were never completely dressed up unless they wore hats. My father's album is filled with pictures of bourgeois-looking figures adorned in Stetsons, Ayer's & Smith and Dobbs. The more flamboyant ones with feathers on them. I never really understood why, because I've always preferred my head clean-shaven. I guess it was the wisdom of the day. Times have changed, not necessarily for the better though.

Modern day men roam the Earth with little or no headgear. We are, however, encouraged to keep it clean. Since not all men are born equal, clean to me may mean something totally different to a figure like David Beckham. When Thabo Mbeki was still the president of the country. My mother used to discourage me from leaving my hair long and not shaving my beard, by drawing comparison to him. Each time I imagined my hair and eyebrows grey with unkempt beard and moustache that resembled those of our former president, I would immediately go under the razorblade. The man achieved a lot, but sadly he can't add the title of a "pin-up man" to his long and illustrious CV.

When Mbeki didn't return a missed call, he had received earlier, he was recalled and Kgalema Motlanthe became the number one citizen. His goatie greyed out as soon as he walked into the Union Buildings. I'm glad he never tried to dye it black, as I find it quite chic. Does anyone know if Sheen or Inecto comes in snow white because I'm considering getting my goatie dyed to resemble Motlanthe's, in protest that he gets given a longer stay at the helm of our politics.

In 2008, a Chicago senator with Kenyan roots burst into the scene as a young politician vying for a top America job. He was later to be voted in as president of the "land of the brave and home of the free". When Barack Obama became president, his hair was pitch black. When I saw him on CNN, recently, I almost mistook him for Thabo Mbeki. His hair is greying at a faster rate than the Arab protests are erupting.

If you still haven't found a snow white Inecto or Sheen, call off your search for I am running for presidency of the state. That should give my pitch black hair that snow white highlight, I so much envy.
The failures of a single sided reconciliation project is starting to show that a reconciliation where justice is not served will eventually lead to place whereby the perpetrators are seen to be of a higher standing than the victims. Reconciliation was negotiated for by politicians who “represented” the views of the majority of the black victims against the perpetrators who in this case where a minority white elite who had grown up in a country where they were more equal than the original inhabitants of the land that they colonized. From the time that Jan Van Riebeck landed on the Cape in 1652, the first victims of white oppression were the San and Khoi people who were the original inhabitants of Southern Africa. They had to undergo a process whereby they were being “civilized” by their colonizers in order to fit into the so called “pure race” as they were the only people who could classify what a civilized person had to look and act like. The results are there for one to see as the San people were not only deposed of their land, but alcoholism resulted in many of them losing the essence of life that they lived. With the San and Khoi out the way after deadly battles, the move went Northwards into places such as modern day Natal and the Eastern Cape where a mainly black population lived and they too were deposed of their land.

In 1910 with the creation of the Union of South Africa, black people’s lives were now in the hands of the English who were in control of the Cape and Natal colony as well as the Afrikaners who were in control of the Free State and Transvaal. The Land Act of 1913 ensured that a black majority had to share a mere 13% of the land while a minority white population had to share 87% of the land that was available; the beginning of Apartheid. By the time the National Party came into power under the leadership of D.F Malan in 1948, the effect of apartheid that was to come was already being felt by the majority black population who were not citizens in their own country. Over the next 42 years the human rights violations that were committed under the name of the “Bible” as a way of separate development as well as maintaining that one race is more pure than another were so severe on black people that many were arrested, left the country to go into exile and others killed for trying to be equal in the country of their birth. Then came the ever changing moment on February 2 1990 when F.W De Klerk declared that all political prisoners would be released and the unbanning of the ANC and PAC. A brave move by him then.

The negotiation period between 1990 and 1994 was a time wherein the ruling National Party ensured that with democracy being the new order of the day, they will settle for a situation where they come out and admit fully to the atrocities that they committed but in doing so they will be exempt from prosecution. Mandela and Tutu agreed. The Truth and Reconciliation Act of 1995 was drawn up and it was agreed that those who do not come out and speak the truth will be prosecuted by the National Prosecuting Authority. Some did come out and admit guilt and reveal the full extent of the atrocities they committed while others remained at home and watched as the proceedings continued. Blanket amnesty was given to criminals who knew very well that all they had to do was some how show some sort of remorse and their lives will carry on while those
who suffered at their hands must live with the scars and the thought that their loved ones will never ever see the democracy they fought so hard to obtain.

Blanket amnesty creates issues because on the one hand South Africa had to get past the racial oppression that black people had to endure for many years, but in the same breath the perpetrators whether fighting for liberation or fighting to maintain oppression, had to be jailed for the killings of innocent people. A legitimate system needs to uphold the rule of law while at the same time being able to reconcile perpetrators with the victims. Giving perpetrators blanket amnesty creates a situation where those that suffered feel like politicians negotiated their way into power at the expense of the majority black population who still suffer from racial oppression even in present day South Africa. The Reconciliation Project is a failure in that some perpetrators never came out to admit to their crimes yet the NPA is yet to even prosecute them. The lives of ordinary South Africans have not improved at all yet our politicians drive around in cars that make them look like Hip Hop artists. Political freedom should not be about a small clique but about the greater good of the masses. Until such a time that people are held responsible for their actions, our justice system as well as the Tutu and Mandela Reconciliation project will remain failures in the eyes of ordinary black citizens. Sometimes a fight through the barrel of a gun looks more legitimate than a process of negotiations where those in power are more equal than others.

This is just a thought from a concerned son who sees how an “Animal Farm” style negotiation process was used. It seems as if George Orwell was years ahead of his time... Equality, what Equality?

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AWAKENING COGNITION

Head above the clouds
Lost and found
in celestial playgrounds
I'm on a natural high
beaming with a smile
Colour me blue
the feeling is so... true
It's all within', freedom reigns supreme
And I'm peddling up against the stream
in this river of lost dreams
Dead fishes go, with the flow
What's your ultimate goal?
is it worth dying for?
First I... went to war
with my very own self
Before I found it's true essence
Hidden treasures in my chest, join this adventure
Come into my life I have so much to give,(all in nature)
For this love, I lost my mind
While I was following my heart
Should I leave it all behind?
Or should I get back to the start
Cupid must be stupid
a bow long bent grows weak
Well... love is more like a blame
You hardly put it next to your name
But quick to everyone else...
Hope I'm not too involved with my self
How important was Julius Malema in SA politics? Was he really a champion of the poor? Has he done anything for the youth of SA?

Allow me to argue a different point about Julius Malema. While Malema himself was enjoying bling at the expense of the poor, no one can argue that he alone brought important matters to fore. None of the leaders are/were willing to talk about poverty, economic freedom, nationalisation and the like in public. He is the only person of influence who has dared to do so, and in so doing has touched a nerve of capital, hence his suspension today. When he started speaking about poverty, nationalisation in our life time and the land question; white capital got unsettled and it did all in its power to ensure he is dealt with. Remember where his troubles started? It only after he started speaking about these things that plans were put in place to oust him. What is most shameful in my view is the position taken by the ANC, for he was advancing an important mandate; in my view. In his absence, who do you think will champion these things? He was so important in the eyes of white capital that anything he said they took it literally. Today nationalisation on the agenda because of him. Now if that is not important, then I don't know what is. Without Malema, please tell me who or how you are going to deal with these things because the ANC has so far shown it is not willing to engage or address them.

If memory serves me well, his troubles started when he fired a white journalist from ANCYL media briefing, raised nationalisation, said land should be taken from whites without compensation, said he supports Mugabe, said Botswana was undemocratic, said Thabo Mbeki was the best leader the ANC has produced, said the African agenda died when Thabo Mbeki left office and refused to apologise for these statements! Pardon my ignorance, but no one in SA politics has dared talk about these things publicly except Julius Malema. Today there is a commission looking into nationalisation, business is drafting an alternative policy to nationalisation, farmers today want to discuss land because they are afraid of what he proposed, the media was not happy because he said what he felt and thought without regard to public image, etc etc. I need someone to please tell me that Malema was not important to SA politics? That he was useless? I may not like his tactics, heck I don't like him, but you can't take away...
the truth 
that he has changed the face of SA politics 
for good. Let's be 
objective please in our pronouncements. As 
things stand, I dare say 
Julius Malema is more of a leader than Ja-
cob Zuma. Anyone who 
disagrees let's debate this matter, but let's 
please do so based on 
fact and not myth.

So a quick analysis of his fate points to a 
young man challenging a 
system, a system which has been fully em-
braced by the crop of 
leadership that are at the helm of South Afri-
ca. His challenges and 
daring remarks brought to light how brutal a 
system of capital is, and 
how intolerable it is to dissent.

The tragedy out of all this is the ANC. For it 
has failed to show 
leadership when it mattered. The ANC has 
always claimed to be champion 
of the poor, but as matters have panned out, 
are you still convinced 
that the ANC acts in the interests of all the 
citizens of this 
country? Or is it a case of some are more 
important than others?

Today I dare say Julius Malema is more of a 
leader than Jacob Zuma 
will ever be. The cat has been let out of the 
bag, South Africa knows 
what Julius Malema is about. Can you say 
the same about president 
Jacob Zuma?

Without having to justify 
Add this to your website 

There is nothing I wish to rectify 
I love being black like I love my high 
If you are a witness please testify 
I swear this my soul satisfy

The Lord is me shepherd, on his mercy I rely 
Amazing grace, so close to true-lies 
A lion in this jungle my roar terrifies 
Always come back like a repeat as if I never run 
out of rhymes

I touch your soul like a book of hymns 
I'm just a 'coal stone' rolling with the times 
"I love you", they weep, but MaZwai26 cries 
I don't step I stride as if I took 'Johnny' for a 
walk

I am loaded with words like prepaid talk 
When the fire burns them I will remain solid as 
rock

Like a bird in the sky this system I mock 
Time is of the essence, well not on my clock

Lost in in space, so lonely light years turned 
dark, I got no place to dock
If we as a country would be able to establish a Chinese sweat shop that manufactures blacks, who would be able gain a wealth status from that? Would it be the ANC and government or the Chinese?

More than 50 decades ago, around 1910, whites formed what we now call South Africa. South Africa would then be an organizational structure that would administer all that dwells with in it in accordance and rule of the minority.

With the minority status in mind whites knew that in order for them to have their right of way the majority had to be excluded from the administration of South Africa.

So they classified everyone and made sure that non-whites would not be able to take part in all democratic processes in the land.

Today in the Republic of South Africa you have the system reversed. The ANC now needs everyone to be non-white, black, so that they can benefit from all the support that they need. In the ANC’s abuse of power quest the ANC now needs everyone, coloured/Indian/Chinese, to be black. If they can have all ethnic groups classified as blacks, then more votes and support they are like-ly to get.

Imagine the Psychological effect it would leave on Indians if they would not be classified as blacks, chances are indeed that they would distort away from the anc. The same fate can be experienced when it comes to coloured’s that are also known as black.

During the Apartheid years Indians and coloured were seen as second, glorified assistants, to those in control of the administration, whites.

Today in the Republic of South Africa Indians and coloured are seen as second to those in control of the administration, blacks.

For the mere fact that these two ethnic groups, Indians and coloured, are playing a similar role during both era’s of rule, black and white rule, one should logically detect that there’s something wrong.

How can these two groups be in a similar position while we know that post and pre 1994 were two very big contradictions. It’s not just the ANC that benefits from the classification or votes, the Indians and coloured are benefiting extensively as well through our many policies, BEE/Affirmative action/employment equity.

During white rule, whites were the dictators and judicators of who can be South African. Indians were denied the liberty to be official citizens of this country until one Gandhi tabled a brilliant plan; that of Indians to assist whites in their program to gain control of blacks and their lands during the wars in Natal.

The globally great Gandhi’s plan was that the Indians would be the ones who would take care of the injured and starving white soldiers and generals while at war in the BUNDUS against the Zulus. So not only did whites have the “deluxe” of armour, they now had first aid as well, topped off with spiced nutritional care.
Whites could not resist this presentation, generous offer, from Gandhi and negotiations were concluded with Indians being finally granted South African citizenship at the cost of the many blacks, Zulus, who fell in the bush at the hands of the white bullet.

Coloured played a similar role. Whereas the Indians assisted at war, coloured’s did so at the workplace. Martin Luther King’s “house niggers” were represented by coloured’s here in South Africa where the coloured would watch and report every black persons wrong move, being at liberty to give out instructions for the white man, get all the left over’s and old clothes.

Today the coloured is still playing the role of the “house nigger”. In Cape Town every senior position is either in the white or coloured’s position, you as the black still come far behind the coloured. If it’s not the coloured then it will certainly be the Indian that will be recommended ahead of the black.

We should do away with the current abuse and treachery of ethnic classifications. With all this history and present events we as blacks should now be clear on our position: that there can only be one black, and that’s black. None in-between, similar or close to. If it’s not black then it will be labelled Indian, Coloured, or White.

Farewell to Earth's bliss
This world uncertain is
Fond are life's lustful joys
I’m sick, I must die
Lord have mercy on us!
Rich men, trust not in wealth, money Cannot buy you health
Physic himself must fade
All things to end are made
I'm sick, I must die
Lord have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour
Brightness falls from the air
Queens have died young and fair
I’m sick, I must die
Lord have mercy on us!

Haste therefore each degree
To welcome destiny
Heaven is our heritage
Earth, but a player stage
Mount we unto the sky
I'm sick, I must die
Lord have mercy on us!

We strongly urge you to forward our newsletters to friends and grow the reading and writing community. If you received this newsletter from a friend and would like us to send our future issues send blank email to info@ilikewhatiwrite.co.za
Ozzie Guillén is a 48 year old baseball coach born in Venezuela and resides in the US where manages a newly branded South Florida team, the Miami Marlins. He has been involved in the Major League Baseball since 1985 in which period he appeared in the game's premier championship series, the World Series, once as a player and won it twice as a coach.

Guillén recently hogged headlines for comments he made in an interview with Time magazine about the former Cuban leader Fidel Castro. "I love Fidel Castro," he said. The fact that Castro has survived for 60 years with plots to assassinate him was Guillén's reason for his admiration of communist leader. These comments angered the Cuban American community who called for Guillén to fired for his "insensitive views". Instead of getting rid of its coach, the Miami Marlins suspended him for 5 games and he had to apologise to the team's fans.

It's not hard to see how Ozzie Guillén would have been required to vacate his position had he managed an American National team, supposing one existed in professional baseball. However because it's an internal matter between him his teams and the fans, the Marlins had to take a decision that would appease its stakeholders, but not affect the team's ambitions for World Series success. A public apology and five match suspension later, the team is ready to get on with business.

This incident had me wondering how we as a nation would deal with the issue if it occurred in South Africa. Suppose one of the Super Rugby franchise team's coach spoke highly of an apartheid leader and it offended the teams' black fans, as it has the potential to, or a soccer coach endorsed the singing of "Dubul'ibhunu" at stadia and offended white fans. Would we even be protesting in the streets with placards demanding they get fired? I can foresee this, but I don't think we would be united in that call. We have become very good at shooting one another down that it's hard to remember when last it was we spoke with one voice as a country. Not even crime, HIV/AIDS or poverty and unemployment manages to be that one common enemy we all hold hands and stand up against as one unit.

Prior to '94, the oppressed stood together because the system was a common enemy. We appear not to currently have that one entity that would have us put our differences aside and denounce the ills with one voice; not Julius Malema's controversial utterance, not even those of Steve Hofmeyr. Even our identity as the "Rainbow Nation" is not embraced by all. There still exists some among us that mock the concept by saying there's no black in a rainbow and that all colours of the rainbow converge to form the colour white.

During the Rugby World Cup 2011, I watched with disbelief that some fans were openly supporting opposing teams because according to them the composition of the Springboks was not representative of the demographics of the country. The same argument could be used against the Proteas. Bafana Bafana has received similar criticism for not fielding enough white players despite poor results.

Very few would present a compelling argument in sup-
Port of the case that South Africa has a common identity that everyone recognises and embraces. Our diversity has been our national identity since political emancipation and behind our differences we strive to find common national values, but is it strength or weakness? If the Cuban American population of South Florida were as individualistic and divided in opinion on matters that affects their heritage and history, chances are the debate on Ozzie Guillén's comments would have began and ended on social media as is usually the case with us; no public apology and certainly no five match suspension.

Perhaps the Ozzie Guillén saga is an unnecessary occurrence, after all America is supposed to be a free country right? Right, "supposed" being the operative word. Speaking about Fidel Castro as a hero in America is almost as suicidal as chanting "heil Hitler!" in Jerusalem.Insensitive is speaking in endearment of the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide yet as many see Fidel Castro as a revolutionary in the same league as Ernesto Che Guevara, while others have experienced him as a dictator.

Enshrined in our constitution, free speech is a liberty that may need to be monitored lest it crosses the line, one's rights end where the next person's begin. However even the very same constitution that's revered as one of the best in the world is under attack, with some calling for it to be amended. Perhaps all we need is a common enemy such as UFOs to prevent us from being an army at war with itself.

Flowing veins
Alongside chains of dust
Blowing mystery in proper lanes
Showing thoughts that freeze minds

Steep visions that divide prominent members
Pure missions projected across continent satellites
We set alight candles of light
Trust commitment

Ceiling boards that take the fury
Between households
Dust treatment
Sealing diaphragms that make it blurry
For see men
Blessing mansions of kings with loving souls that move men to great lands
Time machines tick tock they stop
Birds migrate to greener postures as a flock
Regardless of the ticks they talk to each other with sequences of changing languages
Values of dramatic frames of segregated nations
Pressing buttons that stops blessings

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Looking thoroughly, at what “my ANC” government sings during elections and does the complete opposite after you vote for them. Let’s look at the mining industry on this briefly. You see, over the last 10/12 years there has been a huge boom in the mining industry. All commodity prices have rocketed and hit all sorts of new record highs. All our competitor countries (mining countries) have had their mining industries grow considerably (Australia, Canada and Russia) which means other than a considerable amount of revenue the countries have managed to generate they have also created a whole number of jobs as their mining industries grow and expand and increase production. This is not because these countries have better minerals than we do or better resources, it is purely due to investment. In mining, you invest billions with the idea that you are going to get your return on investment over a much longer period compared to regular business models.

This brings me back to my government, every year over this period of booming commodities our mining industry has been shrinking bit by bit and diminishing jobs in the process.

As much as the ANC keeps singing that nationalization is not the policy of the ANC they should clearly see that the fact that none of us are truly clear in terms of where they stand on the issue will keep squeezing our mining industry. We have ample minerals but the miners will never commit to a country that will keep chanting about mine grabs and nationalization. I truly see no point in pushing agendas that are clearly doomed to fail or that will just keep foreign investment foreign to us. I feel that it is high time that we play open cards and therefore as a result allowing us to grow this industry to the stature that it should be. We all know that the only way out of this trough of joblessness is to drive investments in all industries.

If we take a look at what happened to Zambia after Kaunda’s Government went on a nationalisation reform, we can all see how catastrophic that idea was. Fair to say that there were two oil crisis’ after the reforms, but one cannot blame the crisis’ for the downfall of the Zambian economy. It all came from the macro-economic policies which were implemented by the previous regime. I understand that most people find the notion of nationalisation very noble and that the way to go is to share all the wealth of a country amongst all its citizens, but fact of the matter is that all economic growth in any economy is driven by investment and no investors want to come and pour their monies into an economy that is pursuing nationalisation reforms. If we ever find ourselves nationalising our mines, we will start to see a drain instead of an inflow of capital and our economy will therefore shrink and the “noble” intention of our politicians will achieve the negative effect of what they keep claiming will be a great success in our mining industry.
There are many things that we as citizens of South Africa struggle with on a daily basis. Be it the daily challenges of having to live with our bad life choices, struggling with money issues, opportunities to create our own destinies or the struggles of finding or creating decent work. I sometimes feel like throttling myself when I start getting agitated by the senseless decisions that are taken in my name by “our leaders” everyday. There are many things that we all have to tolerate or learn to live with as a nation. But amongst the challenges we have as a country I feel that the unemployment issue is of critical importance. The official unemployment rate of this country, according to StatsSA, is standing at 25.7% and the youth unemployment is at over 50%.

Finance and National Planning Commission Minister recently came out in support of relaxation of our labour laws to stimulate the creation of jobs in this country. This came as a response to calls by big business, civil organisations and the general public calls for job creation. Some individuals in government also saw that drastic measures would have to be taken for them to deliver on the promise of 5 million jobs. As we all know, we have very strict or rather very restrictive labour laws in this country. I understand that the idea behind the implementation of such laws were noble, but at some point we have to start to accept that in as much as these laws are achieving what we wanted in the first place, they are on the other hand causing the economy to haemorrhage jobs at an alarming rate. We have a manufacturing sector that is dying off because our laws do not allow the labour force flexibility for companies to adapt with the ever changing global economy. This causes enterprises with units that dysfunctional to be forced to keeps taking losses until they go under. I think relaxation of these restrictive laws is the only way our government can begin to make a dent on the great rate of unemployment this country of ours has. I see no other way to change the current situation other than taking this rather difficult path. For as long as these laws stand we will keep blocking young people from entering the job market. We all know that it is much easier to get a job while you have a job. I am not saying I am in favour of exploitation of our people. But we have to understand that South Africa is not a planet on its own.

We are now living in a global community and if our country keeps holding on to the laws of yesterday then we will always be lagging behind other countries instead of leaping forward. Our country has to come to terms with the fact that the structure of the world economy has changed and the days of finding a job with an employer, and staying with that employer (and perhaps remaining in that job) for an entire career, are long over. Employers have to constantly keep adapting their enterprises to the ever changing world economy. People may have all sorts of things to say about China and its respect for labour laws, but it also has one of the fastest growing middle classes in the world. All of this because someone was given an opportunity to have their first job.

Youth Entrepreneurship will only be stimulated when they (youth) are in the working environment. When people are working and getting stimulation, that is when they will get to see gaps in the economy and market opportunities. Let’s go back to the proposals made by Finance minister Pravin Gordhan and NPC Minister Trevor Manuel came out in support of the relaxation. Cabinet immediately shot this idea down before the discussion went anywhere. I really fail to see how cabinet thinks that by blocking the youth entrance into the job market they will somehow magically create more jobs. I would maybe like to end this by asking you this: How else are we supposed to address this unemployment issue with such restrictive laws?
Dear Mr Macozoma, I know South Africa respects you dearly. You are quite an accomplished individual, and one need only look at your educational achievements. But most importantly, who can ever forget your forays into the business world? You and you compatriots came and made an impact with the first wave of black empowerment deals. I too acknowledge these achievements.

But you see mhlekazi, I have a long memory; for it seems everyone has totally forgotten so easily!

I look at the state of education in South Africa and I wonder if we will ever get it right. Well some argue that things have turned around for the better, maybe they have. But where I come from I see a world in crisis. I see black children going through the worst system of them all. And let me dare say that what they are going through is worse than the Bantu Education I got, which was the worst form of education a person can receive.

But why would I say that? Well, during my Bantu Education days, certain things were a given and were never compromised. Take language for instance. Every black child HAD to learn their mother tongue, without which they could never pass any class. That was a good think because children grew up knowing they language, no matter what. Today black children do not have to pass their language in order to progress in school. Isn't everything rooted in language?

The standard of education has dropped beyond belief, although everyone is celebrating the supposedly good matric results!

You see sir, during my days at school, 40% was the pass rate; period. This little fact was non negotiable. And we all knew it.

Today I am shocked to see children passing with a mere 31% passing mark? Goodness, what kind of students are we producing? Is it any wonder then that they fail terribly at varsity? Because we take a child who has achieved a 35% pass into a system where suddenly they must achieve a 50% pass!

While we are talking about the standard of education, why is it that only black children have had to do a simplified form of education? I mean all they get are simplified guides, no more text books to read. Today there is even lower grade for matrics!!!

Imagine my shock to witness the debacle at the University of Johannesburg last week! Thousands of black children queuing to get a place at varsity. Why?

Well, some might have forgotten that it was you sir who recommended that universities in black areas be merged into former white only universities. It was you who said technikons must be closed and merged into universities. The result?

The result is the mess we find ourselves in today, while you have moved on and are enjoying a good life in business.
Your move meant that education would become a dream for a black child because overnight education become unaffordable for the masses! Gone are the days when a black would get a degree at a second rate university like Vista. But at least they had a degree, and they could find some job, however menial it was.

Today we have the highest rate of dropouts at varsity that we have never seen before. Even simple universities like Unisa are today not accessible as all South African universities have been priced out of range for the majority of the people. Today Unisa costs the same as a residential university used to cost a mere two years ago. And the worse thing is that the black children who want to study have no where else to run, because you have closed down technikons, which used to house the vast majority of us.

Is it not time that the South African public start asking you questins behind your take on the current state of affairs? I am yet to hear you, or any of your colleauges, make statements about the sorry state of higher education. Why is it like that mhlekazi?

Please note that even though I come from Bantu Education, I was not fortunate enough to afford any form of higher education. And today I frankly find studying ludicrous because of the costs.

In the interest of trying to fix our ailing higher education system, perhaps you could help us understand why you did what you did? I think a fresh debate/discussion on this matter could be useful.

Yours in no education.
I’m a firm believer in don’t criticize; but rather inspire. With this article I have excused such a conviction. Apologies also for the title. Excuse any impositions found in the article. The attitude is not to impose but inspire.

Political party manifestos; I rarely read them. One impression I hold of all the political parties in South Africa; is that they are not of a sustainable and legacy orientated future.

What is the real problem; or rather the challenge and strive. Where do want to get as a country? Let’s start here. Us as blacks believe that life started in 1994 when the first democratically elected government came into existence. It’s obvious what the past deprived us of.

It’s ok for one to think they are above the other. Our society should not allow the manifestation of such thinking into treatment. That goes for all races, all tribes and any societal category.

I’m a rural boy. I think I have been exposed to the last degree of poverty; I’ve seen it all. Poverty in South Africa affects mostly blacks but as well as other races. Any solution to alleviate poverty is good; as it will help people, not just black people.

Back to the topic. Why are all these other parties not better than the African National Congress?

All I hear from these parties is better service delivery, fairness, defeating corruption and competitiveness. They speak the same language but the ANC represents the majority; native majority that was suppressed for years. The ANC does have their policies to remedy the past (effective or not); in a democratic society. We thank them for the efforts.

They are all on about doing right where the ANC does wrong. Here is what all South Africans won’t mind hearing: plans to grow the local economy, continentally. We import more of what we can produce and that which we can slowly surely learn to produce.

Which party will guarantee (through timely and tangible plans) us a future where we will own our prosperity; fully own the fruits of our demand as consumers? Lest did you know: all these international companies investing in Africa are doing so because our demand is new, sophisticating, desirable, opportune and portable. Not to mention that our democracy is strengthening and leading day by day. Western companies have done business in the harshest circumstances and totally undemocratic countries. South Africa is heaven.

This is what is in the minds of black people: we accepted reconciliation without justice for a chance to take part in the economy. Only a chance to participate in the economy as equals. Obviously with a future (economic policies) that does compensate for what apartheid/colonialism denied us of.
To me it seems all these political parties are not securing such ambitions. Although the ANC is not 100% on track; progress is being made; and the path thereto.

The beautiful thing that the government did when it took over from the apartheid government was to keep the economy going and build from that strength. Actually the trade sanctions on the apartheid government where removed in the mist of the negotiations to democracy. Thabo Mbeki feared that the South African economy would crumble.

Service delivery and eradicating corruption is not our vision. They are challenges; challenges that can be solved in a minute; but it is not happening.

Until the ANC government decides to go after an African oriented vision and really eradicate corruption; they will sell “defeating corruption” to us voters.

Any new (black) political party to lead/ campaign with a manifesto that pushes for a “business culture where South Africa’s prosperity will be owned South Africans” and “proper controls to prevent and defeat corruption” can win the majority’s confidence.

South Africa’s problem is not the insufficiency of jobs. We need businesses with new ideas, new creations and new generation of products. We need businesses that will employ 2 people until they have the same employee base as ABSA, FNB, Coca Cola etc. Can ABSA, FNB or Coca Cola double their employee base by 2015? I’m talking of companies like Mxit, Tutuka, Raiz Corp, Facebook, Apple and the likes.

Follow me on twitter @TiisetsoMaloma

Gag the false Prophet, stop the blasphemy flowing out his silver tongue.

Don't worry there is plenty time to swim in sweet decadent Babylon.

No its not over.

Unwind remain unbound who cares for these Freaks anyway?

Its not over. You get another day in the Dingy Paradise

Look all around.... All we got is time.

Time to wriggle in quick sand

In the end it won't matter how far low we go.

Its not over.

Carry on.

Tell the Priests we are our own Kings.

Fiends for Cash

Thieves for Trust,

Spare us the Religion

who cares for the Messiah born a Jew?

Its not over' they say

They are slaves to their own Will and they Prefer it this way.

World is on Fire and yet they say "ITS NOT OVER"
Sushi and our minister have missed the point

I obviously do not care for Kenny Kunene. He is filthy rich, no matter how he may have made those millions, and he enjoys wasting his wealth. He also enjoys threesomes and foursomes. That clearly is his business and I can't begrudge him any of what he enjoys.

I do however find his treatment of this nation detestable and that is just putting it mildly. The Sushi King, as he parades himself, was in the country some few weeks ago, and initially, I was very proud of the man for breaking the one-man so-called cultural boycott that has been forced down the throats of many South Africans who have been paid to come and perform in the kingdom. The Sushi King wasn't intimidated like the rest of the artists who have broken their contracts with promoters to appease certain people who have masqueraded themselves as legitimate Swazis. So, for that I was pretty pleased with Kenny. And that was the end of it.

I was later to learn that he wined and dined, and he was wined and dined. He was later introduced to our king, during the reed dance. I knew right then, especially when I heard he was filming this for some reality programme of his, that there was trouble coming.

It came to pass on Saturday, when his show, aptly titled “So What?” buried the dagger deep in the hearts of the Swazi people—and the person carrying it was Mr Kunene, smiling all the time. It left a bitter taste.

Quite honestly, Macford Sibandze should have seen this coming, but that he did not has nothing to do with him seeing God in every human being, it is simply that he miscalculated this situation. I do believe that the minister for Tourism, who was sticking out like a sore thumb throughout the weekend Kenny was in the country, has missed the point about this brouhaha that has now gripped all of us.

He and his mate Kenny too.

Both of them, and perhaps their mates, happen to think that those of us who are upset at his programme are either filled with jealousy, or that we think Kenny should not have been allowed into the border. No, that is far from it. What I am really annoyed about firstly is the manner in which Kenny and his programme has been so desperate as to improve his ratings by degrading the people of Swaziland who treated him with such warmth.

The programme was everything we could have expected from a South African’s view of Swaziland—it was distasteful, degrading and embarrassing. The less said about his presenter, that blonde presenter who did everything in her power to show off this country as so backward as possible she even embarrassed herself in the process.

My goodness, she demanded market vendors to accept her American Dollars when she purchased the traditional attire she was to wear at the reed dance—as if in South Africa they use US dollars and
are the official currency! What was the point with that, other than to show those poor women, trying so hard to earn a living, as so poor they did not even have a swiping machine? (Yes, she was astonished there was no swiping machine for her credit card!).

And yet, you would have expected her, a South African national, to carry the Rand, which we accept in this country.

She also insulted the king, at every opportunity she got, and I am still amazed that she was allowed to say the things she said. In fact, she said what is so special about this guy that so many girls will want him to take them as his wives. He must be something special. But then again, perhaps that is what comes with a cutting edge programme as Kenny wants to show, and it goes without saying that that is the view of many South Africans of course.

So right then, I asked myself, what was the point then with all those people trying so hard to be so hospitable to the crew, to Kenny Kunene? What was the point then with the minister going out of his way to welcome guests, and try and educate them about this country?

Oh, but the minister has tried his best now to distance himself from this. I believe he has missed the point too—entirely. The minister thinks the public is blaming him for bringing Mr Sushi into the country; far from it. The public is upset that the man he showed off as a good man, and a friend has gone and betrayed him and this nation. What we would have expected therefore would have been for the minister to simply share those sentiments and be dismayed at the audacity and then leave it at that. We would all have been fine.

This has nothing to do with what the man was doing in this country. This has a lot to do with what he has done, AFTER being given the red carpet treatment. Otherwise, the last we checked of course Swaziland is a free country, and he would have been free to come in, do as he pleases without all the pomp and glamour that went with it. I would have been least bothered then, and I would not have wasted so much precious space writing about a man who enjoys degrading women. That is his favourite hobby, but then again, I understand that those are the women who enjoy it.

This of course brings me to my conclusion. No, that he bedded four Swazi women is also not the argument. The argument is that he did and showed it off, and still came out to say he did the best to put Swaziland on the map. What map, Kenny? That is the betrayal right there. But then again, it is all about the ratings, so Kenny Kunene must be laughing to himself right now.

Follow me on twitter @MbongeniBingo
Our legend is told through stories written in blood on the streets of the Soweto's and Gugulethu's of this land.

It remains in the minds of our unsung heroes.

It lingers in our minds with every thought of our fallen heroes.

Freedom was the reality they seek, and the dream we'll never realize as we have no clue what it entails.

But we dare not fail.

We claim freedom while our minds are in knots and binds.

We seek emancipation of mind, when we have no clue where the shackles lie.

We look to find ourselves in a history told to us by our oppressor, feeding us lies making our fore fathers seem like self-hating vultures.

We are lost.

But we dare not fail!

We have not yet grapple with knowledge of self.

The beginning of freedom would present the ending of our illusion of self.

Our identity was stolen from us and we were left with nothingness.

We are at crossroads at a change of time and history, yet we have not embraced the challenge of our time.

Our freedom is meaningless as we play dumb to our reality.

But we dare not fail.

We claim freedom without defining its content and substance.

Freedom is an illusion personified by lies and greed.

Our participation in our freedom is nil, yet we claim freedom and say we live in it.

How can a legend be told when there is no story to tell?

How will the future generation inherit its legacy when no inheritance is left?

History has bequeathed much more responsibility on us more than any of the previous generation. We dare not fail!

Today we are lost to the reality of who we are and that of who we wish to be.

Today we seek self knowledge to create self definition.

Today we stumble profusely because we are free....today we claim freedom but lack knowledge....today we are lost, but we dare not fail.

Because this is our Legend told through Knowledge, Understanding and Wisdom...today we keep seeking more knowledge because it is not limited to our reality.

Today we are taking the decision to be, because we have too far to go, yet we seem so near, but through it all we look beyond the illusion of freedom.

This is why....WE DARE NOT FAIL.
'Stop stealing and fighting  
Crime doesn't pay.'  
Now I'm singing and writing;  
Rhyme doesn't pay.  
Kneeling and supplicating  
With this hymn I pray;  
Though I'm about to stray,  
In your everlasting  
Mercy Lord let me stay.

Through those imparting  
Knowledge about your way  
You said crime doesn't pay.

This is just a metaphor;  
Let's see it for what it's for;  
Life is not all daffodils.  
Yes crime kills  
So does the bills.

Why must I wait for what life offers  
While a bunch of lazy loafers

Are stealing from the nation's coffers?  
I too will become a thief that pilfers  
But with a strategy that differs  
From that of lazy loafers  
Who steal from our coffers.  
The loot won't fund my living room sofas  
But coffers aimed at turning Train Surfers  
Into World Wide Web surfers.  
This will make sure none of them suffers  
The indignity of dying like heifers.

This I shall do to change their way.  
With my life for this I'm prepared to pay.  
I am prepared to pay  
Because if crime is used to betray  
The freedom that was denied  
Through tactics of delay,  
Surely they have not lied  
Those who said crime doesn't pay
To the lay African the concept of a "Rainbow Nation" is lucrative yet alien, if not utopian. How do you sell a rainbow to the colour-blind? How do you make a nation wish upon a star when all they see is dark clouds hanging over their heads. The words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu still echo loudly in my mind in his famous "We are the Rainbow Nation-We are free" speech. Are we, really? The proponents of the Rainbow Nation fallacy have soon forgotten that black and white are the only known colours to an African child. Like light and darkness, these spectrums can't exist side by side. Light chases away darkness, likewise darkness depicts the absence of light. You are either black or white, nothing in between. This is the colour of our world, of our people, of our hearts and minds. Nothing in between.

I guess the proponents of the Rainbow Nation had good intentions by marketing the concept. Surely they were intoxicated by the freedom drug. Whatever the excuse we can suggest, my question is still up for auction: How do you sell a rainbow to the colour-blind nation? Going once, going twice, gone...!It's kinda ironic that yet being so colour-conscious, we are still so colour-blind. We don't dream in colour, but in black and white. I also find it very funny that the concept of a Rainbow Nation was a brain-child of the black elite. Is this an attempt to appease the slave masters in the expense of the black majority? Why do I still get the feeling that somebody is still sucking some white toes?

The concept of the Rainbow Nation was prematurely and badly marketed to the not-so-ready clientele. Everybody drunk from the freedom wine, staggering and chanting freedom songs, the so-called "whites" even sang along with us as they reluctantly walked us through the gates of the promised land. Somebody started hallucinating about seeing a rainbow and started spreading rumours. Everybody caught wind of it and started thinking this might be true. Like the ridiculous Truth and Reconciliation Commission, people started imagining that this is exactly what the blacks need to move on, fallacious concepts.

The truth is, in black and white, we are still black and white. There is no rainbow anywhere, nor is there any truth in its reconciliating effect. The truth is, our black leaders dismayed failed to successfully help cross over the river Jordan. Seventeen years into our democracy, whites are still white, blacks are still black. The rich are still rich, the poor are still poor. Whites still call us by finger gestures followed by the occasional "yes baas" response. Blacks are still overcrowding trains and taxis to and from work, slaving to make a decent living. Farm-workers are still exploited for a meagre wage. Our grand-parents still wait on long queues, all day to collect their pensions from the window. Many black families still live below the poverty line, many, with no access to proper education and healthcare. The list is endless...Whites still enjoy the fruits of their Apartheid labour with guilt, no shame. Now where is this rainbow people are talking about? Where is the promised land? If someone can show them to me, forget I ever wrote this.
Writer’s Stage
Reader’s Heaven
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Log on to:
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he is someone child
he has a mother
a mosquito shudder
raising him on the muck
she labours beneath the sun
like all mothers due
payments due
she is due justice
she is due time
she is due
what about her
what about what
she has to go through
she went through
nine months
punches and kicks
riding on the back
of her hips
back breaking
she went down
below sand cut
she went to the river
to the lake
quaking these tremors
tree limbs and
femurs
and yes I am crying
and yes I am singing
and yes I am praying
she is due
and he
is someone's child
and some one
will have to pray
and someone
will have to pay
for the blood
of the migrants
and no one
will lay hands
on the righteous
time is due

it is hoarse baying
its a may flower
its a dowry
out of me
out of me
out of me
it's the sun
it's the sun
it's the sun
under
the cement block
under the cinder
under the sender
under the sender
fixin his plate
fixin his plate
render all
render all
under the cinderblock
under the dooms day clock
with all this soot
from the sugar mill
from all this root
from this everlasting rain
the trains coming
stumbling across the tracks
its black sunshine
its black sunshine
and yes I am crying
and I am singing
and yes I am crying
he is someone
I am someone's child
and her legs are spread
like the Pahokee canal
and she is due
time is due
she is due
she
is due
and he
is someone's child
and some one
will have to pray
and someone
will have to pay
for the blood
of the migrants
and no one
will lay hands
on the righteous
time is due
“Faith” is a fine invention
When Gentlemen can see –
But Microscopes are prudent
In an Emergency
Emily Dickinson

Young, silent observer
In social circles he stands reserved
He is part of all, but not
Jotting down notes with his elegant flowing mind script
Always adding to his intelligence supreme
Like a journalist in a war zone he can do nothing
Nothing but record the terrors
Taking note of human errors
Always adding to his heavily guarded vault of infinite intelligence
Observe is all he can do
It is no fault of his
He seems without feeling
Emotionally void
Grey-eyed ghost

Hands stuffed in pockets of faded blue jeans
He scours rodent-inhabited streets
To add to his already extensive library of thought
His presence paradox, phantom but not
His lips dry like the arid Kalahari from the lack of use
In the shroud of city death the grey-eyed phantom stands
Unseen, listening, jotting down and storing in a box
That might one-day spill all the secrets of life under a cranium saw

“Why do you just stand there?” I dare to ask
No reply
Just a penetrating silver glare

Blood begins to fall from a wounded sky
Drops fall like crimson jewels
He stares at the bleeding sky, emotions from the dawn of time finally stirred
Platinum tears hit the blacktop with unheard plops
He falls to the ground on his knees, arms skinny and limp at his sides
“Father, why?”
He asks in a parched tone

"The Lord said, ‘I was ready to answer my people’s prayers, but they did not pray. I was ready for them to find me, but they did not even try. The nation did not pray to me, even though I was always ready to answer ‘Here I am, I will help you’. “
"You were laughing and your eyes rolled back... Then I knew something was wrong," said my Nursing Sister Mom; ironically, that's how she saved my life. I had a busy job, that required I travelled throughout South Africa. I was in the office at 7 am everyday, and left no later than 7pm. My twins had just turned a year old, while their older brother had just started primary school.

My life was, if anything, beyond hectic. And I was pregnant, again. But I just didn't take a moment to listen to my body, so I just ploughed on. The father of my children was unemployed, poor man. I raised my suspicions to him and watched his eyes nearly popping out of their sockets. "You're just putting on a little weight, I don't think you're pregnant. Maybe you should start doing some roadwork," he nervously commented. And I convinced myself that he was right, so I bought some Herbex and started the process of "hlaselaring amafutha".

Then one afternoon, my mother came to visit and she was suddenly tense. "You have to see a doctor, you are not well." The next morning at 8am she was back, told me that she'd look after the kids, but it was important I saw a doctor immediately. Little did I know that was the beginning of a really bumpy ride. I went to see my GP, a tall Afrikaans poppie who was pregnant herself. She was excited when she saw the results of the pregnancy test, until she took my blood pressure.

"You, my dear, are not well. You have to go to the emergency room at once, I'm calling an ambulance. "Don't stress," I assured her. "I will drive myself, my car's outside." And off I went to the mall to buy something to eat before I went to hospital.

Eventually, after spending an hour at the mall, I made my way to Pretoria Academic Hospital (now known as Steve Biko Academic Hospital), where I sat in the wrong queue for 45 minutes. When I finally went to the correct section, a nurse approached me because she saw my referral slip and took my blood pressure - I saw the same look on her face that I saw on my mom and the GP. She called the porter and I was wheeled to High Care, still oblivious to the danger I was in.

At that point, in medical terms, my kidneys were failing, and I can't remember what else was packing up. In lay man's terms, I was "5 to" suffering a stroke, then a heart attack, then inevitably death. I was taken for a scan to check on the baby, and they confirmed that I was 26 weeks pregnant; 26 weeks of no care, and Herbex. Because the amniotic fluid was dark (because my blood pressure was high) they could not confirm if my baby had legs.
My partner and mom were already at the hospital, and my little sister had driven from Jo’burg to babysit the kids; everyone looked concerned, and I was just cracking jokes, and hoping for a healthy baby - with or without legs. What I didn't know was that my mom was called aside by the doctor to ask her whose life should be saved between the baby and I. She told the doctor that she should save mine as I had 3 kids at home who needed me. I remember crying uncontrollably when my mom told me this 8 months later on my birthday, only then did I realise how much danger I was in.

Injection after injection. Drip after drip. Tablet after tablet. Hell, they even had Professors from Tuks and Medunsa coming to see me. I was even the subject of an oral exam for one medical student. Fun and games. After some hours, an emergency Caesarean Section was performed. I remember asking the anaesthetist to put me under general anaesthetic. She looked at me with sad eyes and said "I'm afraid if I put you under, you might never wake up." I was still cheerful, and I giggled just before then when they asked me if I wanted to get sterilised.

Who would say no? I would have been crazy not to say no. When my daughter was born, the first thing I looked for was legs. Both were there, with feet too! Like any normal child. I don't remember much about what happened thereafter, just the warm feeling in my heart. I didn't even notice how small she was; she weighed 1,3 kg and she was just perfect. Her lungs were already formed so she didn't need an incubator, just had a touch of jaundice.

Yes, she was just perfect. I spent 32 days in hospital, getting medication around the clock while kangaroo-ing my little girl so that she could grow. We had the best care and medication available in the country, and every day my health improved. After a week and a half I was able to go to neo-natal ICU to feed my baby without swelling up. We were moved to a private room where I could move around a bit more. I finally had a visit from my other children, whom I had not seen for almost 3 weeks. They all had the "Mommy when are you coming home" look in their eyes. When my baby weighed 1,7 kg, we were discharged; just 2 days before Christmas Day. And that was probably the best Christmas ever. My daughter turned 6 in November - she's healthy and has never been back to hospital ever again.

I'm still on hypertension medication, and I will have to take a tablet everyday for the rest of my life. Its a small price to pay, if you ask me. I think I survived because I didn't know how bad it was. Sometimes, ignorance is bliss.

Follow me on twitter @MizAnne157

Every mother has a story to tell about the birth of the her child, we would like to hear yours. Send it to info@ilikewhatiwrite.co.za
Q: Hi doc. I’m 28yr old lady with a problem of not CUM when we see* with my partner and I don’t wanna loose him.
A: Send me an email so we can chat about this further - drsindivanzyl@gmail.com

Q: What is ilvitrim suspension?
A: Co-trimoxazole/Bactrim/Purbac/Nucotrim/Doctrim is an antibiotic that we give as prophylaxis. It is given to HIV positive clients with CD4 counts below 200 or those that have TB. We also give it babies who are breastfeeding from an HIV positive mother. The reason we give it is to try and prevent the client or the baby getting a certain type of pneumonia and diarrhea that is unique to HIV.

Q: Hiy doc plz explain for me how the baby carried by +v mom can get hiv while in the womb?
A: The main predictor of mother-to-child transmission is the viral load - the number of HIV copies in the blood. Most in utero transmissions are thought to occur in the last trimester of pregnancy. If the mother’s viral load is very high then the virus can cross the placental barrier in the last trimester.

The highest risk of transmission is during labour and delivery because the baby is now in direct contact with mother’s blood and amniotic fluid.

This is why it is so important for all pregnant women to know their statuses and take all the necessary medication to minimize the chances of mother to child transmission.

Q: Hi doc! My bby is 6wks old on formu fding & zidovudine, 2day I ve bn tking bby 4 pcr test in a public clinic, the RN told me tht she doesnt know about AZT only know with Nevirapine, so must I continue giving baby AZT until the results come back or what?
A: You stop the AZT syrup at six weeks and then baby starts Co-trimoxazole suspension.

Q: Doc should Odimuni taken at anytime at bed time or same time at bed time?
A: It should be taken at the same time every evening

Q: Hi doc I’m on haart, with my first baby I did not breastfeed now I’m 8 mnts preg I decided to breastfeed I’m scared the baby will get hiv.
A: The breastfeeding has conditions.

It must be exclusive - this means that baby will get nothing else but breastmilk and any medicines from a healthcare worker. And breastfeeding must be for six months. If you know that you can give breastmilk only for 6 full months, and not be pressured to start baby on solids and so on, then by all means please breastfeed.

Q: Hi dr Sindi. I would like to
ask about Zinplex, would u advise an HIV+ person to take Zinplex. Do u think it works? As it is also written that it is good for Hiv + people.

A: From what I have seen it is zinc supplementation. I have not read anything yet that emphasizes that zinc be supplemented in HIV-positive clients.

In the public sector we give Vitamin B Complex - and it works well. If you want to you can buy a good multivitamin like Centrum. That should suffice in my humble opinion.

Q: Hi Dr I formulae fed my baby from birth nw she's 5 weeks and have been giving her water and gripe water as well is that mix feeding?, and when bottlefeeding and mixing with solids does that put the baby in danger?

A: Firstly babies do NOT need water or solids before 6 months of age. Breastmilk only or formula only are just fine for all of baby's nutritional needs. As for over-the-counter baby remedies - those are a definite no-no.

Your baby is formula feeding - so the risk for HIV transmission is small BUT you do place baby at risk for allergies and intestinal disorders by giving water and solids before 6 months of age.

Babies that are breastfeeding and mixed feeding are at the highest risk for HIV transmission. That is why it needs to be made clear that breastfeeding is exclusive for the first 6 months. Breast only and of course medication from a healthcare worker.

Q: Hi doc, I'm the mother of the baby who tested + on a rapid test & negative on pcr. Thanx 4 your answer u don't knw how relieved am l. I was worried 2 death, now i can enjoy raising my child. She's the best thing that's ever happened 2 me.

A: Glad to have helped you! Enjoy motherhood! :-)

Q: Im 14 weeks preg now with a cd4 of 550 thy hve given me the zidovudine tbs nd told me to tke thm 2 tyms per dy @the same tym nd every 3 hours in labour nd the ferorus sulph 3tyms a day is tht ok

A: Perfect! That is correct! All the best!

Q: Doc I'm hiv pos and my cd4 count was 800 in May,I want to start treatment so that I minimise the chances of infecting my partner, and I want to get preg,what pills should I go on?

A: You need to see a doctor that is competent with dealing with serodiscordant couples. Where are you based? Email me and let me know so that we can find you a doctor for you. My email add drsindivanzyl@gmail.com

Q: Hi doc ,hiv + which doctor can I go to in meyerton or vereeneging

A: The Meyerton Community Health Care Centre has a good facility. I worked there for some
time. It is a public sector clinic. If you want to go to a private doctor then email me drsindivanzyl@gmail.com and I shall ask around for you.

Q: Hi doc I’m on haart can I breastfeed for 6 months then change to formula because actually I wanted to breastfeed fo 12 months. Now I hear that is going to be mix feeding what must I do.

A: The choice is yours. I know a mother whose baby stopped breastfeeding at 10 months of age and is HIV-negative. What I want is for you to make an informed decision but I am in no way discouraging you from breastfeeding for 12 months.

Q: Haai Doc my friend is HIV + and she is looking for life cover can u recommend one for her

A: She needs to make phone calls to each insurer and ask if they accept HIV-positive people and ask if there are any conditions or restrictions for HIV-positive members.

Q: Hello, is gynaguard safe to use, how often can i use it?

A: The vagina is a wonderful organ. It cleans itself. There is NO need for scrubbing, intimate washes, douching, spraying, a special ‘waslap’ to wash it, soap and water, powders ... I could go on but I am sure you get the message. Warm water is all you need to keep your vagina clean.

Q: Hi doc i want to know if AZT will affect my cd4 count which is 709 bcos i have a low blood

A: AZT Zidovudine is an antiretroviral drug. These drugs work by suppressing the virus' ability to make copies of itself. The virus makes these copies by using the CD4 cells. The CD4 cells die after being used in this way and thereafter your immune system starts to suffer. If this ability is suppressed then we can expect your CD4 count to go up. AZT has a good effect on your CD4 count - it increases it, even if slightly.

All patients that are on AZT also have to take iron supplements. We know that the main side-effect of AZT is anaemia - low haemoglobin and I suspect this is what you mean when you say you have 'low blood'.

Make sure that you are taking one ferrous sulphate tablet three times a day. This is what we give to ALL HIV-positive pregnant women who are on AZT. If you are not on ferrous sulphate then please go back to your clinic or doctor and ask for it.

If you need more info email me drsindivanzyl@gmail.com

A: Hello Doc my bby is 9mnts at 6weeks she tested -v she is on formula feeding since birth but at the clinic they continue givin her ilvitrim they said I must give it to her till he is one year. She is
12kg do I have to continue givin her this medicine?
Your baby does need to take the Ilvitrim/Co- trimoxazole/Bactrim/Purbac suspension any longer.
Babies that take this suspension are the ones that are breastfeeding and of course the ones that are HIV-infected.
Your baby is HIV negative and formula feeding. You can stop the Ilvitrim. Make sure that your baby goes for her final HIV test at 18 months of age.

Q: hi doc i am on haart n exclusively breast-feeding, baby tested neg for 6 weeks test she has rash on cheeks n body , went to a doc they say its an allergic reaction she gave me allergex n a cream so is it safe for baby to take allergex scared?
A: I would rather you figure out what is causing the rash. Use the cream as per instruction but Allergex causes drowsiness and I would be cautious with using it at this age.
Is it the washing powder you are using? Perfume on your clothes? Perfumed baby products? Look at those things first and make the necessary changes. Obviously if the rash persists then take baby back to the doctor.
My general advice - use the Sunlight green bar for all of baby's needs. Laundry and also bathing. Use plain white aqueous cream and if you really must use fabric softener for baby's clothes then use a hypoallergenic one.

Q: hi doc on life treatment baby is 12 weeks she tested neg they increased her dosage to 5ml of co-trimoxazole is it right?
A: Yes that is correct. All breastfeeding babies have to be on Co-trimoxazole/Bactrim/Purbac/Ilvitrim for the duration of breastfeeding. Bab- ies above 5 kg get 5 ml of the suspension daily.

Q: Hi doc, does Arv's cause high libido?
A: As far as I know, ARVs antiretrovirals have no effect on one's libido.

Q: I need to go counelling,.can u recommend a place in pta
A: Email me drsindivanzyl@gmail.com

Q: Hi Doc, I am 38 weeks pregnant and have been taking Pregnavit throughout the pregnancy, should I continue to take supplements (LactOcare) after pregnancy & during pregnancy they have Omega-3 with vitamins and minerals?
A: That is okay. As long as you have read the label and the PIL patient information leaflet carefully and there are no specific contra- indications in pregnancy or drug-drug interactions with ART antiretroviral treatment, then it is fine.
I would steer clear of any over-the-counter medication that does not have clear information about use in pregnancy and especially use with
ART antiretroviral treatment.

Q: Hi sindi I hav tested hiv + last year november nd I'm still healthy nd not taking treatment.I hv 1 partner using condom alwys,I'm taking immune booster pill evryday,eating fruit evryday.what more can I do to keep my self healthy.

A: Please tell me more about this 'immune booster' pill that you are taking daily.

Everything else that you are doing is fine. Make sure that you check your CD4 count every 3 - 6 months, depending on how high it is.

Q: Doc is it true I must wait 2 weeks after the injection? Its my 1st one

A: You must use barrier protection with any hormonal contraceptive method. That's the recommendation. So yes the waiting period to engage in unprotected sex is about 2 weeks after your first hormonal injectable. This is to give the hormones a chance to 'kick in' and start working to prevent conception.

I'm saying rather use condoms all the time - regardless of whether you're on contraception or not. It is the safest thing to do.

Q: is there a danger when nevirapine syrup runs out at 5 weeks?

A: All HIV-exposed babies have to take Nevirapine syrup for 6 weeks. The babies that will continue with extended NVP syrup are the ones who are breastfeeding and whose mummies are NOT on lifelong treatment.

Please go back to your nearest clinic with baby's Road-to-Health card (and the empty NVP syrup bottle if you have it) and get another bottle. The depot decants 70ml of syrup so I would like to know why your syrup ran out before time.

Email me drsindivanzy@gmail.com

Q: I am hiv+ & hv a 5mnhth old bby. She ddntt receive treatment & tested + on a rapid test but negative on a pcr. She's formula feeding. Which 1 is true. Pls am worried 2 death.

A: Rapid tests are ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) tests and they pick up HIV antibodies in the blood. We never ever do rapid tests on babies less than 18 months of age because we know that babies have their mothers' antibodies floating around in their blood in the first year of life. So a positive ELISA in a baby tells us that the baby was delivered by an HIV positive woman but does not tell us if the baby is HIV negative or positive.

The HIV PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test detects the virus within DNA. If that test is negative, then your baby is negative. It is quite costly. We reserve it for use in babies because we want to know for sure at 6 weeks if baby is infected with the virus or not.

I hope I have allayed your fears. If you still have ques-
Q: Hi Doc I'm on ARVs but my problem is my body start to deform I'm not sick but my legs r thin my upper body is big
A: It sounds like you may have lipodystrophy - abnormal fat redistribution due to ARVs antiretroviral drugs. The drug primarily responsible for this is d4T stavudine. This side-effect to d4T doesn't happen to everybody and usually happens about 2 years after starting treatment.
Please go back to your doctor or clinic. They will do some blood tests and if those results are fine they will switch you to a drug with a better side-effect profile.
Do let me know what happens drsindivanzyl@gmail.com

Q: baby tested neg for 6 weeks test exclusively breastfeeding n on lifetreatment, she has a small bump size of a pea it not grow she is 11 weeks nw on back of head almost behind ear what could it be?
A: It could be anything. Take your baby to the doctor or to the clinic for a proper check-up

Q: I think its really great what you do for people free of charge and out of the kindness of your heart, how old do you have to be to get yourself checked for hiv, I'm 14 now...I doubt that I have hiv but would still liked to get it checked....thanks doc
A: Thank you for your kind words.
According to the Child Care Act, children can consent independently to an HIV test from the age of 12, when it is in their best interests, and below the age of 12 if they demonstrate 'sufficient maturity' i.e. they must be able to understand the benefits, risks and social implications of an HIV test.
So if you deem it necessary to go for an HIV test by all means do so. :-)

Q: Do you believe the illuminati created HIV
A: No I do not believe that the Illuminati created HIV.
My definition of HIV is Hope is Victory and you can ask me anything HIV related anonymously on this link: www.Qooh.me/DoctorSindi
To read more of my articles visit my page www.ilwiw.com/hope-is-victory
Regards,
Dr. Sindisiwe van Zyl
@sindiVanZyl on twitter
Doctor Sindi on facebook
E-mail drsindivanzyl@gmail.com

I Like What I Write
Whenever I tell people what I do, I am usually confronted with questions like: “What is that?” or “Are you like a sport’s coach?”, so I thought it would be prudent to take a moment and explain what Life Coaching or Personal Coaching is.

We all have aspirations for our lives, where we would like to be in a few years or months, results we would like to produce in our lives, or simply just to have a satisfying life. Sometimes we don’t know how to produce the results we want, and sometimes we don’t even know what results we want.

Life/Personal Coaching is the art of holding a solutions focused conversation, which leads to the unearthing of answers and insights from inside. These insights can lead to finding ways to achieve desired goals that resonate with the unique client. During this process, inner obstacles to the achievement of goals and desires are also confronted, leaving the client with the confidence to take inspired action that ultimately leads to fulfilment of the desired goal.

As your life coach, I hold the truth that every client has the inner resources to find their solutions within themselves. My role is to ask questions and offer techniques that will bring those solutions to the surface. This means that I do not impose my views or judgements on my clients, so all insights resonate with the unique client. The time spent focusing on what you want is a powerful way to breathe life into what you want to manifest in your life. Life Coaching will help you do exactly that.

The benefits of coaching include:

- Improved mental clarity
- Clarifying goals and objectives
- Achieving personal goals and objectives
- Removing internal and external obstacles to success
- Dealing with unproductive thoughts, emotions and behaviours
- Improving depression and anxiety
- Improving self-esteem and confidence

Question 1: I’m unhappy with the way my body looks, I have gained a lot of weight over the past few years. Can you help me find a way to lose the weight and keep it off.

Answer: I believe that the first step when it comes to body issues is first to fix the relationship with the body. You have expressed that you don’t like the way your body looks, which leads me to conclude that you are not having a great relationship with your body. I’m sure you’ve heard the expression "What you resist persists". This means that if you fight anything, it will fight back, so it is much better to work with your body on this, not against it.

Start by acknowledging what your body means to you, it has brought you this far, without it where would you be? It is a functional body, and it does most of what you instruct it to do. Whenever you tell it to move an arm, it moves it, and many other things.

By the way, remember that it did not get this way on its own, your thoughts and actions got your body to where it is. Your thoughts and actions can also change it in a positive way.

Take some time to write down all the positive aspects of your body, and to thank it for its support. Make this a
habit.

Now, give some thought to what kind of change you'd like to see in your body, be specific, write this down. If you have a picture that represents this, paste it on the same page.

Next step is to write down how you might achieve the results written above, while working with your body. This means not depriving the body, or hurting it with harmful chemicals or harsh exercise. Think of your body as a friend that you are working with to achieve a mutually beneficial result.

More on the diet and exercise. Depriving the body of anything will often lead to bingeing, which leads to guilt and self-sabotage. A balanced diet with reasonable portions is more sustainable than deprivation and bingeing. When it comes to exercise, it is best to choose movement that your body enjoys, as this will be more sustainable than heavy exercise that will cause you to resent having to do it.

Weight loss is a journey. It's important to find ways to support yourself in this journey, to keep you focused on your goal. This may be a gift that you will give yourself on achieving your goal. It may be a contract that you sign committing yourself to your goal. You know yourself best, so you know best what will motivate you.

Have a wonderful journey with your beautiful body!

Question 2: I've been in my job for about 5 years now, at first I enjoyed it, but I now feel bored and uninspired by it. My job offers me security which I don't want to give up, but I don't see myself going on like this for long. I would like to be in a job that inspires and fulfils me. Please help.

Answer: The first way to approach this in my opinion would be to look at what inspires and fulfils you. Most people make choices regarding their careers when they are very young and have very little knowledge of life and themselves, so the choice is made looking at external benefits as opposed to internal benefits.

Feeling inspired and fulfilled are internal benefits whereas things like money and status are external benefits. External benefits can change at any given time because we have very little control over them, whereas we have control of internal benefits.

Start by taking some time to define what inspiration and fulfilment are for you. This is so that you will be able to recognise them when you feel them. After this, I would advise you to find things in your life that already give you this feeling. If you cannot find things that currently give you this feeling, then think of things that used to give you the above feelings.

Try to incorporate as much of these things into your life to produce a regular feeling of inspiration and fulfilment. You may wonder how this will help with your job. It helps to cultivate the feelings you want because when you already have these feelings, you are more likely to find ways to produce them in other situations like your job. This may also help you, if you choose to eventually leave your job, to have ideas about what other career paths you would like to follow.
In the job itself, it would be helpful to look back to the time you still felt good about your job, and find out what you felt good about. You may try then to bring in more of those aspects into your job. Also, it helps to look for things in your job that you enjoy. It may be your relationships with your colleagues, the lifestyle that your job affords you, or the working hours. Take time each day to find things to appreciate about your job. You would be surprised at how much your attitude can change once you start focusing more on the positive at work and away from work.

Question 3: I am a 28 year old woman, I consider myself an attractive woman, and I am a professional and able to take care of myself, but my romantic relationships never seem to last.

Answer: Since I don’t know the specific reasons why your relationships do not last, I am going to be general in my answer to your question. The most important relationship any of us can ever have, is the relationship with ourselves. All relationships rely heavily on this one. If we do not have a good relationship with ourselves, we constantly look for external validation, needing other people to provide us with the love and appreciation that we should be giving ourselves. That can leave us feeling like a puppet on a string always dancing to someone else's tune, and when they let go of the string, we feel lost.

This is also difficult for the people that we get into relationships with, because they then feel responsible for our happiness and wellbeing. This is heavy on anyone.

The longest lasting relationship we will ever have is with ourselves and it should be nurtured more than any other.

Before looking at reasons why your relationships with others do not last, it's important to first examine your relationship with yourself.

You mentioned that you consider yourself an attractive woman, but that is only how you feel about your external appearance. How do you feel about yourself as a total person? Do you feel that you are good enough? Do you feel that you deserve what you want? Do you feel that it's possible to get what you want? If your answer to any of the above questions is no, then I would advise that you work on yourself before expecting another to come into your life and making you happy. This you can do with a life coach.

In the meantime I would suggest that you clarify what you would like from a romantic relationship. Begin by taking some paper and writing what qualities you would like on a partner and why you would like you have these e.g. someone who likes jazz, because I would like to share this with them. Once you have written the qualities you want, cultivate as many as you can within yourself. In short, become the partner you seek. If you want someone who will get you flowers every week, get yourself flowers every week.

By first being what you want, you will attract what you want into your experience, and you will have fun doing it. Maybe you've heard it said that others will treat you only as well as you treat yourself, this will help you set a standard of what you want in your life.

Contact me before the 15th of December 2012 and book yourself a free consultation

tembisa@innerpowercoaching.co.za
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