Imbokodo is a Xhosa word for a rock. It was used to refer to a woman during the defiance march of 9 August 1956. It was on this day that a large group of women began a campaign to bring an end to the pass laws enforced by the government of the time. The pass laws meant that all black people were to carry a special "pass" or identification document which they had to produce to prove they were permitted to enter a certain area designated for white people. This was a major law of the apartheid regime and greatly restricted the freedom of movement of black people.

Even though we draw inspiration for the name and essence of this newsletter from that significant day, there is nothing August 9th about this issue. This edition of the newsletter is dedicated to womanhood. Womanhood in all its multi-faceted shapes, personalities, experiences and abilities. We celebrate women as the rocks that form important foundations for our societies, rocks that give us life and sustain it as only they can. We celebrate womanhood with stories, poems and experiences unique to them.

ILikeWhatIWrite showcases unpublished writers, and these writers have given us fascinating pieces that speak about womanhood. Their words will make you giggle, laugh, think, cry as you delve into the soul and life of a woman. May it also inspire us to also love women better.

I was honoured as a woman for the opportunity given by ILWIW to put together this issue. I am a fan and supporter of ILWIW and cheer the noble work it does of bringing us the works of unpublished writers from Mzansi. This website shatters so many stereotypical myths about the talents and interests of South Africans and for that I am grateful. The works found here feed my heart, soul and mind.

You can also get involved and get your stuff published or just browse. Click here to register your profile.

Enjoy the journey this newsletter takes you on, we enjoyed compiling it for you!

“wa thintha abafazi, wa thinthi imbokodo” (You strike a woman, You strike a rock)
## February 2011 Statistics

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The burden of womanhood

By Blaq

After being violently violated...
After having your womanhood torn to shreds...
After having your self confidence and pride stamped on the ground with every forced thrust against your body
After every unimaginable touch as he does himself proud on your property.....
After all the pain of envisioning your dreams flushed right in front of your eyes
After all the fear of contracting life ending diseases
After all the anger as you lose yourself forcefully to another
After the threat of death with a knife held up to your neck
After every curse by yourself as blame for not being any wiser
After every curse by him as he throws around orders acting as your owner

You have to legitimize your pain
Legitimize the death of the woman in you
Legitimize the death of the little girl child in you....
Legitimize the violence on you as if you asked for it
Legitimize your attire as if it was an invite to it
Legitimize your whereabouts as if there were road signs warning you about it
Legitimize your fear as if bravery would have prevented it
Legitimize your anger as if you should be happy about it

You have to be strong for the pain
Strong for the journey ahead leading you to shame and blame
Strong for the hurt and anger still to come as you will be questioned and prosecuted for being raped
You have to be strong for being a violated woman.

It is a real heavy burden this womanhood
The independent woman farce

By Mabel Thandi

I am tired of all these common broads who go on about how independent they are when they actually just happened to tap onto the right mine. These women have never strained a wrist nor broken into sweat but yet they boast about the money that they have.

I think I should begin by looking at just what independent means:

in•de•pend•ent/?ind??pend?nt/
Adjective:Free from outside control; not depending on another's authority.

Noun:An independent person or body.

Synonyms:free - substantive - self-contained - self-sufficient

I know it might be asked what business it is of mine but I think they are hampering themselves. There is that phenomenon that psychologists call the self fulfilling prophecy. The original psychological definition of a self-fulfilling prophecy is from Robert Merton who defines it as "a false definition of a situation evoking a new behaviour which makes the original false conception come true."

If you constantly say you are independent but you are not you will end up actually believing that you are. Then sad you will never go to the needed lengths to become independent. You will never get the education or experience one needs to survive in this very harsh world.

However if you do not lie to yourself then you will try to somehow fix things in your life. How many 'independent' women end up on the streets penniless and with nothing after their husbands or partners leave them?

I know that it is none of my business how people live their lives but it just worries me. I think this is what I would tell my daughter (if ever I have one) – if you are supported financially by a man always make sure that you have at least three month’s worth of savings in your account just in case you need to bolt. Anyway, that is what a wise woman told me.

"Do not create circumstances that you’ll end up being a victim of" cc The Roots.

I know that people might think there are more important issues to talk about but it is 2012 women need to start taking control of their own lives and stop relying on other people.
I have, on numerous occasions, been called a feminist. Believe me; I have absolutely no reservations with the label provided the accusation can be sustained. “Accusation?” you ask. I am yet to meet a person of African descent who uses that ‘word’ with no malicious intent. Yes, I belong to the 2K generation however the only thing rainbow about my world is the fact that I use the same amenities as the rest of my counterparts. My dealings, except professionally, have always been with black folk. Has it been intentional? I will let you know once I get the answer to that.

In my 10 years of trying to entertain the social scene in Johannesburg very little seems to change if anything changes at all. The days are characterized by the hustle and bustle of city, people acting busy, the traffic because nobody advised the leaders of the regime that the American dream was actually a disease and in fact contagious. The nights are sweaty in between drink orders and last night’s odours, I found myself playing referee at the next table after we had settled our bill.

A late afternoon meeting evolved into a chill session with friends of a friend. It was a Friday night, my colleague/friend’s man met up with some of his buddies at the same restaurant we had met and before long tables were joined together, names exchanged, cell phones began to ring and before one could say ‘I am out’ we were corned into hosting fifteen odd people. Majority of them were male, I loved the eye candy until most claimed their gay statuses, what a waste I thought.

The night was jovial, the conversations interesting and the drinks were coming in numbers. I, like most Jo’burg dwellers I know, had not taken time off in ages. My social life was almost non-existent, which explains the following confession.

We had not meet in a club so it was not wrong of me to have my hopes high on the possibility of a relationship by the end of the night right? After all I chose to believe I was single and it’s not like they were strangers at least not to all of us. Mind you I knew none of them.

Then the bill came...it would be an understatement to say our beautiful night come to a halt, abruptly. Those interesting conversation’s slowly turned sour as some people tried to ignore their dues. What started off as a night of pure bliss ended with the receipt on my table, a pen on one hand, I was using my debit card as a ruler and remember screaming, “Who had 9 Black Labels? Can I have your R225 please? There is no woman here who is prepared to pay your way comrades!”

Off the record, I am a Womanist.
So this is my entry-level attempt at writing a blog. I’ve never blogged before and I’d like to assume (for assumptions’ sake) that it’s somewhat like talking online. If that makes sense to anyone but me—which I hope it does. Would hate to start this off on the wrong key…

So this is me letting you into the diary of a young, black, feminine lesbian. Trust that I have lots to tell-seeing as how I have seen enough to last me three lifetimes and a trip to the moon and back. I cannot promise saucy scenery because I’m not a blue movie script writer, nor can I guarantee entertainment coz I’m no gossip columnist either- but on a weekly basis I will give you insight as to how my mind works, what I go through as a fem les in the LGBTI community and maybe tell you tales from The Adventures of Vee.

So with regard to the whole DYKE issue (and I know some of you are thinking about it so I figured I should address it before it becomes a big hoo-ha). I hate being stereotyped and put into classification boxes and all that, but I realised that labels are everywhere we go so it’s up to one to find a “comfortable” label (if such a thing exists) and DYKE is mine. Often seen as a derogatory term for lesbian women - I actually like the word. It doesn’t beat me down, or insult me or even make me feel discriminated against because I associate the word with this woman I have created in my head from when I was younger. She is as butch as you can imagine with soft eyes and sweet lips. A manly stance that attempts but fails to hide her hips. Her warm giggle disguised by a deep-ish voice. A strong woman, a beautiful woman with a boyish swagger… she makes me drool this girl. Yeesh! A real STUD! Mmm…ok- lemme wipe my drool and get back to the point. When I hear the term dyke I see that image and so I shan’t offended by that. I’m actually more offended by the term “bitch” than I am by the term “dyke”. Some lesbians HATE that word though, but what’s a word if you take its power away from it? Think about it - you reckon those America rappers just started calling each other the N-word and didn’t think how it would affect their people? I don’t …but let’s leave politics up to the fat cats in leafy mansions. I’m too crude to share my views on that…

With all of that being said, here’s to a dyke-ly delicious diary filled with profanity, an over-opinionated attitude, a slight drinking problem and lots of rainbows…

P.S Remember to wash your numfi before you scissor because believe or not that itch can kill, don’t kiss the girl with the receding hairline and if a butch asks you to call her “abuti”- RUN!!

I am on twitter @JazzyVixen
Dyke Diaries #2: As I write this- I’ve planned a little retreat for me and my significant other. Nothing fancy- just a break from society to celebrate our 1 year anniversary or something of the sort. We’re so excited. Being together, connecting, celebrating, being, sexing! Yes- I said sexing. I know it’s not a verb but even Keith Sweat used it this way so just buzz off with your red pen. My straight friends (especially the guys after my ass) always ask how we do “it”. My response to this has always been “like you do but better” just to shut em up but then I realised that majority of straight people (you ladies too) think we don’t enjoy sex because of phallic shortages in our routine. Could you be any wronger?! Clearly the answer is yes.

Now I will admit that I have jumped into the sack with a few broska’s (don’t judge me you Judy!) and erm...it wasn't all that great...it was dead boring and somewhat rapey. And I see you there rolling you eyes saying “nah. He didn't do it right. You need a ninja like me!” Erm, can you buzz off too?! He did it the very same way you would have so sit down and take notes! Fool! I didn’t enjoy sex til I met my first lover. She was a soft butch with short hair and saggy track pants. Natalie :) Needles to say she made me call out every scripture I had learnt in Bible class over the past year in one hour! She was amazing! I once broke it down to my best friend like this: sure the phallus isn’t present during our mating rituals however the apparatus used is sufficient. 10 fingers like a tongue and a tongue like 10 fingers. And hey, fuck it, should we need deeper penetration (note- NOT A MISSING PENIS but DEEPER PENETRATION) we’ll use dildo’s and strap-ons and all that kinky stuff!

The problem with people is that we are too technical for our own good! Porn has ruined our imaginations somewhat and so when I say I’m going to have sex with my partner the dirty side-eyes come out because people don’t engage in sex to connect anymore. I’m still a loser so I’m the connection type...and it’s very rewarding for your info. I don’t just fuck then go home and watch Muvhango! (I’m in the process of learning TshiVenda so that wifey’s family thinks I'm cool). No! I take time to love every inch of her. Touch her softly, taste her, feel her next to me, behind me, on me and in me. I make the effort to please her physically and emotionally...then I hump her like a rabbit ‘cause I’m a lil horn dog like that! The gist to all this is that maybe human beings as a whole need to look back at why we connect with other humans in the first place. Look beyond the stirring in your loins to feel the stirring in your heart. Ask yourself if you still have feelings or did they take that away from you as well? (I’m a bit of a conspiracy theorist- and society has brainwashed most of you. Don’t argue with me. Just ask yourself the question). Are we still connected with each other as people?

With this being said I end off with a quote from Dr Suess as I shop around for sexy undies and sex toys: “We're all a little weird and life's a little weird, and when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up with them and fall in a mutual weirdness and call it LOVE.”
You know when there is this one thing u wish u could make disappear. Take it out of your life and whatever you do it will never leave you. It is now who you are and without you I wouldn’t know what to do or where to go.

When anger is burning like hot flames within me and nothing anyone says or does makes me calm. At this point I became so irrational with everything. I shit on everyone for stupid things. I blame, I shout, beat and break everything that is in my way. At this time it seems you are a curse to me my friend. That you making everything worse. That you are ruining all the relationships I have had. That the only person you want me to be with is YOU. My friend, at this time you take away the only good things I know about everyone I love. Sometimes I even thing I am hallucinating about how my loved ones treat me on daily basis, thinking they are the monsters while the opposite is happening. In moments like this my friend nothing seems to make sense. All I want is to take this beast inside of me out and if anyone gets hurt in the process, I wouldn’t care. At this point my friend I wish I had never known you, that I should have never let you in my life.

And then there are days where I feel like I am blessed to have you.

When everything seems to be falling in place.
When the lights shines even in darker places.
When all my loved ones are precious and I can’t hurt them.
When that favourite glass of mine is placed in its right place, so it wouldn’t fall and break.
When I hear LOVE everywhere I go and everything
When the birds look down on me, sitting underneath the tree and singing sweet songs to me.
When their melodies sound like my mom’s favourite lullaby
On these days everything is possible.
On these days I am a super Star,
I am a beautiful, intelligent young woman
And I can get my hands on anything I want in life.
On these days I fall in love with what and who I am.
On these days I am so happy to have you in my life.

My friend I have learned to love you and except that you are part of me. I have learned to held my head and proudly announce to the world that I have a new friend and her name is Bipolar. I now know how to deal with you when I am sad or happy. I know how to control my moods and I am happily leaving with you MY BIPOLAR.
Woman in a red dress

By Bubu Songz

A woman. A female person with a female nature or qualities, such as caring for the weak creatures, personal attractiveness and interest in people. An experienced woman who knows how people behave, a fully grown human female, a woman in employment in a house or who serves a queen. I could have a whole list of what being a woman means. But as some point, BEING a woman comes from within you as an individual.

TALL, Long Legs as she walks in the office with a red dress that reveals her worth as a woman. Nothing seductive, but a red dress that explains why she is a woman. A women of strength and of power.

Nothing stood in Her way, everything seemed normal for Her. People loved her, most wanted to be her. She drove a car that didn't have status. But it never made Her stop going to work. She was never late, nor could she do her work in the last minute. She was always up to date. And never made a mess of her work.

She was an ordinary women. A receptionist that worked hard. Even she knew her job wasn't such a glamour. The women with a red dress worked hard to achieve everything she ever wanted, the women in the red dress made sure that no one would ever make her feel otherwise. She was comfortable in Her own skin and never for a second did she think of changing herself.

She Believed in her abilities as a women she carried. She minded less on people who would call Her names and even drinking tea. With her name being a debate instead she took all the negative talks and used them to defeat her enemies with success.

Being a women means you have to be strong, stand on your grounds and conquer the world.

Take a Bullet of what you think is right and never for a day should you look back and second guess your abilities being a women means you have to use your power being a women means you have to have both d male nd female figures in you. Not everything is done by men. BUT A strong well equipped women will stand up and do what a man does without Being ashamed of It. The biggest fear that women face is the fear of not being vulnerable to someone; a fear of not being noticed or taken into consideration, a fear of always being described as an IT and not someone stronger.

We all get fears at some point and they result in ours being afraid to put ourselves out there in the middle of an ocean and take it on.

I may be young but I know what Being a women means, I have faults too. And I have fears but for how long will we shift our selves away from the power we have as women the only way for us to be real survivors of this world is if we never look back at the suffering and pain we have once been in, rather let us move forward because with all the pain comes a great victory.

The women in a red dress looked forward, she had all Her flaws wasn't perfect but because she believed in herself and her abilities of being a woman, she conquered everything. She moved from being a normal receptionist to Being a woman of power and of strength. She carried the biggest load on her shoulders but still made it through in her life.

It doesn't matter the colour of your skin nor the Language you speak, what matters is we all woman and we all carry the same weight in the days of our Lives, and the only difference is we do certain things because we are all unique and individuals don't be a woman of failure, be the pillar of your strength and never second guess your abilities because women are stronger than anticipated. The nine months women go through carrying a package that will change their Lives. Is a privilege and not a disaster. This too shows how women are stronger.

Women are leaders, you just have to put it out there for all the world to see be the woman in a red dress.

And Believe in everything you do.

And God shall grant you all your dreams and transform you into someone Stronger.
The value of open legs

By Nyakallo Lephotso

Minerals derive their value from how many of them exist. The fewer diamonds there are, the higher the demand
and, by default, the higher the price. Some guy, with hearts in his eyes, spends 3 months' worth of salaries to keep a woman, with
Dollar signs in her eyes, by his side. A deliberate act of keeping a number of diamonds in circulation maintains their high price, regard-
less of what they are used for. Currency, any currency, carries no value. It derives its exchange value based on how much of it
is in circulation. Botswana's Pula is always slightly above the South African Rand. That doesn't mean the economy in Botswana is
stronger than our Rand. That can't be. Botswana is only a desert with a few diamond mines. If one doesn't work for government or
a mine, in Botswana, they go to work at a Shoprite store. The reason their currency is artificially high is because they import almost
everything they use, from South Africa. As a result, they have to ensure that they make their currency attractive to us. One other
thing, a South African company like Shoprite can sell an apple for R1, in SA, but make a 5 cent windfall when selling the same
product for P1, in Botswana.

The idea of paying for a wife may sound barbaric, but it's a widely used practice in Africa. As we aspire to learn more about our-
selves, as a people, we feel the need for self-determination. Though Lobola is currently being used as a money-making scheme, it
does form an integral part of our culture. One, as with many, we should embrace. What factors should be of paramount impor-
tance in setting a dowry amount? We can all take it for granted that a man must find a woman beautiful, on some level, to consider mar-
rying her. So beauty cannot be charged as an extra added feature. The fact that many men want her is a valid point to make, but
she equally found value in her future husband; hence she chose him out of all of the offers she had. Her education may surge her
price, the income-generating potential thereof is appreciated by all. What can decrease the asking price, though, is her gener-
ous nature.

The greatest marriage of them all is between A molecule of Hydrogen and two of Oxygen. Water is way more essential than Gold,
yet Gold costs way more than Water. The reason water costs next to nothing is because it is freely available. Water is like opinions,
everyone has it. Every man appreciates the value of open legs. Beautiful women are popular, but women who sleep with their legs
behind their ears are every man's favourite. Since men are territorial, each wants to know that he has exclusive rights to his bride's
pearly gates. Way before the HIV pandemic hit our shores, a practice of virginity testing was meant to ensure young women were
virgins before they entered marriage. Many brides were returned home because they didn't meet this prerequisite. Virginity is a trait
that's so revered many female public figures have claimed it, only for a string of lovers to surface and burst their bubble.

A female friend once said, "if a man wanted a girlfriend that doesn't smoke, he should go get one from a farm". Is there, by any
chance, an oversupply of virgin smokers? No, I'm not hunting for one. Somehow, I believe if a woman would allow cigarette smoke
to stab her lungs, there are many things she would let enter her. This is not an attempt to label smokers as promiscuous and non-
smokers not. There are no Angels among us. We have all fallen. As peer pressure and curiosity are gateways to smoking so are peer
pressure and curiosity gateways to first sexual encounters. Show me a young person that’s experimenting with smoking, I’ll show
you a young person that’s experimenting with sex. Women are the holders of faith, whatever faith. They are the pillars of our fami-
lies. Instillers of morality. When our women demonstrate behaviour that personify soul decay, we can acknowledge that the future
of our species is a bleak one.

A man's worst nightmare is to stand at the alter and proclaim his love for a woman, when almost every man in attendance has been
in her panties. As virginity used to place value on a woman and labelled her virtuous, so does loose sexual behaviour defile a woman.
As sexist as the view may sound, this conversation begins and ends with a woman. A man can only go as far as a woman lets him.
Dress the way you want to be addressed. Corny as the saying may sound, it's based on reality.

Like all matters human, a sexual act is tripartite. Body, Mind and Soul. Whoever we engage in sex with, we tie souls with. They
take a part of us that cannot be replace and us theirs. There's not much life in open legs, except in the delivery room. Even then, it's
the beginning of suffering. Most women would be quick to object to being addressed as a bitch.
"Who you calling a bitch, have you fucked me?" What if he hasn't? That doesn't take anything away from the fact that many have.
How much of your value lies between your thighs?
I think there is more to a man than how he looks: his soul, his brain, his pocket’s ability to not be liability to my finances and his heart. A man with a compassionate and kind heart is worth gold to me. Michael is a cinematographer. Born in the DRC but has been living here for so many years my French is better than his. Michael has swag. One look at me and the ATM and he says, “you look cute. May I please have your number?” I agree to take his business card and promise to call him as soon as possible. Which I do; I do what I say what I will do.

Articulate and lived, Michael’s enthralled me with tales of his work in film. We loved speaking about the meaning of freedom, identity and just riff raff sometimes.

Laugh, rejoice, flirt; the usual

So when Michael and I agreed to hook up on Friday night, I trusted that that’s what was going to happen.

We’d meet around 6pm in Melville. Have dinner. Then hang out at his. I do this a lot when I think a guy is great. I’ve convinced myself that seeing a person where they can take their shoes off and slouch on the couch is a great way of seeing a slice of who they are. Besides, a good old snogging session has never hurt a girl.

So I was really looking forward to my date with Michael. So much, I almost cancelled afternoon drinks with a friend I had not seen in four years. Indeed, come an hour before D time and Michael says he is driving to the airport. He will call me when he’s back in the city. He does not call. He does not respond to my text message. He does not pick up when I call. But I’m a cool cat; that woman who is not fazed by much, certainly not by a Black man acting dodgy. I know my brothers. I have come to accept that about some of them. I ordered a mojito, and drank to deleting Michael’s number from my phone.

Being in Melville, I call my girl to say let’s get vrot on wine. My girl being a Nigella, she suggests dinner and wine at her house around the corner. I was having a great time with old and beloved friends. But I was also aware that I did not want to be at Heidi’s.

I may have acted flippant about Michael’s no show, but I realised that I was actually hurting.

I called him to say give me a reason not an excuse. My sanity needed one. He does not owe me anything—it was just a date—but still, respect insists on not giving bullshite to grownups. “Why did you say you would do something you had no intention of doing?” He refused to answer and after 45 minutes of a heated call, he hung up. I needed his ear. Not his arrogance.

I felt his excuses reduced me to stupid. Something I am not.

I texted to say, “You are not the parting of the red sea. You are just a person. Don’t push the illusion of importance at my expense.”

The SMS put Black love in the box of hate and spiteful games. Kinda like if you think you are the bastard, then honey meet the bitch supreme.

I crept underneath the duvet and started crying, It was way past Michael.

I wanted to be out on a date as planned, as agreed on.

Michael rings to apologise: he ran late, then there was a meeting then there was something or the other but it all ended with him having a long list of excuses.

We hang up. I realised that it did actually hurt.

It hurt that to him, I was not worth the respect of keeping his word to me. I chose a date with him not out of lack of a social life or other (guaranteed thrilling) possibilities. I just thought, “hey, you said yes to Michael, you keep your word.” I believe that’s what respect does. It honours the other’s time.

I crept underneath the duvet and started crying, It was about my experiences with Black men. And how they seem to have reduced love and emotions to a game of bitch vs. bastard, to battle of the sexes and drivel like He is not that into you and Think like a man, Act like a lady.
In all my dating life, all I have only ever insisted on is respect. Respect me enough to tell me that it is over instead of avoiding my calls. Respect me enough to do what you say you will do because anything less is crushing. Please don’t crush me. I’m not here to be your casualty. I’m just a woman who believes in love that thrives and nurtures.

I don’t believe that love is a miracle that must heal, cure, or save me. I don’t identify with the love that has produced best sellers and inspired rims of copy on magazines.

I also I don’t believe that love is a game to reduce to minor crap like, “I’m being needy if I call first?”

Love is to me the second big thing after the miracle of life. When I’m in relationships, I don’t send poetry and R&B verses. I send affirmations of love being patient and self-less. I quote 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7.

I used to fear love because someone shattered my heart. I saw how this robbed men who loved me from getting the love they deserved.

I opened up and confessed to something that sounds stupid in its simplicity. Built bridges towards each other not walls against each other. Choose the bravery of revealing your fears to the other than pretend to be strong. Let’s not assume the personas of the “It” girl and man of the moment.

This is the kind of love I have always wanted.

Under the duvet on Friday, I had to stifle my tears or risk wailing like a baby and having a dinner party turn into a pity party.

I cried because last year I loved a man called EZ. My sister and I called him Khulu Jnr because he is on the heavy side. Which is fine, what’s mkhaba compared to a kind heart?

Mr Z treated me like a queen. He is a man of rank (I adore rank in a man) and yet he found time for me every second of the day. He managed to make even the most insignificant parts of my life feel big. Opened doors, wined and dined me. We laughed until we choked on our aged merlot. And when he had a fight with his ex wife, he chose me to talk him through it. And at the end of the conversation I thought, “Okay. Ex wife four kids and you end up having to tell a middle aged man that relationships end but never parenting so humble yourself to her so your kids have memories of happy co-parents not bitter ex lovers.”

I knew then that I had let go of the idea of the perfect man to embrace the fact that life happens, and in the case of a man a loved and respected, life was an ex wife and four kids.

He called me for hours later just to thank me for “adding perspective”. I was so happy I cried when I thought of him. I loved him. I could have written volumes about this man who, like me, believed in the bitter pill of truth than sweet illusions in a relationship. It meant we could communicate without fear of ego or hysterics.

I’ll never forget the afternoon he said he loved me: I was in the East Rand, working on a story. He called in the middle of the day to say he had to leave the office to supervise the workmen fixing his geyser. He played Natalie Cole’s Good to be Back album and thought of me. I love that album. He ended the call by saying, “I’m falling in love with you.” He was happy when I told him it was “oh so mutual I cannot believe I’ve been around a continent, met many men and have my heart captured by a home boy.”

He was obsessed with asking me what I wanted in a relationship/in my man. I said respect.

Z loved dates. And he insisted on dropping off me home every time so we could kiss and be dreamy about falling in love.

One Sunday, he “had” to see me. We had not seen each other in a day. We were wild with missing each other. We went out and my life felt so okay with me: I had a truly wonderful man.

Afterwards, he dropped me off at home, he said he loved me. We kissed. We’d see again soon \, take me out for my birthday and finally get around to that dirty weekend away.

I never saw or heard from his again.

Like every man who comes into my life he was begged to please be kind to my heart and respect me enough to say there has been a change of heart. Change is allowed in my life. I don’t cry when dumped. I thank the fellow for announcing it properly than act in a way that leaves me feeling inadequate.
On Friday, under the duvet, I remembered that Z and his 47 years of life decided that I was not worth respect. I cried.

I was hurt that SL, another ex, trampled on my heart even though he was asked to be kind to it. It was everything but me with him: politics, business, golf, time with boys, Zar, Moretele park and being unbendable about having a colourful social life. I’ve out-partied myself. He was not denied the right to party. But eventually, it was all about the party with him. I was a by the way; a time filler.

And now he wants to come back into my life. And I’m supposed to be grateful because he misses me. “It was a school boy error,” he said. No. It was my heart being crushed. It was my worth cheapened. It was my faith in Black love dwindling. It was yet another Black doing the same shite on a different day.

When a man wants to get know about me and tries to impress me with his car, how well read, travelled and all that he is, I tell him it comes down kindness. I tell it to all of them; I beg them all to remember that. From old man Moses who broke up with because I was not ready for a sexual relationship to the young one’s I’ve played with lest cerebos kill me. “Be kind.” Respect me enough to say it is over with words, not with actions that leave me feeling like shite. I do the same. I actually don’t expect much because I don’t have much to offer: respect and honesty.

And all these men I that I loved or had hopes about chose as the first strong emotional experience to give me hurt and disappointment.

Why feel so at ease with dismissing knowing that I’d be hurt and disappointed?

Tears turned into rage: why did these men acting from a space of ego? Why that is when Blacks try hooking up it quickly turns into bastard vs bitch. Why can’t kindness and respect be a virtue?

Tears that I have been refusing to cry over men all these years poured flooded my face.

Why did you call me the one K and call it a stalemate because I was not prepared to sleep with you unless we were a clearly defined label? If I’m good enough to shag, I’m good enough to be girlfriend. You called me a dream girl over and over again, and not even that dreamy me was worth you letting go of the ego of being a sought after man. For every Lerato who says no, ten Nellies say yes so that’s where you went. I believe the word you used was “audition.”

Then the tears streamed because of T. Why choose to be cruel, to make it a war when sat I in a bus for a day and half to see you Ta? Why did you dismiss my issues as “typical female.” I did not see a former Wallace or Vusi in you. Just a man; a new book to read and discover. But I was “typical” and nagging when I said you had to be a better daddy and co-parent to your ex. You would have rather had me as feeling grateful that you chose me. I felt insulted that our mutual friend’s daughter knows you better than your sons. I demanded that you account. And you reduced an existential experience to the battle of the sexes. Worse, you denied me sex one night because we fought about your nonexistent relationship with your sons. Sex is not weapon, punishment or reward. It’s am instinct.

Tears soaked my pillow when I thought of Wal. The one I loved with every fibre of my being. The one who knew he was loved past fear, youth or fantasy. He had me when he recited Marechera when he saw me reading The House of Hunger.

Why sing me all these praises Wal, call me all those amazing things and walk away because I’m “too cosmopolitan?” WTF is being too cosmopolitan anyway? And what happened to my being Cosmo after you got married and wanted to shag me: am worth just that to you, booty? Something you can buy for even R10?

Lying in bed crying, I felt like a silly, desperate young girl: why do these man to this to me: I’m just a regular next door. Got my education, personality, interests, brains, passion, killer legs, award winning cleavage.

I understand that there is nothing special to me: I am just girl, like most girls. I’m not a saint. But I don’t sin all the time. I’m loud and brash. Other times I’m polite and quiet. I’m well-read and well-travelled. I’m intelligent, I’m engaging, I have opinions. Sometimes I’m blonde and can barely carry a conversation. Other than times I’m so eloquent I give myself a round of applause.

I’m merely mortal. So ordinary it bothers of being dull. I don’t have list of 91 traits a man must have for me to love him. It’s always been brains, wit, money to not be a liability, spirit. Most love food and sex. Bonus if he wears suits.

I don’t judge a new man on anything but his actions.
I hosted your friend when you were not here to do so. I “gave you a sense of belonging” when you were feeling the outsider. I did not ignore the wall flower or dismiss it as boring. Your achievements inspired me. You were a teacher and lover. You helped me find my writing voice. We read. We made each other smile. You were my joy. You made News Café seem like the Ivy. You made the campus bus stop feel like waiting for a Limo. And I kept asking you one thing, “there is another woman?” And every time you said no with a straight face and a loving look. “There is no one like you Lerato: intelligent, engaging, head strong.” And then one Monday when the honours class had to write profile, a colleague chose me as your dearest to tell her about the other side of you.

Monday morning just before class, I hear that you have a fiancé back in Harare.

That did not hurt. It shattered me. It broke me. You lied; over r and over again. You lied to my face. While I was loving and supporting you, you were using me: host my friends, help me find these books, where shall we go eat? Where can I buy this or that? Where shall I go for engaging conversations? What should my next career move be?

Finding out about the fiancé felt like someone put a knife into my chest and kept twisting it.

“I’m sorry. It’s complicated but it’s over. I ended it,” you said. But only because she was fucking everyone from your garden boy to your ex school mates. I gave you love and loyalty. And when I gave you a second a chance, when I stopped hanging up on your calls and decided I to “give you a chance to explain” as you kept on begging, you turned around a few weeks later and said “I’m too cosmopolitan.” Brother you were eating a home cooked lunch of seafood pasta served with your favourite chardonnay. If that’s not home, then fucking walk please, I cannot be more than me. Yes I loved you, but you were not ever going to be world. Maybe I would have changed my mind on marriage but I still did not want your kids, certainly not in my 20s and early 30s. If that made me cosmopolitan then okay, fine, walk away. But fuck I was gutted. You were the one. brains all the way-the academic and the writer.

You claim you tried getting me back before you got married. I don’t remember you trying, much less hard enough. But I after you married a good pious village girl you learned the perks of women who’ve had a sexual revolution and wanted me back, under “complicated circumstances” while I had to bear in mind that it was a “dead marriage.”

So yet again, you who sang me these praises reduced me to mere ass. Crack whores sell it for one hit. Go to them.

Suppressed tears are nasty when they finally pour. Every man, every encounter and it all came down to being negative. Not because they failed to launch of ended, but because they reduced emotion to war. Black Love as Bitch vs Bastard

Why did you choose the boys over me Vusi, on a public holiday when we were going to get time to us, couch, movies and cuddle? When our schedules made it near impossible for us to ne in a relationship even though we were in the same city? Why pick that one day, when I finally had a public holiday along with the rest of the public, and your day was not ending at 22pm and other usual awkward hours to break my heart, when it had been bouncing with joy all day. And then you don’t have the halls for call say sorry for hurting you. You wait months, then call to say “ I miss you sweetie,” like we had not seen each other since that morning. Where is the respect in that? And the fuck was up with the things you loved me for, like being opinionated and pulling no punches, turning into a problem.

Michael should have just showed up at that damn date because the duvet session brought back every encounter I’ve had with Black men. It reminded me of my psychological fear of Black men.

What, pray tell Sifiso, made you woo me and then say “but know that I have a girlfriend back home in KZN and that’s not going to change” as part of you shellaring me. How can you not equate that with not insulting me? How could he feel so at ease with insulting me like that? (I gave him the door on the spot, wathi women don’t appreciate honesty)

Why Eliasu, did you insist on disturbing my peace by wanting to talk about us a year later, a whole fucking year later and I told you no, my heart no longer trusted you. It feared you. And you asked me for a chance to just speak and be heard and maybe hopefully understood. It added an extra night for me in Cape Coast, but hey, yes, let us talk. Nothing is going to come out of it except proper closure. The appointed hour arrived. But not the man. I shrugged and played role of the strong woman, as I have been all along.

But that was yet another knife in back, courtesy of a Black man.

I smiled when I thought of Shola. It amazes me how easily I fall in love. And with Shola, it took one night of my period starting on our date and him having to run around Accra looking for tampons. Seeing him describe what a tampon looks like as we went from pharmacy to pharmacy was hilarious. It was endearing. And I understood that money is that important to him. And loved the perks of his money. But why turn it into a big deal that I did not want you to pay my bills, that I wanted to sleep at the dorm using my money than an en-suite room using your money?
I loved you. I told you this a million times a day. But I did not want to move in with you. You said its skanky behaviour. I told you it’s simply because you lived high up in hills where there is no real life. I was not in Accra to be Miss Sandton. I insisted that my refusal was my way of respecting what we were trying to do and who we were; a 47 year old divorced father of one and a 28 year coming into her own skin and being. I was learning lessons that were harsh but that I would not have any other way.

What killed me was when you got up and left because I thought I was having an affair. I ran through that fucking village and its stony paths to get call time to call you and beg to turn around so we could talk, so we could deal in an adult way; fairly.

You said yes, and went to on Accra anyway.

I had never given you reason to doubt my loyalty to you, to us. Yet a mere little boy who was like a kid brother coming over to say hello and having a sip from my glass was reason for you to just walk away?

We tried. Money came in the way again. Business called. I'm not miss eyes on phone. I did not know you were back. I was not avoiding you. You got over the “anger” and turned around and acted spitefully on my birthday so “I knew what it felt like.”

I should have forgiven you, you should have forgiven the simple mistakes we made. I think we really had a shot at it. But six weeks later it was chaos and ego, survival of the fittest. Yet again, Bitch vs Bastard. I moved countries.

There used to be a Siza. I want to ask him if cocaine was so all consuming that he’d consider a lovely, perfectly nice and pretty interesting woman just because there is no snorting around me?

Thabo what made you think you could use love talking about us and then say you are in a complicated relationship you can’t get out of? So, what, I’m just ass. No emotional accountability to me because you don’t have the balls to say tell your girlfriend you met someone else?

Then three years later want to be my man and say I’m a being bitter when I say I will not have you as anything in my life.

So, on Friday, I lay underneath that duvet crying buckets. I realised it was not because Michael had disappointed me. It was because that’s my story with Black men and Black love: dark emotional space, games, Taking cues not from the heart but from websites like askmen and magazines like FHM.

In many years of dating, there has been a lot more fucking, but even that was a reaction; just cum and go as you will not get more than swallow from brothers.

And when I open or opened my heart, the weaknesses in me when not seen as Lerato being human. They were used to walk over me. I will let her down today, take her out for dinner tomorrow night and all will be well.

I got up, washed my faced. I want to love and be loved. I’m not going to experience that with a Black man. I’m tired of being a casualty ya Black men. Of my issues, their issues and whatever it is that has turned Black love into the biggest battle I know; into a race to see who will break whose heart first.

I’m 32. I do not have a lifetime to fix or hope there are better men out there. I do not doubt there’s an ocean of amazing Black men. I’m just no longer going swim against the tide. The current of trying to have a meaningful, significant relationship with Black men is exhausting.

I will not make insecurity, anger and bitterness the running narrative of how I experience Black love.

So now, I’m giving myself the freedom to be lesbian. It is not an escape. It is not anger. It is not romantic illusion. I have kissed and shagged women but never dated them. I have had crushes on women. I have always kept my right to choose a sexual identity open.

I fear heterosexuality will leave me angry, broken and bitter.

I used to joke that my vagina is not a school where boys graduate into men. It used to mean not getting into sexual relations with men who were childish.

Looking back at my loveless experiences with Black men, it turns out I had turned my vagina into a school.

No more. And for me, it starts with removing myself from the heterosexual pool. I want nothing to do with Black men as more than friends.

Brothers as lovers have failed me, hurt me and used.

And that’s not okay. Carrying on as a heterosexual would normalise a perverted situation.

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POETRY

Let's hear it

By Felicia Mkhize

Take your hats off
Let's hear it
For that woman that jumped fences pregnant and still gave birth to a healthy child

Give it up
Let's hear it
For that woman that stood by her man while he was wrongfully imprisoned for 27 years

Stand up
Let's hear it
For that woman that raised 3 generations of masters that scorned her

Take note
Let's hear it
Of that woman that raised 3 boys in a squatter camp, by herself, while their father lived in the suburbs raising another man's children
Nomvula
By Emm Tea

Come to us Nomvula

U Nomvula, tight-thighed, high and mighty hoe they call her
Come to us Nomvula
All wishing her to their beds, or lovers' beds to no reprieve
Come to us Nomvula
Miss 'thang' with her beauty
Sauntering around like it's eternally Sunday,
And she Jesus – or at least Mary
Nxa!
Come to us Nomvula
The earth is bare
The streets dusty!
We lose all sanity trying to praise you,
To cajole you into existence
Come to us Nomvula
She looks at us with distain
Like our beats and our drums and our dances and decorations
Are for nothing…
Come to us Nomvula
Our feet bare,
The dust sings in the air
But yet we beat the drums
Believing – Needing YOU – Nomvula

Come to us Nomvula
It’s been a day,
The sun sets
All bodies weary, tired and in despair
Golden, for WE are beckoning YOU – Nomvula
We give up hope
Us the people who need you the most
Come a little closer Nomvula
The first drops of drizzle!
Then all at once – appearance made!
Nomvula! drums echos claps
Ku ya netha NOMVULA – our rainmaker – our gift bearer
Miss "thang in all her glory
Parading and shaking what her mama gave her for all WE'RE worth!
I ya netha! MVULA!
NOMVULA!
**Women where is your pride**

**By Mandiwe Ndaliso**

Women where is your pride
When men push you aside
Women where is your sight
When you seem to have lost your light

In seeing what is in front of your eyes
Instead of believing all the lies
This world seem to dish out at you
Tell me where is that fire that is in you

Coz you seem to shine darkness
To a world that is filled with sorrow and sadness
Where is that tender loving kindness
When we are losing the only glimpse of happiness

That only you have the power to give
To a world that has lost the will to believe
Coz I know that be hide every successful men
There’s a very strong women

So tell me why are we allowing
Ourselves to become objects
To a kind that doesn’t seem to appreciate
The very existence of us as a being

That is capable to nature and gives birth
To a kind that will build this earth
And yet we find ourselves in situations
Of immense and intense complications

That one seeks to compromise
Whatever life she has left
Just to satisfy a hunger that can’t be filled
The only thing left is to realize

That “women” your existence means a lot
To the ones who appreciate your very existence
The ones who acknowledge that your presence
Is a gift to make man kind’s burdens seem light
So Women where is your pride
When these men push you aside?
Dripping

By Lebohang Mpholo

Deep into her eyes
he gazes,
into her soul
he gazes,
reaching for her thirsty
calling entire being!
touches her face,
fingers run down his
his firm back!
within him a burning
desired bursts into
distinguishable flames
to pin her on the wall
and drive her to,
a land of passion!
And so she melt
and drips..
Poetry

Emotional abuse
By The original fake

Crept my way in the silence of the night
Smacked my face, blood piercing from my punctured lips
Punch me in the in the eye

Instantly blind me
Hand trying to block,
Block the fear, block the weakness, and block the hatred

Grab me by the neck, almost breaking it
Throw me on the ground, give me a wicked smile
“I will show you who the man is, I will tear, reap and teach you”

I try to scream but my lungs don’t allow me to
I kick; I shake my head, venom coming out of my mouth

Volcanic tears flow now from my unsighted eyes
You pull it out
It’s undesirably pale from dehydration; skin seems to be peeling off
It’s thick, relative to where you want to stick it

Pain paralyses my muscles
Unconsciously I open up
It feels cold, smells of betrayal
You thrive, you dig and you bury it

Deep within me as if you are trying to connect with my belly button
I try and push you but that makes you violently thrust
What are you trying to find?

Feels like you are on a treasure hunt
I start feeling bulimic, a process of self-induced vomiting
But only difference is that, it’s in my virgin vagina
The only person that ends up puking is you,
You do it inside me
I feel your viruses flowing in my blood,
You scratched me; you grabbed me and held onto me
Mind why can’t you knock me unconscious?
Why do you let me sit through this whole torment?
Do you expect me to cuddle afterwards?
I am about to pull up what’s left of my undies up
You kick me in the stomach
I end up rolling and lying flat on my face
You see opportunity, you seize it
By now you are slimy, dripping wet, full of cream
You part my buns, shove it in
Two pushes were enough for you
You call your mom’s name. Fuck you scream your own name
Finally pain gives way to coma
I go through a trance, hypnotized and dazed
I try to reach for you; you slap my butt, zip your pants and walk away…
I am left to pick pieces of my esteem and smile within this turmoil…
Words of a dying mother (Tribute to those who lost their children)

I died more than she did that day...

The day she was raped and brutally murdered

The day she was set alight in the effort of hiding the evidence

That day when she fell into a tub full of water, only a week after she had learnt to walk

The same day when I was called to come and ID him since he had conveniently ‘drowned’ at a camp

It was the year she was due to complete her degree...would have made me proud for raising her.

The day I had knelt and prayed, asking God to keep her safe

The one time he had devoted himself to a Christian life, did he know it was the wrong type where he would be tortured and murdered?

A ritual killing where only another woman’s child can be used as the sacrificial lamb?

I died deep down inside, felt numb, felt cold, felt lost, felt dead

I died deep within my breast, the same that had brought life but now is dead

I rock and try and make sense of all that has been with no consolation I give up hope

I’m dead, though not visible I cease to be, no matter who may try to resuscitate my life

I’m dead and cannot live knowing that my child has suffered and there was not a single thing I could do to save her, not a single thing I could do to bring him back!

I’m dead, let me be! Do speak words of relief to feel relieved for comforting me but please!, do not expect me to live again

I cannot be alive for if I be alive then my seed also be!

I cannot agree to life and yet have failed to preserve that of my child

I refuse to agree with you, there was no purpose, there is no purpose and there’s no mysterious way about it

I refuse to listen to words of comfort and how we will one day be reunited, I choose to be with him now

Therefore I’m dead, though my shell may remain, yet my soul has went its place and surely won’t return

Hence I say let me be, leave me be, with her is where I would like to be and where I am

It feels better here, though his face I do not see and with him I’m not united, yet the comfort of this strange place, the corner in which I am hidden feels so much more comfortable

I am dead, leave me be, let me be,

I shall return

I’ll heal again

I shall be back

Be back with her

I am dead, leave me be, let me be...

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Partiqla Inspired in spite 2011
The heart of a forty year old woman

By Gold

I'm not a woman of a bitter spirit-in fact, "Ms Jovial" is my middle name. I know how to eat humble pie-knife, fork and a serviette where you'd put a tie. No, not on my lap. On my chest, indeed. To protect my fragile heart...

Then, I ask myself, how do I protect it when it's no longer there? For you took it. I tacitly consented. I missed it, for nothing was pumping my hyperactive blood. I went looking-not for it, but for you. So naïve. So innocently stupid. I found it-not you. Desolate and left to dry. You were without a trace. My heart as dry as biltong.

I cried and cried. Not for my heart, but for you. Hoping and wishing you'd come and restore it to its original position. I wailed, thinking the tears would bring you back. No call. A void.

And just when I was strong again. When I was about to install my heart back to my chest-there you came...

Told me I'm all you think of. Almost said you'd put my heart back where it belongs. I presumed you said so-so I entrusted my heart back to you...

You took a grater. And shred my heart to 801 threads.

... I weep no more. Got a heart transplant. The heart belonged to a 40 year old woman. Who had seen it all, bought the tee, sold and resold and chucked. I'm told her last words were:

"Never no more."

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I dream of her

By Partiqla

I dream of her, the woman I wish to be...

She is constantly there in my dreams

The woman that is so beautiful not only on the outside

Her inner beauty is one that cannot be overlooked

I dream of her, the woman I wish to be...

She is so full of life; nothing ever put her down it seems

She is so full of love; no one ever seems to get her down

She is graceful, able and still puts food on the table

She is the pride of her mother, asset to her husband and a gem to her children

She is the first one up in the morning and the last to go to sleep

She knows all the answers to my algebra homework and history seems to be a breeze!

She submits to the demands of the head of her house, advices without taking credit

She is faithful and oh so full of faith

She makes it known to the world that she is a child of God and is never shy to proclaim it

I dream of her the woman I want to be, every time I go to bed

I walk each day knowing who she is

For I have seen her in my dreams

I dream of her, the woman I wish to be.....

The only thing that stands between me and her

Is the alarm clock that goes off at 3! ;)

She is the pride of her mother, asset to her husband and a gem to her children

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All in her

By Juno

All in her.
I see love inside her eyes.
It's all drawn in her eyes.
The love she holds in her heart.
The soul within her heart.
The truth that i have to tell comes from my heart.

It's all in her.
The brain will always think.
The eye will never forget to wink.
When at her sight, the love i have gets bigger.
The pointing pistol fails to trigger.
For what we have is bigger.
For what we have is huge.
I love her more when she's nude.
She makes me happy not rude.
She says I'm the perfect gentleman when I'm in my suede.

God all in her.
I love every moment we're together.
Death our enemy will separate us but in our hearts we will forever be together.
No matter how much distance is between us.
The bigger it gets to be, the more it fails to split us.

The love is all in her.
The more I long for her.
The more my love grow for her.
Nyahallo said distance is a bitch.
That never made me snitch.
That made my love grow even bigger than i thought.

If love was for sale, i would have bought it.
I would have purchased it.
If her love was luxurious.
I would have made myself jealous.

I can’t sleep with mink when she's in bed with me.
I can’t drive around when she's with me.
I can’t be shy when she's with me.
I will only stay with her all day.
Do whatever that make her happy.
All i do is what should make her happy.
I love to see her smiling and laughing.
When she's happy, she's beautiful.
When she's angry, she's more beautiful.
I will never call her pretty because she ain’t.
I’m calling her beauty because that’s how she is.
I never plan to change the way she is.
But plan to love her more.
I'm saying it for sure.
My love is all in her.
**Jezebel, the Demigod**

**By Puo Pha**

Body so ultra-peri like a mid-summer’s day in Venda  
But heart so über chilli like a mid-winter’s night in QwaQwa.

Like a demigod, I worshipped you  
I wished you long life for my own benefit

In you I created a human god  
Served and praised you

Your smile revives life like first spring rains in Durban  
Yet your words bring death like late autumn frost in Lesotho.

Like a demigod, you dominated me  
Changed my lifestyle and alienated my friends

I did things your way  
Lost my identity and lived under your shadow

Your heart is full of traps  
It ensnares honourable men like a spider trapping insects in its cobweb

Like a demigod, you controlled me
Carry yourself like a queen

By Mandiwe Ndaliso

Carry yourself like a Queen
You will definitely get a king
A person who searches from with in
To find that you are that very one thing
That most men always miss
When their trying to lend that first kiss
Carry yourself like a queen
And see what this world will bring
To your wondering mid that if he is what you’re looking for
Or that what you see is greater and more
For you know not what meets the eye
So take a leap of faith before saying good-bye

Well with that said my dear
Please listen up and ad hear
What your heart tells you to do
For the power lies in you
For that men to treat you like a queen
Take that step and make it happen
So carry yourself like a queen
Greater things will happen
In finding out that you are that one thing
To that person you’re hoping to call king
Thoughts of You

When the first rays of a rising Sun climb above the Horizon to bring light on Earth, my mind is filled with thoughts of a Nubian Queen in all Her Majesty.

As the Ocean waves wash over sands bringing its jewels to land, I have thoughts of you wearing your hair like a crown graciously towering over your subjects.

As the first raindrops of Spring hit the ground bringing forth life to crops, I have thoughts of you dressed in all your splendour with your Bosom leading the way and your Heritage gracefully trailing.

As the Stars preciously fill the night sky in all their beauty, I have thoughts of you walking in unhurried strides with that "I Own This Place" attitude.

Your presence ricochets around Royal walkways of African Aristocracy. Your Self-Importance is embedded in the Hearts and Minds of all mere mortals you encounter.

As the Sun hides behind the hills and Day separates from Night, I have thoughts of you as the Queen of my Heart.

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By Nzolo “Ezee” Bidla

He took her ripe chary, this clown forgot his profession and took her smile.

She’s a diamond but his sweet nothings promised to break her, when night came with conditions of torment because she refused access to her diamond mine.

“No” she shouts but to his ears, she whispered a passionate yes and he utters a silent “shh” it will be over soon.

Thinking she likes it rough he worked his way to her favorite jeans ripping them to match her torn soul.

When he was done, her tears washed down the pain, while she gathers herself, memory replays each second as if it were happening over again, so she screams hoping it would drown the sound of his disgusting moans.

That day her innocents died as took her last breath.

Next to her a note, reads; “Dear reader, my womanhood was brought too soon I’ve lost the girl in me, why live?”
Emakhishini: the-love-hate-relations-between-black-madams-and-their-eyes-iii

By Felicia Mkhize

An Entrepreneur is someone that identifies an opportunity in the market and provides a solution to bring supply and demand together, acting as an intermediary between Capital and Labour. These are the livewires of a free-market society, wherein the theory of “willing buyer willing seller” reigns supreme. The fact that women are now career oriented has opened opportunities for nannies and domestic workers alike, as much as it has for gardeners and car-washers.

I work from 8 to 6, hence I hardly find time to clean and do laundry. My first helper, Ntsoaki, I got as a referral from Pinky, my neighbours’ helper. Ntsoaki was great, she would wake up early and and even do stuff I did not expect her to do, like polish my handbags and arrange my books in colour-coordination. She would change my bedding every 2 weeks and my pots always had a twinkle in them.

It wasn’t surprising that she was always exhausted, in the evening. All she would want was her Ntsu Snuff and a roll of tissue paper while she tells me stories of how men she previously worked for would cheat on their wives and how she pick up condom wrappers under their beds because their lazy wives would not clean even their own bedrooms. I wonder what she is saying about me wherever she is.

She always spoke ill of men and their cheating ways. How they mistreated their wives while spending all their salaries with concubines.

“Mpesi o kgola faef tao, o fa mampesi seben handerete. Ha qeta a be a nka 4 tao e setseng a lo e ja matekatsi ane a re nkeng”

It was quite interesting to note how she always knew everything about everybody, in our neighbourhood. The cheap curtains the Nkosi’s have and the apoiit brat that is the Smith’s son.

One evening, I came back from work to find her ticking names off a list on a notepad.

“Hey Mamokoena, what names are those, society members?”

“No, ea ba nkolotang, or did you think I only worked for you? This whole neighbourhood is full of my clients.”
E-mail to my mother

By Apple Ann april

To: mapril@webmail.co.za
CC:
Subject: Mom

Mama my friend, I send you this email as a letter will take too long to reach you. A phone call I foresee I might dry out of the correct words to explain.

Mama I have finally met someone, the most ideal of humans for me. We met at the most unexpected of places, the park on a random Sunday afternoon. I was wondering thoughtless as you know I do, when I was blinded by a generally well described male descriptive conversation of this being.

Mama my friend, I am truly happy.
You know how I am. I have not been looking for anything serious nor a one night stand. Whatever would happen in terms of my hearts relations I was willing to take it one step at a time even though in my head I knew I am not getting any younger. Heart matters have never been my major concern.

Mama my friend I have met someone.

She, she is the most perfect of creations a man would illustrate. How a man would probably lust over her physical appearance I withdraw my approaching hands in wonder and admiration how a woman’s body could be so shaped. I can faultlessly describe her when her back is against the sun, her silhouette. She is slightly shorter than I, brown eyes, short brown hair and her skin tone golden syrup best describes. Her hips and buttocks vaguely prelude capturing her ability to bear kids. And her breasts are a little bigger than mine as you know I am not largely blessed in that department. They firmly standout pointed in opposite directions as though they lead the way.

I never knew how soft a women’s touch skin is until I met her. Touching her, feeling her, smelling her. There is so much to be discovered, a history of joyful pain, science of explosions, mountains of geography-her art.

Mama, I had no better methods of telling you hence this email. I don’t know how Dad will respond but you have taught me that it is okay to “controversial” as long as I am happy and live in maintenance of God’s love. I am happy mama, she makes me happy.

We plan on having children so you and Dad will still be grandparents one day. Marriage is in the pipeline but I intend on bringing her home first, I hope Dad won’t feel uncomfortable.

Mama, I write with great extent of openness to you as you have been my best of friend growing up. We spoke about everything back then, the hurt a failed relationship seemed to bring yet my reluctance to let it show; my ability to steadily heal and my eagerness to try again not letting the past rule but being conscious of the present.

I did not go looking for her mom, she found me. I have found love Mama, her name is my forever even though ideally she is to be my sister from another and not my life partner.

Mama my friend I have found love in the same make as I.

With love
Your daughter.
To the airport we took the Gau. That’s a very convenient way to travel to ORT and it’s not at all uncomfortable. Uneventful thus far. There was a strange guy at the airport who insisted on weighing our luggage. There was nothing about him to distinguish him as an airport worker. He was certainly not South African. Nigerian I’d say judging from his accent. He recognised me from the tv. Sweet. Perhaps I was beset by an attack of vanity. I allowed him to weigh my luggage. He said it was overweight. I’m travelling to darkest Africa to a theatre festival. It’s not where you need your glad rags so my bag is small. I left my glad rags at home. It did occur to me that if my little pieces of luggage were overweight, then everyone must be paying fortunes over the odds because our brothers and sisters from up the continent do not travel light. Will the plane even be taking off under the weight of what one sees being checked in? You see televisions and microwaves and all sorts, so I couldn’t help but wonder.

Anyway, so the guy weighed the luggage and told me it was overweight. He wanted me to head for the check in desk with him. He said he would talk to the girl there and get me a 50% discount. But, how could he do that? Who is he? He’s a scruffy individual with no official capacity and why do I need someone to fight my case when my gift of the gab is pretty untelligible. In the end I had to say no. He mentioned something about us helping each other, but I don’t need his help. Who was he? No. I got to the check in desk. I told the woman seated there that that guy had told me my luggage was overweight. The supervisor type standing behind her heard me and paid attention. But she was very quick to jump in to tell him that it was nothing. It wasn’t nothing and I wasn’t going to let it go. I told the supervisor type my story, and I pointed out the guy. It’s a bit of an affront really, having some complete no one come and grab your luggage. I don’t know why I tolerated it, but there you go, for a little while I did. The supervisor type said that it was a constant problem, and they often had to call the police to remove these people. Well, the question is, why are they still there? This isn’t some banana republic airport, at least not yet. This is O R Tambo International. It’s one of the most beautiful airports in the world. It’s the pride of South Africa. Why are hustlers and grifters being allowed to function there? It’s wrong.

I think I know how was this nobody of a grifter was going to persuade the lady at the check in to give me a 50% discount on my overweight luggage. She must be in cahoots with him. I reckon this is how it works. The grifter says the luggage is overweight, I pay the excess and they split the proceeds. Also I am, I’m sure, expected to give him a tip for having helped me. It’s a total scam. Is that what we want our airport to become? – a stomping ground for scammers and grifters? No! I have no doubt that there are many unsuspecting, confused travellers who get taken for a very nice ride. Unfortunately for him, I like to fight my own battles; or at least I want someone official to fight for me, if a fight is needed. What would I do with a grifter? Really? It’s not my style.

Well, that was the exciting part of the journey. The departure lounge bit was uneventful. I’m a seasoned traveller. I found the my way without trouble. The plane smells like a soup kitchen. The food, naturally, is inedible. The seats are tightly packed. There are no frills, no movies to watch. It’s a glorified bus, really, and a pretty uncomfortable one at that. Four hours. Thank God for the iPod.

I couldn’t suppress a little chuckle when the trolley dolly asked me if I would like chicken or beef. That is such a cliché and such a joke by now and has been for years. I wonder that the airlines don’t change the menu. Chicken or Beef? Ya gotta laff! Actually, now that I think of it, I haven’t heard that in a while, so obviously some airlines have evolved.

I didn’t bring anything to read. I think I’ll catch a couple of hours shut eye. I think I miss my Lavah already. There are so many little observations that I know he would appreciate, and we would laugh about together. I keep thinking about what he’s doing. He’s probably having a jol. I hope he’s missing me. I’ll call him when I land. I guess it’s good for me to have a little test drive of being without him before my big atlantic crossing. We have been pretty inseparable since the day we met. Maybe I should have brought him with me. I could have, I guess. I didn’t think of it until now; now that I face 13 days away from him. OMG is this that thing called Laahve?
Travel

Two hours and 45 minutes to go. This is really uncomfortable. Maybe I should have travelled business class, but one doesn’t want to travel business on one’s own budget, does one. Well, not when one faces NYC in just a couple of weeks time and the dollar rand exchange. Although, I think my wish is coming true. The dollar was at 6.3 today at the airport. 5 is what I wish for. By the 17th let it be 5 and I shall sweep up those dollars. And I shall be much better off in the US of A.

Well, this is life, and I’m living it. I’m glad I packed up the house and just decided to go. It’s going to be a wonderful ride. I can feel it.

I arrived at the accommodations and went into shock. I knew it would be humble, but damn. No, it is impossible to move from Le Chatelat to that. That isn’t just not humble it is as diametrically opposite to Le Chatelat as it is possible to get.

When the car pulled up it was to the outside of a building that was basic brick with along badly lit corridor off which one could see wooden doors at regular intervals. The corridor was concrete. The doors wood. The light meagre, so meagre. It was dark. I asked the gentleman who had collected me from the airport if this was really the accommodation. I mean, really? He laughed and said, “No, this is still under construction, the accommodation is behind you”. I turned to look behind me. I confess that the building under construction and the building behind me looked terrifyingly similar. I moved to the hotel.

Follow me on twitter @tselane
Women in the streets presents  DK Taje

By val

The 31 year old mother of one is a driven and a hard worker who is a project manager by profession but says being a mother to Baitumetse, her 33 month old daughter, is her most valuable achievement thus far.

To DK, style means being her own unique self, not conforming to the latest trends but rather having a collection of classy, timeless and comfortable items that represent her. Her love of fashion started at the tender age of 11 when her grandmother bought her first pair of Dr. Martin’s boots.

“While clothes may not make the woman, they certainly have a strong effect on her self confidence – which I believe make the woman.” By Mary Kate Olsen

DK’s sense of style is classy, sophisticated yet comfortable and easy to wear. Her classic garment that has stood by her is black pair of Christian Louboutin which her husband bought for her.
“The South African fashion scene is progressive dynamic and distinctively on point. We are keeping up with all the fashion forward Hollywood stars and at times beat them to it. Our South African designers are doing relatively well; they do however lack the opportunity to showcase their talent on an international level. They are on the right path and are paving the way for future generation that will be able to reap of rewards harvested by the “Now Generation”.

DK is a label junkie and says: Mantsho by Palesa Mokobung and Marion and Linden are her favourite local brands.

Internationally, like many other fashion conscious woman, Coco Chanel is at the top of the list for DK.

DK’s fashion icon is her mother Thandiwe, who DK says has one of the most amazing closet and an even better collection of accessories which DK occasionally borrows to accentuates her outfits.
DK is a huge fan of Gail Nkane’s closet from the wild. She loves woman who dress appropriately and have that distinctive flair for fashion and also embrace their own individual style.

This sophisticated fashionista’s hottest trends for the season is… “skinny belts are the biggest trends right now, animal print and colourful blazers are breath taking. Sling bags and wedges are an absolute must have while polka dots will soon take over.” So says Mrs. Taje

Here are the 5 items she would take with her to the after life.

- My Christian Louboutin collection
- Playbook to keep in touch
- Our wedding photo and daughter
- A pair of perfect fitted skinny jeans
- My entire sunglass collection

Lastly the fashionista gives our readers a few fashion tips…

Always have a classy dress preferably an LBD (little black dress). A pair of fitted jeans and a plain shirt which makes a plain looking jean turn into a wow factor, a comfortable pair of black stilettos and a cardigan to accessories and tone down a formal outfit to a semi casual outfit. Mac has the best make up, invest in their collection and always have a good collection of sunglasses and watches.

“I don’t understand how a woman can leave the house without fixing herself up a little, if only out of politeness. You never know maybe that’s the day she has a date with destiny. It’s best to be as pretty as possible for destiny” - Coco Chanel
*FLICKS MY INDIAN WEAVE, TAKES OUT MY HANDCUFFS, PUTS MY AVIATOR SUNGLASSES ON AND HEADS ON*

Pictures courtesy of DK Taje

Follow DK in twitter @dk10taje

By Val

Follow me on twitter as @missvaly or like our page on facebook Val Milan

Please e-mail v.kgotla@yahoo.com if you want to be featured on Women in the Streets
I would like to foray, for a moment, into the world of life and style and womanhood. We women live a life and lifestyle of constant torture.

Someone even sang a song about it. ‘Sometimes it’s hard to be a woman’. Do you remember that one? I have a problem with that song. It’s not even about life as a woman being hard. It’s about men. I will admit that much of our torture is caused by our desire to keep the man that the song says we must stand by. Much of our torture is putting up with the nonsense one must put up with in order not to be single, but that isn’t the real torture of being a woman. Oh no.

The real torture is the wax. Yes, I am going to go there because I have just been there and I’m sore. Now, polite society tells us that we don’t talk about those things. Why not? We suffer through them. Let’s talk about the wax.

It is one thing to have a little eyebrow wax. It’s not so bad to wax the legs. It’s a little sore, but it makes your legs look pretty for all the world to see when you put on your little frock on a lovely summer day. Silk scarves slide down them unhindered by stubble. The leg wax is groovy.

Now let’s get to the real meat of the matter. The bikini wax. Why? Why is it that we women are forced to wax the fanny? I mean, who gets to see? Maybe at the gym a couple of women might be glancing in your direction as you pull on your g-string. They may notice whether or not you have waxed, but who cares what they think? On the beach if you sit in an unbecomingly immodest manner it may possibly be noticed by those who are inappropriately scoping out your crotch, but they will be perverts so who cares what they think?

We are not glamour models. We are not photographed in our knickers. We don’t walk around the mall in our undies. No one gets to see what goes on under our skirts. But we wax, religiously. We suffer every other monthly. Why? Because we are women. It’s hard.

The only reason we go through the torture of having hot wax smeared over the most delicate part of the anatomy, and then once the wax has cooled having it ripped off wrenching every hair in its wake from the deepest follicle is for the satisfaction of one’s lover. Are your legs crossed at the very thought? They should be. It’s torture.

Who came up with the idea that this area should be shaped up? It was men. It is for their viewing pleasure. It is misogyny at its worst and we women comply for reasons which I have yet to fathom. I mean, as one lies on that table with ones legs akimbo in the most exposing pose imaginable awaiting a discomfort that far surpasses the humiliation of the gynie one cannot but ask oneself, “What the heck am I doing to myself and why?”

It’s hard to be a woman. Every other month at waxing time, it’s hard.

Follow me on Twitter @Tselane
Despite the depth of the scars and a bleeding heart, women hide their pain so well behind their smiles. Underneath that tenderness, beauty and love, there’s a mountain of betrayal, heartbreak and self-doubt. Not forgetting a steep hill of low self-esteem and dented confidence amongst other things, all which came from her suffering emotionally, physically or sexually. Some women are in relationships where they are constantly put down and made to feel like they are less than what they really are. They get sworn at, beaten, treated like an object, told what to wear, openly cheated on or even told to cut contact with friends by their boyfriends or husbands and mentally, it’s just not healthy.

Abuse doesn’t always start from outside. Most women are affected by the relationship with their closest male figure. The state of that relationship determines how she feels about herself and how she views men because how they treat her is how she ends up expecting to be treated by other men. The hardest thing for a previously abused person is to let someone love them because you get so used to someone putting you down and when someone is good to you, it is difficult to accept that love. The cycle of bad relationship or promiscuity begins. A lot of ladies suffer abuse in their relationships silently because they are ashamed to admit that they are victims and have gotten so used to how things are that they even end up having a low self-esteem and not believing that they are worthy and that there’s someone better out there. Others can’t leave because they are dependent on their lover for shelter, clothing or financial support. Others are so deeply in love, they convince themselves that it’s “not so bad”, because they are afraid that no one else will love them and don’t wanna be alone. They love the man so much that they even protect his reputation and the monster he is behind closed doors because they want the world to see him in a positive way. They feel like they’d be failures if they walked away from the relationship that everyone seems to view as perfect. Plus her friends seem to be happy in their own relationships. Like any other relationship, the longer you stay, the harder it is to leave and your decision to stay or go lies on how much value you have for yourself.

I recently spoke to a woman who told me of how she had been raped twice in 2 years. At a later stage, she got into a relationship with a man who was sexually abusive and would force himself on her whenever she refused to have sex with him, but because of what she had been through before, she didn’t care anymore or fight it. Instead, she became suicidal, but always found hope in the relationship whenever he’d be sweet. Victims of abuse stay because they hold on to the hope that things will be as good as they were when the relationship started. Others even refused to let it end because they feel that they’ve invested so much of themselves in the relationship. In all truth and honesty, there’s nothing to be ashamed of when you’re a victim. That’s why most rape cases remain unreported because victims blame themselves for being violated and that’s why the culprits will even go on to do it to someone else because they keep getting away with it. How a woman dresses or expresses herself is no reason for anyone to wrongfully take advantage of her. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS “SHE ASKED FOR IT”. It’s a psychological plot to make her see fault in herself when there isn’t one at all. Abuse of any kind is wrong and we as society should have a unified voice against it for the sake of our grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, children, friends or even neighbors too. It’s a cruel and very inhumane act of violence cause by the desire to dominate another. 16 days of activism against the abuse of women and children is not enough. It should be an everyday thing so let’s stand together in support of those victimized. Women and Children should not be victims of abuse at all, whether physically, sexually or emotionally.
Braids for the fragile
By Tselane Tambo

Braiding has been an African way of styling hair for as long as there have been Africans. This is evidenced in the ancient stone sculptures that portray both men and women with neat stone braids. When I was about thirteen I wanted to have my hair braided. My Mum said ‘No’, As was my habit back then, I called from London to Zambia. I called my Dad out of deliberations on the struggle and begged him to override Mum’s ruling on the all important matter of my hairstyle. His amused response was ‘So, you want to look like a real Pondo girl’. He spoke to Mum, and I got my way.

I loved my braids. They were long and reminiscent of the wigs worn by Mpondo women and Himba girls. I felt so African, so unique. Ever since, I have had an addiction to braids. They are a homecoming for my head; a place to retreat when weaves are worn out and the labour intensity of daily styling is more than my soul is prepared to endure.

However, there are few things in this world more painful, more excruciatingly tedious and more rewarding in its result than the process of having one’s head braided.

Time goes slowly, even when there are three or more people pulling small strands of hair on every side of your head. They use a comb as though it was a paring knife engraving neat circles in your head. It’s as though they want to take a pound of flesh, infinitesimal bits at a time.

And there’s that moment of planting when they tug at the tiny strand of hair and tie on extra pieces of simulated hair to extend the whole into one long braid. A sharp expressive ‘Ouch!’ will assist in getting through that moment. Focusing squarely on the outcome diminishes soreness.

Then they yank, and pull because only by yanking and pulling, it seems, can they achieve a really neat braid. It’s quite manageable at first, but inevitably they will to lose sight of the fact that there is a human head attached to the hair that they are tugging at. Because the girls, the lovely lively girls have so much to say to each other while their hands go into automatic overdrive. One can’t help but wonder why they don’t talk to each other. They shout. They argue, there is a cacophony of chatter, they laugh loud, four of them, and so close to your ears. Thank God for the ipod.

There is nothing to do through all this but suffer and contribute with the occasional loud expression of pain, which will go unheeded. You can try to bringing a book, but pain makes you cross eyed; so you can’t read. You can bring a laptop, but the discomfort makes you ham handed, so you can’t type.

The only thing to do is to watch your face and see how many different facial expressions there are that illustrate the various moments of torture. There’s the close one eye, the pull up one side of the mouth, the twitch; There’s the total grimace, the frown, the frown close one eye combo, the teeth gnash, the pout, the pursed lips, the close one eye pursed lip combo, the frown, gnash teeth, twitch, frown, grimace, combo which is usually followed by a purposeful yelp. And finally there’s the twitch, close one eye, teeth gnash, frown, pout, grimace, pull up one side of the mouth, neck shrink into the shoulders in a futile attempt at escape super-combo.

But in the end, you smile because you look so pretty.
A hairy subject
By Mahlape Mohale

Horse hair, fake hair, weaverine you can call me whatever you like but this is my hair. If you go into a shop and buy a can of coke, whose coke is it? I don’t know about you but I call it my coke. If I buy a pair of jeans, whose jeans are those? They are still my jeans. So the same rule applies when I buy a packet of hair, that’s my hair and I’ve got the receipt to prove it.

I have never had a judgemental bone in my body that’s why I find it so hard to deal with people whose whole skeletal system seem to be made out of judgemental bones. When it comes to hair the biggest and most brutal critics are people with dreadlocks and natural, “untouched” hair. They frown at us “weaverines” (as we are affectionately known in their circle). When I see more than three people with natural hair in one group I quickly run to the conclusion that they were brought together by hair and their friendship lies at the root of their hair. They are very conscious of hair and when I pass them by I just know I have given them a topic of discussion.

The topic of hair for them is a passion, they live for it. Anyone with processed or extended hair is less of a human to them, a sinner. They feel it threatens their very soul and existence. So they make it their mission in their very rare encounters with weaverines to always bring up the subject of hair and try to enlighten us on our poor choice of hairstyle. I have had my fair share of encounters with these characters and I must admit they used to intimidate me more than enlighten me. The latter being their primary intention. I still find myself loving my bought hair now more than ever.

Don’t get me wrong I still at times look as someone’s dreadlocks and think to myself how beautiful they look. I love dreadlocks and overall natural hair but I know that’s not for me. What these people with natural hair don’t understand is that not everybody is trying to make a political statement with their hair. There are many other means and ways of making a political statement and still look good at the same time. For them is through their hair, but not everybody looks good with natural hair. As women I believe we all like looking our best and maximising on our looks. If I had hair or the face for dreadlocks I would have them right now but unfortunately my hair is too brittle and I wouldn’t look good in dreadlocks.

I have always believed in what works and for me that means bought fake hair. This might not sit well with others but the most important thing at the moment is that it sits well with me. Those brothers who don’t like or want weaverines, fine we probably don’t want you too. Those sisters who have a problem with weaverines, fine keep your natural hair and we’ll keep our fabulous weaves.
Q: Hi Doc

I'm hiv+ my. Husband is -ve, I'm currently on ARV's. Is there a way we can get pregnant such that he is not infected with hiv?

A: A serodiscordant couple - where one partner is positive and one partner is negative - can conceive naturally or they can use artificial insemination - if they can afford it.

The most important thing is that we want to keep the negative partner negative. I shall focus on the HIV-positive partner - regardless of gender.

1. Ideally, the positive partner must be on ART - antiretroviral therapy 3 drugs taken to suppress the virus's ability to replicate - make copies of itself. We want the positive partner to have a high CD4 count and a low viral load - the number of HIV copies in the blood. This is because the lower your viral load, the lower the chances of transmitting HIV.

2. The positive partner must have no sexually transmitted infections. HIV loves open skin and ulcers in the genital system. Once again, STIs increase your risk of transmitting HIV.

3. The couple must have extensive counselling. The negative partner must understand that if the natural conception route is chosen, there is a small chance of being infected.

If the natural conception method is chosen, the couple would have "timed intercourse". This is when the couple would have unprotected sex only on the days that the female partner is ovulating, and use condoms with every other sexual encounter.

If artificial insemination is chosen, the couple would have to consult a fertility specialist well-versed with HIV. I can recommend Prof Mervyn Jacobs. He runs Vitalab. Google it for their contact details.
Q: Hi Doctor, I'm a 39yr old positive(5yrs) female and on ARV's I keep getting genital warts although I haven't been sexually active for the past 3 yrs. I use Wartex to remove them but they keep on coming back. What to do

A: Genital warts (condylomata acuminata) are caused by HPV - human papilloma virus - sub-types 6 and 11. The virus is easily spread skin-to-skin during sexual acts. Once infected, you're infected for life.

What you've described is typical of genital warts. They are generally recurrent especially in immunocompromised patients. The only time I would worry about the warts is if they've become unsightly, infected or are blocking your vaginal canal. If they are bothering you then I recommend that you visit your GP and get them looked at. You can get them cauterized - 'burnt' - with podophyllin.

Please DO make sure that you do a PAP smear. HPV sub-types 16 and 18 are associated with cervical cancer.

Q: Hi Doc, I'm a 30 year old woman in 2010 I had my uterus removed because it was cancerous & last year I had another op to remove 1 ovary but now I spot very ugly blood during intercourse is this normal?? I'm scared something might be wrong!!

A: Bleeding during sexual intercourse is not normal. Please go and see your GP as soon as possible for a referral to an obstetrician-gynaecologist

Q: Hi Doc. My gynaecologist has recommended the HPV vaccine (gardasil). I'm healthy (age 25) and clean bill of health (STI free, pap smear is clean, etc.) but have been debating the pros and the cons vaccine, if there are any at my age. Should I get the vaccine?

A: I attended a Preventive Medicine Conference last year and the expert on cervical cancer advised ALL women to get the vaccine - regardless of whether they were already sexually active or not, whether they already had HPV Human Papilloma Virus or not.

He cited the risk of HPV re-infection as one of the main reasons for this advice. The risk is ever-present hence the advice given.

So yes, get the vaccine.
Q: Hi Dr sindi

My baby was born the 18th Oct and will be turning 6 months in April do I start feeding her solids any date in April or on the 18th and want to I start with in feeding her thank you in advance.

A: Well done for having breastfed exclusively for the past 6 months.

You are now approaching the weaning period for your son. The 2010 PMTCT Prevention-of-Mother-to-Child guidelines recommend that babies be gradually weaned over 4 weeks.

For you, this means that between the 18th of April and the 18th of May, your daughter is going to gradually change from exclusive breast milk to a No 2 formula milk and a baby cereal.

When I train nurse clinicians on weaning, I give them a regimen.

Some basics: you need new baby bottles, bottle sterilizing stuff, rice cereal, No 2 formula e.g. Nan 2 or Lactogen 2. Whatever formula you get it HAS to be No 2. Baby is going to CUP feed a bit to avoid nipple confusion.

1. Week 1: 18th to 25th
Breastmilk as usual. Start by giving baby ONE teaspoon of rice cereal a day, made with No 2 formula. Start giving baby one or two feeds of No 2 formula - using the lid of the baby bottle as a cup.

By the end of this week baby should be on breastmilk, comfortable with rice cereal and drinking No 2 formula out of a cup nicely.

2. Week 2
- lessen the breastmilk feeds
- increase the rice cereal feeds
- increase the No 2 formula feeds - still using the cup

3. Week 3
- start strictly limiting breastmilk to mornings and evenings
- rice feeds as per the instructions on the box
- No 2 formula feeds as per baby's age AND now from the bottle with the teat

4. Week 4
- one breastfeed a day
- rice cereal feeds continue. And now we add small amounts of mashed vegetables. Do NOT add salt or sugar to the vegetables. Potato is the best to start off with
- No 2 formula feeds continue

23 March you STOP ALL breastmilk feeds. Your baby has been weaned and will now be on solids and No 2 formula.

Baby's next HIV test is going to be exactly SIX weeks after 18 May - on Friday 29 June 2012.

Please email me sindivanzyl@gmail.com if you need extra support. Weaning is easy. It get harrowing when you have too many people advising you so you need to make sure you are strong-willed and stick to the regimen. Good luck :-}
Q: Dear Doc I’ve been with my boyfriend 4 years and we have unprotected sex. I tested positive. He tested in December and he says he is negative. Is it possible?

A: Firstly I would suggest that you go and test together as a couple. You need documented evidence of his HIV status.

Secondly it is possible for a couple to be in a situation like this. The term used is serodiscordant couple. Sero = blood discordant = not the same. One partner is HIV-positive and the other is HIV-negative.

There are a few factors when considering HIV transmission:

- gender: females are more likely to be infected after one unprotected sexual encounter with an infected person than males are. This is a physiological fact. Semen is deposited into the female’s body. There is a wider area of mucous membranes - which the virus loves. Add the fact that it takes about 72 hours for the semen to ‘work its way out’...and you can see why women are more vulnerable to infection.

- presence of sexually transmitted infections: HIV loves STIs and STIs love HIV. So if either partner has an STI with open ulcers, your risk of getting or transmitting the virus is higher. Regardless of gender.

- viral load of infected partner: the lower the number of HIV copies in the blood, the lower the chances are of one infecting their partner.

Hope that this helps.

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Q: My boyfriend and I broke up after 6 months. The break-up caused a lot of heartache. Now we are back together but I can't seem to forgive him for what he did. It's not so much mistrust as it is hatred I feel for him.

A: Sweetie, the worst thing you can do to yourself is get back with someone you hate!!! It's not gonna work out unless you truly let go of the anger and hurt. It will cause both of you terrible heartache. My advice would be to give yourself sometime until you can forgive before getting back together. Good luck!

Q: I was dating this other guy. I'm really in love with him but we never broke up and we don't call each other nor e! So do I do?

A: Seems to me like what you guys have is fling (on and off relationship). If it is working for both of you, then don't change anything. Sometimes the worst thing we can do in a relationship is ask for too much too soon. Just continue with your life and if it's meant to be, it will be. Good luck!

Q: Been in a relationship for more than 2yrz with this guy, recently found out that he's got a gf and a son....His cousins says I should fight for him if I love him but I feel I can't. Should I?

A: The one thing you should remember Sweetie, is the fact that: if you fight and win, you will always have to share him with the mother of his kid and his kid. That cycle never ends........are you prepared to put yourself thru that??! Is he willing to fight for you? Ask yourself these questions then make your decision carefully. Good luck!!

Q: My bf is always reminding me of our religion differences and that will breakup even though we love each other so much. Am I wasting my time or should I go with the flow

A: If religion is that important to him and his family, then I'm afraid this will NOT end well for you. What worries me the most is the fact that he seems willing to let you go because of this religion and he doesn't sound willing to defy it. If the flow works for you, go with it, DON'T invest in him until he INVEST IN YOU! Good luck sweetie!!

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A: Seems to me like what you guys have is fling (on and off relationship). If it is working for both of you, then don't change anything. Sometimes the worst thing we can do in a relationship is ask for too much too soon. Just continue with your life and if it's meant to be, it will be. Good luck!
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