Chivanhu: identity

April 2012

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Chuck Palahniuck once said: “we can spend our lives telling us who we are. Sane or insane, Saints or sex addicts, Heroes or victims. Letting history tell us how good or bad we are. Letting our past decide our future. Or we can decide for ourselves. And may it be our job to invent something better.”

In this issue we let our writers intrigue us with all things related to “identity”. We have titled the Dini newsletter CHIVANHU, a shona word for identity. It will expose, celebrate, inform and provoke our ideas about identity, while also giving us new ways of owning our identities...be it individually or collectively.

This issue will also celebrate the identity of ILWIW, showcasing the reason for its existence. It is in this light that we will also be asking you to partner with us in the work of this website (see page 30), because we are all after-all www.ILWIW.com.

We are an online platform that showcases unpublished writers; essentially, we are Writer’s Stage, Reader’s Heaven and Publisher’s Hunting Ground. All articles published in this newsletter were taken from our website that features eight new articles a day, seven days a week. You’re more than welcome to join our community and contribute your works of writing or engage in discussions by commenting on each article. Click Here to Register your Profile.
Pastor Nkosi Mbene’s death was untimely; he still had so much to give to the world. He was loved by all those around him. After hearing about the news, one of the old men had smiled and said, “it’s clear that life in its entirety is not without a sense of irony,” deeply disturbed by the news. He was a god, some felt, and did not deserve to die, at least not at such a young age. “Is it not logical to denounce whatever faith one had in God when God takes away the very thing that instilled that faith?” Intelects debated. But the pastor was gone, and life, it had seemed, would be gloomy without him.

As expected, his funeral would be filled to capacity by the sincerest of individuals, his deep and solemn lovers, his friends and family, colleagues, teachers and his students. When a chance to speak about his life and the impact or effect he had had during his lifetime, it was his congregation that had the most to say. Even before their chance to speak, it was evident that they felt obliged to help. They felt deeply indebted to him and his family; which manifested in their actions, their propulsive need to make sure everything was smooth running.

Everyone that spoke of him spoke of a saint, a healer, a problem solver, a realist whose spectrum of advice far exceeded that of other ‘orthodox’ men of the cloth. The pastor was praised and loved even by those that society esteemed incapable of loving. From children to old men, policemen to thieves, everyone was under the same cloud of remorse, commemorating and celebrating the life of their hero. It had seemed, for that moment, the pastor had brought hope and unity to everyone.

Amidst the teary community of mourners at the funeral, one lady seemed noteworthy. She hadn’t shed a tear, and throughout she’d seemed more indifferent about the event than the media people who were merely there to report on this sad day. She had sad eyes, her bony shoulders told of a story of a once happy mother or wife. When it was her turn to speak, she stood up and walked slowly to the pulpit – seeming a tad bit disoriented.

The lady gathered herself and greeted everyone. She introduced herself as the wife of the pastor and the mother of his three children. She proceeded to share with everyone the life she and her family had before the pastor’s untimely death, speaking with sincerity, softly and clearly.

“First I’d like to thank everyone for coming, thank you for your help and making whatever efforts you did to make sure that my husband’s last moment went by without any problems. It is with great sadness that those who are more effective in society pass on at the times when we least expect them to, but God has his reasons, and we as the God fearing people have an obligation to respect and honour those reasons, whatever the hardships of doing so may be.”

“Unfortunately, I hear of the good things my husband did for everyone in this room and my heart is filled with envy, jealousy and sadness. I wish I had a chance to meet the person everyone is talking about, to talk to him, and possibly share a life and family with him.” As she spoke a mild swift of confusion seemed to fill the room. “As everyone spoke of his kind deeds,” she continued, “I kept pinching myself to see if I’m not dreaming. And more than anything I wish I had at least known the person you are all talking about. To me, Nkosi was nothing more than a bad husband, and at times, I couldn’t help but wish I would just die and escape this misery.” “I know you may not be accept what I’m telling you right now, and maybe it is not the best of timings to say this now, but I’ve kept it inside long enough. Maybe I did not deserve his love and kindness.

Maybe this was the life God had chosen for me, but what about his children? Nkosi had never been to a single parent’s meeting at his children’s school, he never helped with homework or went to any social activity they had”

As she went on, tears filled her eyes, her life was one lesson everyone had not expected to hear. She went on and on painting a gruesome picture of her years as a wife, how he had never touched her intimately for over 7 years. There was never any violence, physical nor emotional; there was never any shouting or screaming. It had seemed to have developed this numbness against everything he had and everything they shared. She explained that all seemed to have gone south after their second child was born, she wasn’t sure why or what caused the problems. For infinite years she would be the shadow of a well renowned icon, a glitch of his immature mishaps – or so she believed. Her children would suffer the consequences, but she would bend over backwards to ensure they never felt neglected. Where was this God that everyone praised so much, why would he let this happen to her?

At the back of the hall, slightly slouching on my chair, I listened to the lady’s stories, my teary eyes covered by my polo sunglasses. My mother next to me, consumed by remorse for her friend’s confessions, she had known. I found myself thinking about the facets of success, how society seems to dictate what happiness or perfection is, until they realize they don’t have a clue.
Her torn clothes exposed her nipples. Naked she was, in front of the world. Ashamed of her bare state, she couldn't maintain eye-contact. She was clearly embarrassed to be seen in that state. Though she was a proportionally built woman with a firm body, she didn't find her nudity sexy. Her cracked lips and battered skin told a story of treacherous roads she had travelled. Troubles of her bruising past had worn her out. She was so dehydrated, even her tongue was dry. A state that impaired her speech. She was thirsty and desperate for water. For the sake of her life, she needed a drink.

He too wore torn clothes that exposed his manhood but he walked like it didn't bother him. So comfortable and confident he was with himself, he looked people straight in the eye when communicating. He paid so much attention he looked to be zooming into the pupils inside people's eyes, as though he could see into their souls. He was attentive, yet the torn clothes he wore exposed his manhood. He walked like his nudity was sexy, but it couldn't be any farther. His skin was silky smooth and his lips hydrated, for he carried a bottle of magic water. He kept taking sips off it as he listened to all who spoke to him. He never spoke much, but people enjoyed his company. All he had was that magic water that kept his skin glowing.

Stumbling upon her words and struggling to get her voice out, she asked for a sip of his magic water. With a smile, he duly obliged. Miraculously, her skin was instantly rehydrated. Her cracked lips moistened and her once dry skin glowed. Her tongue loosened up and speech returned. Her beauty shone and confidence returned. She was now comfortable to maintain eye-contact. Her torn clothes still exposed her nipples. Even though her beauty resembled the stars in the night sky, she was never comfortable. Though she was more beautiful than the orange and yellow rays of the rising sun, she was never fulfilled. Unlike him, her nudity bothered her. He asked her to stay with him, but she couldn't for he wore the same torn clothes as her. She left him behind, in search of a cloth to cover her nudity. In spite of his repeated pleas to stay with him, she left and followed a man who wore silk robes.

The man with silk robe gave her one of his finest, especially imported from Syria. She smiled, yet the moisture on her lips had weathered. The magic water's effect works only for a short space of time. Though it never runs out, one has to continuously take sips of it to remain moisturised. She was clothed, yet her skin was cracking. The man with silk robe had a gravely voice. Doctors said it was due to a deteriorating state of his internal organs. Many gossiped he suffered from Soul Decay. He would temporarily regain the voice, every time he took his robes off. That seldom happened so much he never noticed. Though his skin was generally in good condition, the magic water would have the same effect on his voice and internal organs as it has on the man with torn clothes' skin. He knew that. The lady's skin condition was fast deteriorating to levels worse than experienced before. She came to a realisation that she needed the magic water. She went back to the man with torn clothes and glowing skin and demanded the whole bottle. He told her he could only give her a sip, but even then she had to take off the silk robe she was wearing and promise to walk with him. She refused to take the robe off but begged him to have a sip. He wouldn't budge. Told her she couldn't have it both ways. It was either the sip that would rejuvenate her skin to glow like sunrays or the robe that hid her nudity from the world. She chose the robe.

Upon return to the man with silk robes, she told him of the man with torn clothes but had magic water that could help both of them with their conditions. For the man with silk robes, the magic water would renew his internal state. For her, it would rejuvenate her external state as it once did and restored her impeccable beauty. They had a Eureka moment. She went back to the man with magic water and smiled at him. He looked straight into her eyes and saw through her nervousness. She swayed her well crafted hips gently from side to side as she took off her silk robe exposing her cracked skin.

"A sip is all I need and I am all yours" Overwhelmed by temptation, he duly obliged. Instantly, she transformed into a beauty on witnessed in fairytales. She kissed him, but instead of experiencing Nirvana that lied on her lips, blood came out his mouth. A dagger had been stuck on his back, resulting in internal bleeding. He met his end, courtesy of a conspiracy between a man and a woman in search of his magic water. The bottle fell to the ground and disappeared into thin air. The magic water was his and could only be used by him on himself and whoever he chose to let have a sip.
Spellbound mercenaries

Charles Siboto

Magical lands like Narnia and Fantasia never fight their own wars without 'recruiting' children from our world to aid them. These magical lands have a sly scheme going on I suspect. Instead of going the expensive route and hiring trained mercenaries they recruit children from our world who have a sense of adventure. Their influence penetrates every nook and cranny of our society, they make sure that books with buzzwords such as brave, epic and honour are continuously being published and are ready for children to pick up and read at all times. The fantasy, horror and science-fiction genres serve as a vehicle to brainwash children. Adults are discouraged from reading "that sort of drivel" and those adults that do read about Faerie and deep space usually turn out to be the sort of people about which the rest of society whispers, "Just humour her won't you dear" - the sort of people who spend too much time on the internets ;)

Our world is a cheap child labour market for our neighbouring magically endowed cousins. They never pay the children they recruit a single penny. What they do instead is enchant them with the beauty of their castles and noble ideals, such as brave kings dying for helpless peasants. Magical countries abuse the fact that one can visit them for decades and it would seem no time at all has passed when you return to our world. After having spent years of your life fighting some strange country's wars they send you home with something trivial, like a vial full of liquidised starlight. I mean really now! It's all just a conspiracy. It simply must be, or my name is Pete - which I assure it is not.

Disclaimer: As far as I know it's not really a conspiracy. It's just one of those things that come to mind when one has too much free time.

(I would have added this disclaimer even if the CIA didn't show up at my doorstep and force me to).

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Palesa looked like a tragic parody of a movie star as she lay on the velvet chaise lounge with a glass of Chardonnay in her almost perfectly manicured hands. Or perhaps I should rather say that she sat as if she had watched more Hollywood movies than one was permitted to and they were slowly affecting the way she interacted with the world. “You sure you don’t want some wine?” she slurred slightly.

I looked at the time, barely past 10 o’clock, “no, thanks doll. I need this cup of coffee more.” She nodded and pulled on the cream robe that did little to cover her model perfect doll. I need this cup of coffee more.” She nodded and pulled

This was a conversation that had been repeated on many mornings. It started after she had called me one day in a mess of panic. She was being watched by an undesirable, she moaned. The young voyeur described as an undesirable because he lived in an apartment that looked like a haven for drug addicts, indigents and worn out prostitutes.

She had been blow drying her top of the line Brazilian weave, dressed only in a short bath towel, when she was overcome by a powerful feeling that she was being watched. She went to the window, looked around but saw nothing. She grabbed the telescope that an estranged lover had left and scanned the periphery but could still not find the offending eyes. The feeling initially overcame her periodically and then gradually transformed into a daily occurrence. She remarked that it was the strangest sensation as after being a model for eleven years she had been certain that she had grown used to the insane power of the gaze.

One day she found him by chance as she was doing her now daily frantic search of the neighbourhood. There he was, a young man dressed only in a pair of boxer shorts, standing in front of a floor length window staring at her through a pair of binoculars. Fuming, she stepped away from the telescope and saw the blur still positioned at the window of the atrocious apartment block that was a blemish in the otherwise great suburb. The absurdity of his lack of embarrassment angered her more, she could not understand how he could still stand there knowing fully well that he had been discovered. She gestured angrily at him but the blur at the window refused to budge.

As I said the topic bored me but I knew that I had to go through all the motions to please her. “Get out of here” I said, “so did he give you any sort of sign this time?” “No, he just stood there, scratching his balls with one hand, the other hand holding the binoculars.” “Why don’t you report him?” a logical point I had raised and she scoffed, “sorry, I didn’t … I am sorry. It just slipped out. Must be the wine” and she gave me one of her sad, empty smiles.

“I thought you didn’t want anything serious?” I looked at her baffled, “but men love you. I mean ..” I was at a loss for words “… you have your own stalker. You are a model for fuck’s sake”. That doesn’t mean shit!” she spat out “and anyway, I lied. He hasn’t taken his binoculars out for more than a week now.” She gestured for me to look at the telescope that was now permanently focused on the voyeur’s window. It took a while for me to focus and once I did all I saw was an unoccupied, scantily furnished sitting room. I moved away and looked at Palesa, “there is nothing.” Just wait, they will come in a few seconds. They always do.”

I returned to the telescope and again saw nothing but waiting furniture. The coldness of the lens made me want to move away but as I was about to a young man in the infamous boxer shorts sauntered into the room talking to someone outside of my view. I now understood why she had permanently moved the telescope to its new position. The boy had a warrior’s aura around him, the toned skin, the carved body, the ishloths, the assertive strut, it all seemed divine. I was about to move away to comment on how desirable he actually was when a young Beyonce like woman entered the room and jumped into the young man’s eagerly waiting capable arms. The girl was definitely not a model but she had that body that African men were automatically drawn to. The couple fell onto the couch as one and like that were out of my vision. I turned away to see the perfect face of my friend crumbling into pieces. “You saw them?” she asked, I nodded, a bit confused. “You do not understand” she mumbled. “That is what I am to everyone. Just something to ogle over. Not good enough to take home. No one loves me.”

The need

Mabel Thandi
My father was the hardest, staunchest believer in life rules. His first rule was: No true Kikuyu blood should be mixed with any blood from ikamba (from Kamba land), ruguru (west of Kenya), or from ruraya (abroad). He believed his children, even the daughters were made from the blood of Gikuyu and Mumbi, whom he virtually considered to be under gods of the great Ngai. He expected the very best from his children; sent my brothers, my sisters and I to the best schools his money could buy.

It was just after independence, spirits were high, hopes were soaring. My father wanted so much for the great country, and so he sent us to get the best education, even as far as sending me and my sisters, not just our brothers, to universities abroad.

And that is where I broke the rules. When I told my father, that I wanted to marry a man from ruguru, so soon after arriving back from four years of university, he was livid. He even said it.

“I would have understood if you had gotten tempted and married one of those white men. Nyamu ya ruguru! Gwakwa? Muiritu nii njiarite, ahike ruguru? No nguragire! (An animal from the west. In my home? A daughter from my loins. Married to the west. I'd rather kill you!)

So I fled, with my man from the west.

Fitzgerald Mboya. No relation to the great Tom Mboya, or John F. Kennedy, although the US President’s middle name might have had something to do with his name. You see my Fitzgerald was born on November 22, 1963, the same day John F. Kennedy was killed.

Even back then, I had no doubt that he would come to be a great statesman. That might in a way explain my decision to run off with him. I was blind in love.

I met him at an African Students Meeting in Georgia, Atlanta in 1988. I was a student at Emory University studying Mathematics, which surprised him when I was introduced to him. He was a student at Georgia State University studying Law & Political Science. It was a whirlwind affair after that. Leading up to our eloping, returning to the United States so he could pursue a teaching job and a PhD, two children in a row, and then his sudden disappearance one late summer day.

It was not long before I was on a plane, with two children going home to uncertain fates. I was fortunate that my sisters heard about my problem and got some money together so that when I arrived back home, I could put a kind of life together. My father wanted nothing at all to do with me.

And my husband? He was married to another woman, someone his tribe accepted. I wanted to know nothing more about him. Of course, later, I just had to know because he decided to run for his father’s parliamentary seat, following his father’s death, and it soon became cool for journalists to air politicians’ personal lives on National TV. Thankfully, no one seemed to know anything about me and the children who looked uncannily like their father.

I lived in Nairobi’s Ayany Estate in a rented 2 bedroom house from November 1992, until September 1993. Having failed to get a decent job in nearly a year, with my money running out, I agreed to take up a secretarial post in a shipping company down in Mombasa. I managed to get a friend to keep my kids for a while as I settled in my new job. I was fortunate that one of the senior managers, Alistair Blaine noticed my hard work and promoted me to become his PA. It was a better paying job, but in time the work came in direct conflict with my vow to become a very good mother for my kids. When I got pregnant with my third child, I took the opportunity to take some time out and start a business.

I got into business with one of my new friends at the Coast, Salima Hassan. Salima was quite a surprise, I have to say. She was nothing like the rumours of lazy coastal people I had heard of. She was a widow, after her husband died of sudden illness in 1990. There were whispers, but Salima came right out and told me that her husband had died of AIDS, and that she herself had the disease. That was long before it was ok to admit your status. And she had four young children, so had decided to take fate into her hands.

Salima put her heart and soul into that business, I tell you. By the end of 1998, I had started to see quite a lot of light in my dark world. And then the world collapsed into itself again.

Salima died in a car accident. Her husband’s relatives, every single one who had whispered about her condition, and spread the rumours that she had killed her husband, showed up to claim her share of the business. By the end of 1999, I had no business, so I went back to looking for work. And like before, inspite of my pretty University Diploma from Emory, good work was not available.
When Alistair Blaine offered me my job back, I took it. I took back a few other things that I had hoped to walk away from.

I don’t think that anyone quite understands the sacrifices a mother has to make for her children unless they are mothers themselves. I cannot say that I succeeded every time. There were times when it killed me because my sisters had found both careers and decent husbands. I do not think they meant at all to look down on me, and my kids. But they did. The looks of pity at Christmas, after my father died, and we were welcomed back to visit the homestead and my mother. When their children would repeat to my children the things they heard their mothers say to each other. When my sisters offered me their children’s old clothes and I could not say no because my kids really did need clothes. When my sisters would wink at each other when my mother handed me a Christmas present, invariably several leaves of hundred shilling notes because she knew that January was the toughest part of every year, with school fees, new uniforms and new books to be bought.

I did a lot of things, accepted very many situations to take my kids away from that. I worked hard. I started a business and put in all the time I had into it, and made sure I was home when my kids came home from school so that I could see to it that they had their supper and did their homework. When I lost the business, I went back to work, so I could get Gaby through High School in the semi-private school. I accepted certain situations so I could pay for my son Leopold’s extra tuition at the Academy that catered for children with learning difficulties.

And now I knew that I was going to have to do something that neither I or Gabrielle would like, but it had to be done to save my daughter.

A while back, my sister had offered to pay for Gabrielle’s tuition at a Private University if Gabrielle agreed to live with her. I had vaguely promised to talk to Gabrielle about it, but never did. Now, I have no choice but to force it down Gaby’s throat. She must leave this god-forsaken tourist town and its even more god-forsaken residents behind. We couldn’t wait for a vague loan from the HELB board so she could start university later in the year. Any more time in Mtwapa would kill her.

Look at her. She is not that proud little princess who walked around claiming that her mother was the best, or glowing because she was having a relationship from the unconquerable Creekside white boys, and ruling over the ganja boys under the tree at the end of Mtwapa at the very same time. Look at her.

I guess sooner or later, I was going to pay for my sins. The worst was when I had to look at my child as she reeled from shock and pain when Alistair Blaine’s youngest son broke her heart.
The four hour journey had come to an end and I couldn’t wait to get a glimpse of the place that was to become my new home for many years to come. I recall how the excitement that had diminished when we left Nairobi began to fill my heart again as we made our way to the exit. I pushed through the long queue of people hoping to be the first at the door but my parents quickly pulled my hand and called me to order. As we waited to disembark the plane, I suddenly wondered whether travelling to South Africa could be considered going overseas. When I was growing up, I had the idea that anyone who left their country for another country was going overseas. I guess my thinking and definition of ‘overseas’ had been shaped by the many stories my dad told us about Canada, one of the many countries he had visited. His fascinating description captured my imagination especially when he explained how the snow held people hostage in their homes and how winter somehow brought life to a standstill. He further described how the transport system was more advanced and convenient as compared to Kenya and how the train was the commonly used mode of transport. As dad went on and on about Canada, I sat attentively and could hardly move from the spot where I was seated to the extent that sometimes I could hardly hear mum calling me from the kitchen. Could this new place hold similar characteristics as those of Canada? A silly thought one would imagine, but for an inquisitive youngster like me that was absolutely normal.

It was not long before we arrived at our new home. As we walked towards the gate I gazed from one end of the building to another. The place was quiet and I hardly heard the sound of children playing nor did I see people walk in and out. “How do I survive in such a quiet place?” I pondered as we offloaded our bags from the car and quickly headed upstairs. Everyone looked tired and mum suggested we eat and rest for a while. I was excited to see my room which had windows that faced a busy street. My brothers and I gathered at the window and began to analyse life on the streets which somehow gave us an idea of what to anticipate in the new place. We giggled about little nothings which left me laughing to my knees. These were fun moments, although my brothers were younger they made me laugh and it is at that point when I realised that whether I made friends or not, I had my brothers to entertain me, they were my best friends.
Our first full day was on a Monday. I hardly saw children going to school and my conclusion was it must have been school holidays. My parents suggested we take a walk so that we could accustom ourselves to the new place. The streets looked busier than the previous day when we arrived and I could sense the city coming to life. Its streets were well marked and sparkling clean. Leisure parks stood at nearly every street and jacaranda trees shed their purple leaves which made the streets look beautiful. My dad explained to us that the abundant jacaranda trees led to the city been nicknamed the “Jacaranda City”. Unlike in Nairobi where I lived, multiracial groups were visible on the streets, something I found so unique. I imagined myself having friends from various racial groups which tickled me as I had only been exposed to one racial group in my growing up. Mum mentioned that schools were opening soon and that we should make time during the week to purchase my uniform and stationery. Before she even finished the sentence, I quickly interjected and asked how far my school was from our house. Dad quickly answered that it was located in town and that I was to take a bus every morning. “Where do I take the bus”? I asked. Dad told me to calm down as he was to go with me on my first day so that I could familiarise myself with the routes.

The first week went by pretty quickly and I was beginning to settle. I had learned a few street names especially the street where we lived but despite this mum was not comfortable with the idea of sending me the shop alone. She always asked my brother to accompany me which irritated me as I considered myself a grown girl. Nevertheless I didn’t mind my brother’s company because deep down I knew he had the ability to sort out anyone who tried messing with me. I was still getting used to the new currency and often when I asked the shop assistant for change I would say ‘shillings’ instead to ‘Rands’. My brother would often correct me but I would brush it off with a smile. Our movement was very limited as my parents only allowed us to play inside the building. There was a small secure yard where my brothers and I would play. We would chase each other around the building but this had to stop one faithful afternoon when one of the white neighbours complained that we were making noise. What had been an exciting day of play came to an end and sadly we had accept the reality that making noise was forbidden in the building.

Before we knew it, it was the weekend and mum had set the day aside to do school shopping. There was a long list of the things we needed to buy and mum keenly browsed the list to ensure that she didn’t leave out anything. Dad suggested we take a walk to town instead of taking a bus so that we could see more places. On the streets, I noticed that people spoke various languages and in my curiosity I asked dad whether Zulu was the widely spoken language. He didn’t give me an answer possibly because he was tired of my ever unending questions. We made our way to the uniform shop which was located on the furthest end of town. My feet were tired as we entered the shop which was packed with school children and their parents. One had to literally squeeze themselves through as children stood on every corner waiting to be assisted. I noticed how some children looked unhappy as their parents forced them to queue at the cashier while they wrestled to get the right uniform. Mum, who was always quick in doing things came to where I was standing and handed me a long blue dress and sweater. I rushed to the change rooms and fitted the dress which was way below my knees and made the “short me” look even shorter. I turned around and looked at myself on the long mirror from head to toe. The moment I had been waiting for had arrived. I was ready for high school, ready to make new friends the beginning of an interesting journey.
I guess I should tell you guys about all the madman stuff that happened in my neighbourhood towards the end of last year when God was testing out the Apocalypse on Rosettenville. He wanted to fine tune it before taking it worldwide. I don't really feel like telling the story and all because I have to be in the mood, you know. But I guess I should.

The madness began with my housemates and spread over the neighbourhood. The whole mess began in the usual manner an apocalypse begins, with a couple's tiff in the room across from mine. N., a petite beauty, lives in that room and because of her good looks she's never short of suitors knocking on her door, which is what sparked the tiff between her and the one guy I assumed she was 'steady' with - he's the guy that visits the most and all. For a while I tried ignoring the screams and crashing sounds coming from her room, wishing they'd kill each other in a quieter manner. But eventually I had to go see what's going on - doing my neighbourly duty and all that, you know. I'm not certain what the spat was about but I got them to calm down, with the aid of an Amazon of a woman who was (and still is) one of my other housemates. I left as boredom with N.'s sobbing settled in.

I thought that was that and everyone could go back to ignoring each other. No such luck. A few days later the boyfriend person runs into me in the house and asks if I'd seen N. I tell him that I had a few minutes prior and that she's probably in her room. He tried knocking and reaching her on her cellphone to no avail. He then proceeded to trying the door and lo and behold! Shit was real.

I was wrong.

A few days later I came home in the evening to be met by commotion in the house, which I tried to not get involved in till someone knocked on my door asking if I knew the number for the ambulance. I figured someone had gotten its ass kicked and was injured, judging by the thuggish types around.

I was too tired for that shit.

That was shit getting real in the ol' house (ground zero for all things weird and not-so-wonderful). Next in line was the neighbourhood.

The madness began with a beautiful woman, as is the usual way of things. For cool effect's sake I'll name the woman Raven and the guy she was cheating with her husband with I'll name Nimrod, because that's what he is - a stone cold idiot!

Raven's husband is one of a handful of Indian guys that live up to the racial stereotype of Indian men liking pimped out cars in that they own a shop that pimps out cars on the corner of my street. Till the day all that madman stuff happened they also fit the gentle and mild-mannered stereotype in my mind. Then shit got real. I digress though.

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A few days later I noticed a baby lying on the ground outside, in the sun, wrapped in a blanket whilst its mother objected did laundry. Who leaves a newborn baby lying in the sun? Seriously. They also played their music on an insanely high level at all hours of the day. I've no high hopes for that kid surviving long.

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The madness began with a beautiful woman, as is the usual way of things. For cool effect's sake I'll name the woman Raven and the guy she was cheating with her husband with I'll name Nimrod, because that's what he is - a stone cold idiot!

Raven's husband is one of a handful of Indian guys that live up to the racial stereotype of Indian men liking pimped out cars in that they own a shop that pimps out cars on the corner of my street. Till the day all that madman stuff happened they also fit the gentle and mild-mannered stereotype in my mind. Then shit got real. I digress though.
Raven and Nimrod were caught in the act because they are idiots! They were fondling each other in Raven's car on the street where her hubby's shop is. Hubby was walking by, coming from the store, and of course noticed his wife's car and peered through the side window to say hello, only to find her locking lips with another man. Shit, of course, proceeded to get real and I had a good view. All I needed was popcorn... But I don't like popcorn that so that was alright.

Hubby pulled Nimrod out of the car, took off his belt and started whipping the man as if he were a naughty school boy. Raven, in a state of panic, put pedal to the metal and got the hell out of dodge. Hubby's friends joined in on the epic whipping of Nimrod - much to my delight. There is something perversely satisfying in watching a grown man get whipped by other grown men. The whipping continued for a few more minutes and, alas, I had to depart because the taxi I was waiting for arrived.

A few days passed in a blur of too much alcohol and I eventually found myself seated on a chair at the corner of my street, near Hubby's shop, getting my hair cut by the dude with the informal barber set-up there. Needless to say that shit was materialising and fast reaching the consistency at which it's considered to be real. Again, great view and no popcorn. But it was okay.

Like the Terminator, but not as cool, Nimrod was back and out to get revenge on those who wronged him. This went down like a scene in a lame action movie. Nimrod rocked up in a VW Golf and parked near Hubby's store and just sat there... waiting... Such as a Hawk.

At few minutes later Hubby walked out of his store and crossed the road, at which point Nimrod, like a bear out of the darkest of Peru, came driving up the road and hit Hubby with his car! The sound of crunching bones and blood! People screaming! Me shouting, 'Holy fresh fog fuckery!'

Hubby's floppy body flew across the street and hit a general store’s window. He was still alive but was a bloody mess and... No freakin’ time to wait for it... his left foot was severed somehow! Nimrod, still sitting in his car, whips out a pistol and calmly puts it in his lap. These are the times I usually get my ass out of place. Being shot or going to jail are things that I try to avoid on a daily basis. I digress again. So, Nimrod’s just sitting there with his gun in his lap looking calm as all hell an Hubby’s crumpled on the pavement, half of him in the general store and just a bloody one-footed mess.

Hubby’s friends are real troopers because they all grabbed metal pipes and ran to Nimrod’s car and proceeded to bash the living daylights out of him through the windows and windscreen of his car. Strangely enough Nimrod just sat there for a while getting beaten in a rather savage manner. At no point did he even show signs of an attempt to use his gun! What a chop. He managed to open the door when he realised that the beating would not cease and he ran down the road with his gun in his hand. Hubby’s friends went over to assist him and medical personnel were called in and the police types also showed face. The icing on the cake for me is Nimrod coming back to the scene (gun still in hand) and complaining to the police about how he got assaulted. His stupid ass landed in jail, naturally. What a chop.

Hubby survived his ordeal and I learned a valuable lesson: do not fuck with Indian guys because they look timid and whatnot, those dudes will kill you.

Since God was testing out an apocalypse there had to be fire to end things off. After a few days of the terrible and stupid catastrophe that was the Nimrod Incident a furniture store, Beares, in Main Street caught fire and the whole block on which it was situated almost burned down. It was just crazy! People stood there watching with fascination and no one called anyone or anything, everyone just watched. Again, no popcorn.

I think God’s Apocalypse needs some more tinkering with before He takes it worldwide though. So that’s the madman stuff that happened to me last year. I still don’t care for talking about it but I thought you should know at least.
The state of being in accord with a particular reality or showing coherence to that reality is sometimes accepted as the truth. A phenomenon that can be scientifically observed and universally accepted is considered a fact.

As opposed to the sun rising from the East and setting in the West, which we all experience without fail, the truth that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin mother is at times disputed. An argument is usually made that "truth is relative". The universality of that statement remains under question. By default, that argument itself is relative, if truth is to be assumed to be relative.

Because all organised religions are based on some or other truth, what sets us free, therefore, stem from divergent points. Even though there are high levels of commonality among all religions, the concepts we differ on reside in deep-seated truths. As a result we have each taken positions we are not willing to get out of because, in doing so, we appear to be rebelling against the very foundations of our faiths.

Inter-religion tolerance cannot be taken as a given. As much as we all have teachings in common of love, peace and respect, we also have teachings on righteousness and leading lives pleasing to God, Allah, Buddha or whoever we choose to call our deity. It is at this point that conflict results. The point where our truths collide usually resulting in self-righteous behaviour and finger-pointing.

Though to some Muslims polygamy is acceptable, we Christians believe in one Adam for one Eve. Hindus consider a cow a holy animal, while Muslims and Jews consider a pig unclean for consumption. If we are to debate the religious aspects of the conflict in the Middle East, we would never finish.

If truth were a fact, we would all be serving one universal God. However, either our truths have divided God or our different deities have divided the truth.
Identity crisis

ArcadiaT

Is it a bird…or is it a plane? LOL On this identity crisis motivation I won’t even go as far as touching on the “worsten” kid’s paradigm, whose mom is Zulu and dad Pedi or any other culture/race but speaks fluent English with little or no understanding of both the folk’s language the picture has been well depicted before. That’s sad as losing an erection just in-time to plunge in, “head” first. I’m no exception to this as my vernacular is just as good as my German, Swahili and Yiddish.

sizable chunk of South Africans have lost their identity to western and many other cultures across. This is not only pertinent to blacks, my other Caucasian pal is pretty adamant that he has black blood running through his veins. #hashtag Mziligazi and HlabanangkaMarumo equally took offense to the notion. Fossils SHM!!

Yet again, the bright spark who took his or her precious little time to invent the concept of identity crisis, owing to the presumption that one person is more cultural or rural than the other without acquainting self with the basis identity crisis, hasn’t been crucified let alone named and shamed. During the times of mad-evil “wise ball” would have been dangled oh his bag upside down and poked with a burning spear up their…. Lord forbid.

"Identity crisis is the failure to achieve ego identity during adolescence". The term was coined by the psychologist –Erik Erikson. *sigh* with all due respect sir. One’s understanding may boil down from identity as sameness or expression of a group’s individuality to whatever makes an entity definable and recognisable. Confused? Smoke afro weed, because as far as this examination was conducted identity verves far beyond just sameness, but in the same breath also reiterates individualism, uniqueness, exclusivity et al.

In times like these our “then” President would have buried his head in the sand and said there is definitely" No crisis in Zimbabwe". As much as this may interest many, spark controversy and national debate on identity crisis I won’t live up to sum people’s expectation to relay this into homosexuality as part of identity crisis #NOHOMO cause applies.

Besides there are quite a handful of unidentified creatures silently going through identity crisis out there like (Equusferuscaballus) that’s a pony if u blank, like that short horseeduuhh ,also the Bigfoot / Sasquatch, aka the Yeti these hairy ape men are probably the most consistently witnessed unknown creatures in the world just to name a few amid many mysterious animals while u go figure out the rest if not most of them, to expand your knowledge if that’s not asking the world of you.

In crafting the last stanza, identity crisis is by far a worldwide phenomenon yet to be explained by man and animal kingdom in generic, the cause of this thought provoking creation goes far beyond imaginable but I believe that only the creator willingly may explain such prolific yet enigmatic creations brought to the astonishment of man..
it’s always fascinating to hear people talk about this word yet my interest is always on how we are so focused on making a ton load of money and gain immensely on materials. Now question is; is it really what it’s about because the more I engage in thought provoking conversations my attention to this legacy this is continuously sent elsewhere?

More and more my eyes are being opened to the need to find people that I can learn about my culture from; our history as a nation and family. With time especially the younger generation we’ve moved FAR from the very things that make us a people we are. Culture has become increasingly irrelevant and in the same breath also confused with ancestry or spirituality and now we’ve eventually made the norm a place of comfort. With that lack of knowledge if not non-existent it scares me that I have nothing to tell the generation coming after me; this also made me realize that I have a responsibility to dig DEEP in the hearts of the generation before me and sponge off the wisdom they carry because it’ll be a LOSS and a waste to let see them die with all that. I keep glancing at pictures families portray and there’s very few that gets my attention; instead that too is another element that could do with change otherwise the next generation will be of people that leave off technology; so much so that if there was to be some great invention for romance human touch would be replaced in a snap maybe even the kids would be raised technologically.

Now all these thoughts are just my perception of understanding what really this legacy this is because I understand that it goes MUCH deeper than inheriting material things. In fact above leaving my off-spring tangible resources to leave off there’s also a need this wisdom that will shape their character and make them well rounded people.

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A great divide

Namy

Once upon a time sasibambene(holding hands) we had the spirit of "UBUNTU" but now that we got what we fought for everyone is pulling to their own side, causing a great divide like we some kind of pawns or something! nowadays days its hard even ask your neighbour for a cup of sugar... "Really now" *being sarcastic*

It's time to wake up maAFRICA! And stop leaving in these selective bubbles that inflate our egos and yet again causing a great divide! Yes let's move with the times because change is something gradual, but please let's not lose our essence to everything that comes our way... Yet I say again "it's causing a great divide"

Let's embrace this Rainbow Nation, because we the only country in the world that has 9 official languages! We have natural resources, beautiful cities, culture and yea yea a History etc. It's still a beautiful country

To our Government it's the 100 year since the fight for freedom, of cause people are hungry for change and service delivery! Instead of us hearing about fraud let's hear more about the remuneration of funds to supply the needs of the needy! Let us not shine only behind the black 'n white words in our constitution! Make us proud "ACT" because truth be told I am Government

And I'm really tired of this GREAT DIVIDE.....

*just being opinionated*
The problem with these modern young men is that they don't know what it means to be a man. Manhood to them is defined by material possessions and the number of women they take to bed. And perhaps the number of degrees attached to their names. They forget the basic tenets of manhood in African society. Responsibility, pride, accountability and humility. A responsible man does not live with a woman he has not married. A proud man has his own compound that bears his name, and by extension the basis for his wealth. An accountable man is one who answers to his actions. And humility means that a man knows that there will always be beautiful women around. That your chosen woman may look the worse choice in the face of temptation. But it is these choices that make us men in the first place.

Like many of his class, Thabo had finally moved in with Ncumisa in her luxury apartment. What they see these young men in this arrangement is not having to worry about own property. But they overlook the naked truth that this situation is the number one cause why many of them lose control over women. A man who lives in a woman's house is not much of a man. He has lost touch with the reality of being a man. This reality only hit Thabo at that moment when Ncumisa announced to the world on tv that she was leaving him. He was too much controversy she said. That hurt him more than what Ethel had done to him. Na yena ke mmutla wa dint-jeng? To be humiliated like this on national television. There and then, he realised he had no place to go to. A place of his own. A place to call home. He must go back to renting a flat, if finds one so soon under the circumstances. He saw the foolishness of it all. That sometimes these boys confuse love for fantasy. Mistake infatuation for commitment.

He understood the wisdom of his Sesotho heritage. The saying goes, maya ke maboya. Etswe le pele di na le baji! How right they were, ancient Basotho ancestors.

Quoted from The Magic Number by Fezekile Futhwa, http://www.nalane.net/publications.html.
The story of a black man
Moeketsi Moshata

Not so long out of the conversation I was having with an associate; he uttered the words: “...story of a black man...”. And for that particular time the words were appropriate for what we were on about but being the person I am long after he was gone; days and most probably weeks those words kept coming back to my mind and every time they do I would dwell on them. I kept asking myself if this story exists and if so who wrote it and what brought the author(s) to a place where they felt a need to document our story.

I will try and be more detailed or at least cover most thoughts in my head when I share with you some of the facts and findings related to this story as compared to the little injustice I did in another piece I penned. I actually discovered that the authors of this story are black which was a huge relief to me considering that you would be reading memoirs and autobiographies of black people which I written by white people which I don’t mind but my question has always been: “What happened to black writers?” because I believe they are as capable or is it that they miss such chances if not uninterested. Let me make it clear that I write not as a professional or an experienced person but I just try to share with myself and others what my mind goes through sometimes. My other discovery was that there’s a lot of background associated with this story and that gave me hope because I knew that I will learn a lot and enrich myself with wisdom discovered off this story. Well it wasn’t long before I learnt that this is not one of those Fairytale Kinda stories but one filled with sadness; poverty; frustration and anger. The story I was so eager to deeply bury myself in and enjoy finding my history and its riches quickly became an obituary of parents that died and left their infant child to be brought up by people with no love let alone interest to look after or raise a child; we can’t even talk about them and leave for them a legacy that will be known by their third generation after I’m gone. It has taught me there’s hope and I can dream and bring those dreams into reality. When I see a couple that celebrate their 50th anniversary and their children that turned out good I’m hopeful that all is not lost yet I know that most males have a responsibility to love and care for the women in their lives because they might be coming from those abuse families and we need to teach them better and gain their trust. I’m reminded of a female friend who said to me: “...it’s not that we don’t want to submit to you or bare you children but we are afraid and not sure if you will assume your role and responsibility as a husband and a father...” and I understood exactly what she meant and it had nothing to do with her demanding her constitutional rights. As young men we need to re-write the kind of story we would want the future generation to associate with; and trust me it’s not that hard to achieve and the story of a black man is also not all-hope-lost but there’s hope.
There’s no place like home
Tselane Tambo

It’s official. At least it is in my mind. Our undecided political situation notwithstanding, we in South Africa have the greatest country bar none. Perhaps it takes distance to really see it. Actually, no it doesn’t. We know that we have the greatest country. We know it in our hearts, but we like to beat ourselves and pretend to ourselves that there is greener grass somewhere on the other side of someone else’s fence. There isn’t. Didn’t Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz click her ruby heals together three times and say ‘there’s no place like home.’ I don’t have ruby, but I do have red soled/souled Louboutins. Does that count as the contemporary equivalent? I feel the need to go to my greatest country. Why? What a question. Would it be too lackadaisical to talk about the weather? No, it is a huge factor, so let me start with the weather – the thing that is the stop gap in times of difficult small talk. When faced with upwards of six months of rain, snow, sub zero temperatures and relentless grey skies, does one not think longingly of the delicious humidity of Durban and the luxuriously constant complaint that it is too hot? Does one not hanker after the divine spread of the Western Cape wine lands on a languidly sunny Sunday, driving, or rather being driven to some lovely spot nestled in the basin surrounded by vines and mountains, eating food from foreign lands and the finest of South African oenological fare? Does one not sigh in longing even for Jozi with it’s proliferation of public squares full of restaurants and fashionistas and lively cacophonies of laughter? One does.

As one is jostled on crowded streets and baked to discomfort in jam-packed subway trains one thinks with extremes of yearning for the peaceful familiarity of the Eastern Cape with it’s elegantly picturesque mountainscapes, bespeckled with rondavels in voltaic shades of turquoise and pink. Why would one be here facing this cold when one can be there facing that warmth, and not just weather warmth either. It’s the people warmth. I don’t mean the people-one-knows type of people warmth, but the warmth and kindness of strangers. We are kinder to strangers than other people in other lands, or so it seems to me.

But, of course there are advantages to being in places that offer other things. The range of theatre productions is worth freezing one’s nethers off for, I guess, if theatre is your thing. The galleries that take not hours, but days to explore are visual spirit food. The freedom of total anonymity is scrumptious. The shopping – oh hold me back, restrain me! It’s fun to pound the pavements full of busy people on their own mission who don’t see one another; or find subtle ways of being alone on a crowed street. They don’t make eye contact. They turn their backs ever so slightly as the pass. There are a lot of earphones in ears, which suggests music, but it could as well be self-help or walking meditations. We can only guess. We will never know for sure. In truth, we don’t really care to know. We are all in our own little bubble. But with all that is on offer to experience and explore in other cities in other countries, there is nothing that can comfort one, and compensate one when one is hankering after home except to get in the car, get to the airport, and get onto SAA.

Why sit and be homesick when there is a cure. So, South Africa, my beloved country, here I come. Just for a little breather. Just because I need S A air and to hold The Lavah and to eat in my favourite place; just because if I already feel and know that if I don’t go home I’ll be miserable. It will be a couple of weeks only until the travel bug bites again. I’ll be back in the USA on the path of adventure.

Follow me on Twitter @Tselane
Since early mid primary school, I've become increasingly adept at adapting myself to different situations. In Grade 5, I moved to a foreign city with vastly different dynamics from the previous and had to acclimatise myself to all of that.

This has certainly been beneficial and I didn't have to stress too much about how unfamiliar everything was. I got on pretty well. A few years ago however, I started to find my own person, became more comfortable with being me. I DO SPEAK MY MIND and do what I like, sometimes when it is against the grain of mainstream thought and norms. Now I would not have it any other way.

I love my life that the Lord God has given me and are content with it. Not even the sky is the limit for me as I continually chip away at the limiting beliefs I've accumulated over the years. I realise my own value and focus on developing that, rather than work to please family, friends, associates and peers. I do not look to external sources to validate my existence or judge my actions. The best barometer is within me, in the same mansion where my happiness-generator lives, along side bundles of love for life and immeasurable determination to succeed and excel for my Creator:-)

Psst*I LOVE Emfo*
The speed of life

Lerato Finiza

Very often we go through life without stopping to absorb each experience. We barely observe where our lives are or are going at each moment. The answers to the question of our purpose may not be in words, but they are written in our surroundings, hence every experience is a lesson that applies timely in contributing to our growth. The further we go, the more important are the footprints we leave behind because you never know when you might need to make reference to the past to conquer a present situation.

Don’t forget to also look at the journey of those around you to either inspire your path or to avoid making the same mistakes as they did. Life is both long and short. It is short when taken for granted and lived in procrastination, but it is long if lived embracing challenges and appreciation of it’s moments of victory.

Every goal you accomplish is a mark on your life’s timeline, while living without ambitions is a blank page where the only thing written is your name. Be patient with yourself, enjoy life, appreciate people and allow yourself to feel, whether good or bad because those everyday circumstances are lessons in acquiring wisdom. What you see from those situations may be what others are blind to and so their enlightenment may actually come from you. Yes! You Only Live Once, so spend your life on things worth being cherished and making valuable memories such as positively impacting the lives of people around you. There’s more to you than anyone could ever determine because you have the unlimited potential to be greater than what motivates you.

Live your life like it matters and view everyday as another opportunity to make a lasting good impression. Many live by the James Dean quote that said, “Live fast, die young and have a beautiful looking corpse”. Well, what good is your life if you’ll only be remembered for your death?
As I woke up this morning, the first thing on my mind was that I’d rather stay in bed than carry around a heavy heart all through my day. So many mixed emotions followed by the thoughts of him, yes him. He’s the pretty boy that all the girls in college fight about and pull each other’s hair over. His well-built body fits so well in polo shirts and when he holds you tight, your heart races so fast that it feels like you’re about to lose your every breath. If you’ve dated a player then you definitely know what I’m talking about.

I’ve recently diagnosed myself with Bad-boy Syndrome. It’s been following me throughout my woman hood. It’s the type of relationships where you give more than you take and you are hardly offered much to feel as if you’ve been taking. This happens to the best of us and not even your beauty can save you. The sad part is when you’ve come to accept emotional abuse, most likely physical abuse and bad treatment such as being openly handled as second best, third best or whatever number you may be in this mans’ life.

You start convincing yourself that all men are bad boys and this in turn holds you back from liberating yourself from these bad relationships. The only thing that happens is that you keep on attracting more of the same kind. I, myself had even started building motto’s to excuse myself from acting like a naïve individual. Motto’s like “It’s better the devil that you know than the one that you don’t” and things like “All men cheat” so I might as well stay. I’d imprison myself in these types of relationships and allow them to drag on for as long as a year and mostly two.

My dad cheated on my mother and so did my granddad on my grandmother. But that that doesn’t make it normal, that doesn’t say that I too have to allow myself to go through the same vicious cycle of being cheated on and ill-treated. Mahatma Ghandi once said “Be the change that you want to see in the world” but how can I be that change if I flow with the rest of the world. If I believe that being treated badly as a woman is normal then what do I have left to teach the children of this world? The mind is indeed a prison on its own and only we can set ourselves free.
Hey DD readers…

As I write this, the missus and I aren’t on speaking terms. Had a bit of a spat last weekend…ok it was a very big spat but that’s always the case with two very opinionated and passionate people. Worse is the fact that even though she won’t admit it she knows I am right, well, she should know that I am right. I am always right. Silly bunny.

I told my friends about it and they mentioned that they were surprised she didn’t hit me. First I acted like it flew past me but one of my friends mentioned it again. Saying that had it been her, she’d have slapped her so hard that the girl got instant amnesia. As you can imagine I was beyond shocked. I was so shocked I chocked on a Dorito. Haven’t been able to face another Doritos pack since. Post traumatic chewing disorder or some shit like that. I was traumsed! (yes traumsed. It’s a word). So, in my shock I raised the question: Is it okay for lesbians to be abusive because we are females dating females?

Some of my friends say that two women fighting is a catfight and so there is no such thing as homosexual abuse. They say things like: “You cannot be abused by someone that wears a panty if you wear one too. There is no such thing.” If this is true- where do we draw the line between a regular catfight and abuse? We cannot run away from the fact that abuse in all its forms is in almost every racial and social group. Why are gays and lesbians exempt from that? I believe that a catfight is momentary whilst abuse is continuous. So if someone continuously breaks you down how is it acceptable based on the fact that you both wear frilly knickers? Mind you my girlfriend wears boxers so does that flip the script?

Where do we as the LGBTIQ community draw the line? When we bury one of our own because her girlfriend beat her to the grave?! When one of our fine gay brothers hangs himself because his partner told him that he was no good? When do we say it is not okay to hurt another person regardless if you are in a same-sex relationship or not? Skirt vs. Skirt does not make for viewing pleasure if there isn’t some Turkish oil, thongs and a wrestling ring included.

I have never been abused before. I thank God for that because I am quite the dark horse and I don’t trust myself to act in a sane manner. Lucky for Pumpkin she isn’t like that either.

A very close friend of mine was in abusive relationship for about 4 years. 4 years of being beaten, sworn at, degraded and treated like shit and 80% of her friends and family told her that she must stop complaining because they are both girls. Her own mother said “you are a woman and so is she so just sort your issues out like women do.” It took a visit to the hospital and several bruises and scratches for people to see that this wasn’t right…lucky for her lived to tell the tale.

I’m not here to preach but come on! All I am saying is that we as people need to have love and respect for each other. Regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation- it is imperative that we act against abuse and help those who need help.

“What the world needs now is love sweet love, it’s the only thing that there’s just too little of. What the world needs now is love sweet love, no, not just for some but for everyone.”
-Dionne Warwick- What the world needs is love

With that being said, I will be in need of my regular dose of spooning soon so lemme go make up with the missus…even if she is wrong and I am ALWAYS right J
I have always known that religion is our biggest problem in Africa and the Diaspora. Historically, I dare say the black nation has stagnated since the arrival of foreign religions, hereby termed world religions.

Creativity and innovation has been at the forefront of every milieu of African states, right from creation as per our various folklore stories.

This creativity can be seen in the way of art, performances and most notably in how dynamic our languages were then. The development and expansion of African languages was at its peak before the arrival of colonists.

Every generation had its own set of language features, deeply rooted in creativity and what today is termed scientific study of language, linguistics.

Our great Ancestors were great innovators for their lives were structured according to own inventions, such as stone grinders, distillers, granaries, tools of the trade and unique farming methods.

It was during the times of our African Ancestors that medicine was developed to a stage where all African nations fully understood and managed almost all known illnesses and ailments. Basic medicine was understood by all, while specialised medicine was a speciality of medicine people. In this way, our Ancestors had ensured that knowledge is pervasive.

Expanding on this theme of innovation, we had fully established political and social systems, which met the needs and demands of their times. Our societies lived in harmony because of all these knowledge systems.

When the white settler arrived in Africa, commonly accepted to be at the Cape of Good Hope, they found a people living in harmony with fully functional societies. For the lack of understanding and due to their ignorant ways, they mistook us for savages and uncivilised bunch.

It should be noted that when the Dutch East Indies Company decided to establish their refreshment station at Cape, they did this in full knowledge that Cape had its owners, with their own ways of life. I therefore conclude that the Dutch East Indies Company had all intentions of colonising my people in the Cape, and this can be proven by the many wars our Kings fought then in trying to placate the settlers.

Across all our folklore stories, no where do they tell us that Black people did not know God, nor that our God lacked in any particular way. In fact, many folklore stories teach children about the existence of God. Only that our God is not a vindictive God who goes around issuing ultimatums to those who do not buy into invested stories of heaven and earth.

Until the arrival of missionaries, who came jointly with the settlers, my people had lived in harmony with their God.

Yesterday reminded me of this simple fact when I witnessed thousands of Black people queuing at a church in inner city Jozi, queuing to buy what they believe to be holy water with healing powers from the church. Apparently the holy water is bought for R5 per 5 litre.
Will God save the black nation (cont)

The simple truth that could not escape me was that while other races were either enjoying their Sunday, or sitting and thinking about new ways to advance, Black people were queuing at a church expecting ordinary water to perform miracles in their lives!

Black people pack churches full for the whole of Sunday praying to a foreign God for luck and prosperity, this while others are working hard for their prosperity.

I found myself asking the question: since the arrival of the first missionaries from the London Missionary Society in late 18th century, what has the foreign God done for Black people and Africa?

A quick analysis of Black life under missionary influence point to stuck and sad truth that religion has rendered Black people slaves to propaganda, albeit willingly so.

Under the guise of a vengeful God, Black people were made to tow the line of a religion many still do not fully understand today, but a religion that drove fear and terror into their minds. The fear and terror of burning for eternity in hell.

It is precisely starting with this period in our history that our languages began to stagnate. Since the arrival of a foreign religion, our languages no longer prospered nor developed, instead, they stagnated as missionaries who themselves did not understand our languages, became the sole custodians of our languages through the written word. The orthographies and vocabularies of present day African languages was crafted by missionaries, and these continue to be used to date. This has resulted in bastardisation of many aspects of our languages.

On top of that, alongside the fear of hell, Black had to abandon their indigenous ways of living and creativity and embrace those that missionaries saw befitting for them. Since this period, Black people have never invented anything of value! Their existence has since been marked by imitation of what the white man regards as good, fit and proper.

Black people who either converted or embraced the new religion were taken to white schools, where they were taught how to be models in following what the white man wanted. The education system was a vehicle through which Blacks were modelled into what the white man wanted them to be. And this has destroyed the creative capacity of Blacks.

History recounts Jan Van Riebeck, the leader of colonists of the Dutch East India Company to have arrived in Cape in 1652. It has been 360 years to date since his arrival in Africa, yet Blacks have neither realised that a foreign God is not an answer to their dilemma, nor have they done anything of value to contribute to their development as a race. If anything, the Black race has lost its creative capacity and has been relegated to mere consumers and followers of what other races invent and produce.
Will God save the black nation (cont)

I will go as far as to say Black people have been affected mentally to not be able to free themselves from this slave mentality of religion. We are forever doomed to be slaves to a religion and God that could not be bothered to develop or advance those who profess most high commitment and selflessness to this religion.

The advent of this foreign thought in the form of a religion has killed Black thought.

The Black academics we produce are more concerned with academic credentials than with inventions and creations. While our Ancestors were concerned with the betterment of their lives, our intellectuals are concerned with earning credits and prestige. Concerned with studying other inventors and expressing an opinion on their inventions, than inventing something themselves. In fact, university education ensures that the Black mind will aspire to work within an environment where other races invent, and they simply become part of the working class. No Black academic mind has invented anything of value to the Black population, despite the fact we have multitudes of PhD holders in the Black communities. In fact, academic achievement ensures that Blacks who achieve academically move away from Black life and experiences and into other races where they seek acceptance. In this way, it is guaranteed that they will not invent anything since the Black experience is something to read about, and their education becomes irrelevant to the lives of Black people.

For 360 years Black people have been praying to a foreign God make them whiter than white. To deliver them from sin and Blackness.

Yet, they have not stopped and thought about their ability to create and invent things of value to themselves. Instead, they continue to fill churches in the misguided hope of finding everlasting deliverance from sin.

Will God Save the Black Nation?

My Ancestors taught me that God helps those who help themselves! God will never help a people who spend their lives praying for pardon from sins, even those they have not committed.

As a result, Black people of 360 years have failed dismally to change their circumstances around, because the foreign religion and God binds them to loyalty to the teachings of missionaries.
Happy earth-day
Gugu Kheswa

She wakes up early in the morning, still tired and sleepy after an uncomfortable night's rest. The room is dark, as if shrouded in a giant's perpetual shadow, yet outside the sky is a bold and beautiful blue, and the sun smiles brightly, beaming a warm morning welcome. She tosses and turns in search of a comfortable position to sleep in, she is not yet ready to get up. She tries lying on her back, but the unsettling weight in her stomach forces her to find another position. She tries lying on her left side, but her husband's noxious morning breath nauseates her. Abandoning all hope of ever falling asleep again, she rises from the bed and stumbles noiselessly across the linoleum floor of her bachelor flat to the kitchen. She smiles to herself in amusement as she realises that it only took her three steps.

Outside, life has begun and the busy streets of the city centre are bustling with hawkers and workers all rushing around trying to make a living. From her flat she can hear the persuasive calls of the street vendors, shouting their wares and trying to catch people's attention. She can hear the stop-start movements of the taxis drivers as they take short lefts and stop after robots. The irate protests from other drivers. The chaos that ensues. She listens intently to the sounds of the city as she stands silently in the kitchen. No longer thirsty for the glass of water that brought her there in the first place. She is captivated.

She is captivated by the sounds of the city as she envisions the world she is living in. The poverty, loneliness and emptiness that surrounds her. The violence and anger and brutality that she witnesses on a daily basis. The struggle and perpetual rat race her people are destined to live in until the day of their death. She envisions all these things as she wraps her hands around her taut, drum belly. It is round and full and teeming with life. She says to herself: "This is the world that my child will come into. But it will not be the world that she lives in. To you, child, I promise life and love. A world where you will always be protected, and always feel loved. To you child, I promise safety, protection, wisdom and growth. May you learn from me and those that surround you. May you grow to be a woman of substance and power. May you grow to be a better woman than me."

Her prayer complete, she makes her way slowly back to bed. She now feels radiant and fresh, like she has unlocked something that lay deep within her. Something powerful and rare. As she reaches her bed and struggles to lay down, she feels a violent kick in her belly. It is followed by another one, and another, and another. Her water breaks. The infinite universe of her womb is rearranging itself, making way to release to the earth a queen. The time has come. She wakes her husband up in a panic. "It's time," she says, "It is time!"

The time is 10:15am. The date, 9 October 1990.

It is the beginning of another story. My Story. Only time will tell how it ends.
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past different phases in my life faced with challenges I have to conquer because my conquest is to prosper.

proper life I'm living leaving the things I don't believe in
not because I'm pessimistic but because I'm realistic.

Fuck law and all its cases and sections and acts and amendments and legislation,

forget the state's constitutionalization ... Yes, me in black robes and white shirts could be quite an inspiration but that is not my destination.

Artistic is who I am and I am happy to be where I am because I where I want to be.

Believe it or not I am the future of the arts industry.

Daddy said to me I wouldn't be anything but something in me says there is no such thing.

I was created with the image of the same God who will guard me and lead me to a place that will take me to where I want to be.

Listen-

just listen to me and believe in me when I tell you that I - am the future of the arts industry.

I am that child that was created as a show off of God's creation of master pieces.

Peace is what I want to create with my piece of poetry-

words that silent whispers mumble in my ear-
I hear and retell the stories that my inner voice silently whispers to me in her silent noise.

That voice.

That voice that speaks to me lives in me-

speaks through me because that voice is me I - am poetry, yes I am the future of the arts industry. The world stops and the clock turns anti clockwise when my wise words reach the ears of those who feast their eyes with my poetic being-going all floetic on them.

I appreciate being appreciated by lovers of art because arts is the love of my life.

Kere, the sun changes colour when I get into that place that delivers me to a phase where I can't even feel my face nor see the change in the faces of those who look and listen in adulation. I love that admiration.

Yes that-
Mary-go-round

Hlox da rebel poet

Mary goes round and round
Sleeping around on each and every bed;
Everybody wants to marry Mary for she is very pretty;
When will Mary stop going round and round
so we could have a merry-Christmas with her;
See, Mary lost her virginity when she was only sixteen
Coz she was very silly;
At nineteen Mary met Jerry and they connected like peanut butter and jelly;
Jerry promised to marry Mary
And Mary said yes in a hurry,
Not thinking about it thoroughly;
Mary was now constantly at Jerry's house
On top of each other like horny rabbits;
Until one rainy day,
when unexpectedly appeared Jerry's wife Penny;
Holdin' a pistol that was a bit shinny;
Mary got but naked and said "sorry"
She didn't know that Jerry was married;
But Jerry pulled the trigger anyway;
And Mary fell on the floor;
And it became silent like the cemetery;
See, we never buried Mary coz she was imaginary.
Continue reading
Slashfire

If you continue reading
you might just get rich
if you read carefully you will get the password to my account
Continue reading
continue breathing
in and out
in the eyes the words
are scanned translated in the brain to print out
projected on the walls
dancing pencils as you continue reading

you realize the silent voices that contradict the true meaning of the words
pause
revisit the main course of pain read eat
the supplements
compliments
comply men to continue reading

reflect on the first word try to evaluate
the true mission of this message
silence
sound clouds heavy rain of musical sounds
damping this message
on the edge of the building
writing the message
its sad but you continue reading
what if i really jumped what it you reading this means its an opportunity to go back in time
to stop me from jumping off the building

will you stop reading just to go check the building for marks
did i really jump?
is this just a tale ?
am i alive or dead as you continue reading
am i still breathing ?
This is a note the police will find and you will continue reading
the rest of it is on the next page it will give you a clue
where i left the money
I robbed the bank and put the money on the tallest building in Durban because i couldn't
continue breathing
that's all i can share for now
This life
Thandeka JT Jwaha

Though heavily burdened by the shackles of this body,
My soul is unable to soar freely,
I choose to live this life,
To do it justice and to make it worthwhile.

I believe I have had many lives before this,
and I am yet to have many more.
This life is my gift,
A gift I am cherishing for as long as I inhabit this body.

This life has shown me what it is to hurt,
What it is to experience ecstasy,
What it is to LOVE truly
and what it is to feel isolated.

Change it, I would not,
For this life is precious
and it is here to teach me,
To allow me to experience myself anew.

This life I live,
Full of wonder and happiness,
Sorrow and sadness,
Is all mine to live.

Happy To Be Alive...
When I used to think of myself as a writer

The Original Fake

All she heard was “mama I am grey”

Rainbow colours are a sticker I plug on my forehead

Mama you didn’t hear me saying I want to be part of his polygamy

Mirroring my confined feelings

All I want you to hear is that I AM GAY!

Feelings of belonging, feelings of the L-word

“I hear that you are happy my child, you deserve all the happiness you can get”

Intense feelings of a virgin heart

But all she heard was “mama I am grey”

Confused frown, thoughts of

Yes I am cheerful, merry and cheery

“Oh, no! She’ll snap out of it”

But all she heard was “mama I am grey”

“She’ll want a husband and a proper family to groom”

“Hey, you are happy, you deserve all the happiness you can get”

“She’ll want a wedding in a pretty white dress with matching pearls and glitter on the soles of her shoes”

All she heard was “mama I am grey”

“I’ve always wanted a happy ever after for her after all the turmoil I’ve experienced”

But mama, I didn’t say I was dying from an incurable decease,

But all she heard was “mama I am grey”

I don’t have cancer or a brain tumor and I am certainly not baffled

Stop calling the priest to cast out this spell;

It has nothing to do with you breaking a mirror long ago,

“Oh my poor baby but you do look so pale,

Do you have a fever? Is it something I did or failed to give to you?”

“You know, Sipho stays down the road; he is very learned and has a car of his own,

He has shoes that you can see your reflection on, the crease on
My heritage follows me
Felicia Mkhize

I don't need one day in a year to observe it. Neither do I need to dress in traditional regalia
to demonstrate my identity. My heritage follows me wherever I go. Pear-shaped elaborate
African bottom is my Pride and your Joy.

Bumper to Bumper, my hips sway from side to side. Curves that even Schumacher won't
rush when approaching. They tempt into fornication even my head of state regardless of his
state of head.

Like horse and trailer, my nation-feeding bosom leads the way followed by my pap-fed Afri-
can pride. In my unhurried strides, you would swear I own the ground I walk on.

My Kanga covers my earth coloured skin. Skin the same colour as the soil from which I
came.

With a love song in my bosom and pride beside me, my heritage follows me.

Let us know who of our writers is your favourite. We may put you in con-
tact with them so you can get to ask them what in-
spires their work.
Believe that
Thandeka TJ Jwaha

I don't believe in Hell
I don't believe in War.

I don't believe in the Man-Made God we obey on Sunday, who has kept record of our sins throughout the week
I don't believe we've been at all bad throughout the week
I don't believe in sins

I do believe in Free Will
And I do believe in Unconditional Love,

I believe in all that I am capable of
Even though I believe I'm afraid of who I really am.

Sensitive to the touch - the winds that blow wild are often hard on my skin
Lies, however thin, cut through my skin like a bunch of razor blades
Leaving my wounds exposed to this cold and miserable world

Yes, ever so often I call this world names
Cussing and dissing it
Discussing and dismissing it
Like I wasn't born into it

But that's only because I believe in the expression of one's feelings
I believe in divine intervention

Oh, I don't believe we were born into sin
I believe that's only one of many things we were told that oppressed us and only kept us further away from the truth that we are made in God's image therefore we are gods and goddesses.

I don't believe in time
I do believe in NOW!

I believe in love
I believe in Companionship, but not that Souls merge as one.
I believe in my Soul's Purpose - that is, it's Sole-Purpose

I don't believe we can be evil
I don't believe in evil
I just believe we wanted to be different.

I believe in a God with no gender.
POETRY

M.I.A
Thandi_k

I'm missing the bounce in my step
The sway and the poetry in my hips
The honey on my lips
And the fragrance the wind gently brushes off my finger tips when I dance

I'm missing the warmth of my own skin
I wanna break out in dramatic song though - guitar strings, violins and trumpets -- all that jazz
I wanna tango on a porcelain floor - mini dress, heels and all

Just yesterday I cried tears of joy
However, today, even with my once broken heart, I wanna dig love so deep I fall and get lost
And even if I'm never found, may you remember me every time you kiss Love
Every time you feel it like the wind that blows away your summer dress

I miss the laughter of a friend and reaching out to me, their loving hand
I miss... Me

Confidence
Nyakallo Lephoto

Keep your head up.
Look people in the eye, smile and speak the truth.
Avoid senseless arguments.
Defend the honour of the absent
But never fight battles of those present to do so, themselves.
Maintain the weight that allows you to wear all clothes you like
Dream big, take the first step, Act!

follow me on twitter @NyakalloLephoto
The black soil of Africa
Nyakallo Lephotso

Like a tree with its roots out of the soil, the essence of my being was forced out of me. When merchant ships docked in my homeland, young men and women divorced joy. I originate from a continent shaped like a gun yet crying for peace. I am the black soil of Africa.

Scattered across the Atlantic, I got chains on my neck with which my master leads me. In those cramped, filthy, stuffy ships, the sea swallowed parts of me but couldn't drown the whole of me. I lived to become a second class citizen in a land worse than Babylon. Here, in the food chain, I am a level below dog shit. I am the black soil of Africa.

Robbed off my identity, raped off my dignity, the only refuge my soul found is in clapping, singing and dancing. I do these in hope of a better tomorrow. The same ship that brought the gun also brought the bible to Africa. Missionaries came with black books, took my habitat and promised me a better one when I die. I am the black soil of Africa.

Emasculated like a castrated pitbull, I was beaten to submission. With my skin dripping with blood, I was taken into slavery. My name is Kunta Kinte and I am the black soil of Africa.

follow me on twitter @NyakalloLephotso

Debt trap
Nyakallo Lephotso

Debt trap
Salary addiction
A curse of a consumerist society
The microwave generation
We want it, we want it now.

Plastic money,
Offspring of our lust for instant gratification
Hedonism
Pleasure at all costs

Living beyond our means
Consequence of the throw-away lifestyle
Your worth is your material possessions

Sleepless nights
Caused by those calls from private numbers
A debtor shall be a creditor's slave

Compound interest
The most powerful force there is
Exit the rat race
Pay that debt!
Its me, no other
Nelly the poet

I Know there is only me that look more like me and there will be no other, all the people I met, all the people I lost and those who are here and still to come were created by no mistake but to love, leave and stay wit me. In life I have no regrets, not afraid of losing cause I know after all that i will not die but i will open my mind and use the knowledge they left me wit. And stand yes I will.

I am
Charles Siboto

I am a writer
My pen stabs you in the head,
Injecting ink into your brain
I get caught ink-handed,
Guilty of fucking with your mind

I am a survivor
My dirty nails claw at the fabric of existence,
Tearing black holes to crawl into
I am hiding from reality

I am a fighter
My fists pound on Heaven's gate till it caves in,
Till God lets me in
And I stride into His court drenched in victory

I am a writer,
A survivor,
I am a fighter
Masha Ndu uSmiso abhale ngaye
Mashandu looking open minded spontaneous
A young friend of mine has fallen for you

Is it your dreadlogs that log each and every situation you have been through
Your patience, pain, hope
Your activities show you have been dancing for life
Past experiences
Proving to be dramatic, authentic
Causing many to want to be romantic
The Roman tick you off as true African beauty

As a poet its my duty to let my friend’s feelings thoughts be expressed
You involved actually dearly glued to your work
Not letting anyone into your private lare

My friend is taken everytime you smile
Your subtle voice vibrates his chest
When he touches it
He feels the dancing heart beat
He can’t look straight into your eyes
He only shows his affection by blaming you for useless things
Trying to distract you from noticing he is madly inlove with you
Rapidly burning inside he is
Shy he is

That is why he has asked me to write on his behalf…

Email info@i writewhatilike.co.za
You don't know me
Nyakallo Lephoto

You don’t know me
All you see is what I ride, the clothes I wear and the people I hang around
Masks

All I tell you are about my success, how good I am and who I have influenced
Facade

You have heard about my sleepless nights, phone calls I am afraid to answer and shattered
dreams
Fears

All you’ve heard of are how great my job is, how well it pays and what it affords me
Bragging

All I tell you is who wants me, who I have turned down and who I am getting next
Conquests

What I haven’t told you is of my first break-up, the father I haven’t met and my abusive
partner
Pain

I lied to you
Haven’t told you I am human
You lied to me
Failed to notice that
You don’t know me
On TV, I watch a frail looking elderly man mobbed by well-dressed good-looking people. All competing to have a glimpse of him, touch him. Murmur something to him. He looks overwhelmed by the whole attention.

I sit and wonder, my interest heightened. I wanna know who he is. Why are they sucking up to him?

People would pimp their grannies to wear clothes that bear certain people's names. We live debt-ridden lives so we could be associated with others.

Tommy Hilfiger, Levi Strauss, Lee Cooper.

The Caption appears, it shows his name. Giorgio Armani. Many would default on rent and even go the month with hunger in sacrifice of owning an item of clothing bearing Armani's name. He is Armani. Having is great. Being is amazing.
She-goddess
Motha

My eyes are blessed
My soul liberated
My senses are graced
This day
The day of wonders
I have seen her
Laid my naked eyes on her
Like it was some prophecy
Destined to happen
Just when the time is right
I must be special
Anointed with the ancient glory
Marked as a wise one
For today I saw greatness
Dreamed in the reality of the moment
The Goddess of beauty
She who represents serenity
Who defines purity
She from whom all beauty came
I saw an African Goddess
Goddess on earth
She truly rules this land
She sways as she walks
Taking measured steps
Not to defile her beauty

Goddess of my land
In her beauty has meaning
How on earth
Am I supposed to describe Her
Her beauty is beyond words
Words do harm
In trying to explain
I can only live in lust
Lust of memories
For memory is reality hidden
Lingering in the depths of spirituality
Remembered only in tranches
As the spirits wills
I know no other
But beauty I have seen
On this my land
Land of Ancestors
Land of the Gods
Land of the Spirits
Beauty defined in a woman
An African woman
You are God
Through the falling rain

*Dimakatso Khoza*

I will walk until I reach my destiny

It will pour for months and months

The lighting can strike daily each hour

The hurricane can make the weather inferior

The blustery weather can waft me from side to side

But I tell you I will keep on walking.

The stones I might not see, everything around me might be blurry

I will take my chances.

The season might not have mercy;

There might be people sitting around a fire, I'll pause, but will not stay if they can not help.

I will walk even though at times I will seem forcing…

I am conqueror, vanquisher, I am The Defender

You see I am a superwoman

I say I am the leader of my life

I am the share holder of my future

Something tells me the price to be received is good

I might be on pins and needles but I will stay strong

I might be agitated, but I will keep on walking

No one promised to make this route easy…

I will fall yes, but again I will stand up.

Through the rain

I will walk, run, jog and fall

I will not hide, will put my pride aside

I will prove to myself that I can, I will work according to my plan.

I might get there crippled, fact is I will have made it.

People we'll use me as an example.

Daily I thank God, for making me who I am.

Daily I thank God for the strength He has given me.

Daily I thank God for He is an Awesome God.

Through the rain

I will come out wet and successful. (";")
• Can you get flu while using PEP medication (3.5 weeks)?

You can get flu at any time. The flu virus is easily passed from one person to another through contact. You are probably concerned about sero-converting - going from being HIV-negative to being HIV-positive - whilst taking PEP Post-Exposure Prophylaxis. The only thing to do is for you to continue the PEP and finish the whole course. Repeat the HIV tests at the recommended intervals.

• Hi doc if a woman is HIV & is breastfeeding her baby that struggles 2 poo what must she give him. Please help

Babies don't get constipated especially if they're exclusively breastfeeding. The reason why many mothers or caregivers think that babies struggle to poo is because of the grunting sounds that they make in their sleep. This is called Grunting Baby Syndrome and it is extremely common. And nothing to worry about. The baby's is just "practising" the sounds and actions for the future. So relax and continue to exclusively breastfeed. The only medication that you can give to baby is medication prescribed by a healthcare worker. Otherwise it is breastmilk ONLY for 6 months.

• If my viral load is below detectable and a CD4 count of 590, what are the chances of transmitting the virus to my baby if I exclusively breastfed for 6 months and now mix feeding?

Difficult question. As long as you're breastfeeding, the chances of HIV transmission are always there. The risk is NEVER zero. So having a lower than detectable viral load is fantastic - because the chances of HIV transmission are greatly reduced. The weaning phase - when you switch from exclusive breastfeeding to formula-feeding and solids is indeed a period of mixed feeding. And I will admit that this is the time where the chances of HIV transmission are highest. But weaning has to be done. I believe that if you wean as per the regime I've written up in previous posts, you cause minimal excoriation of the intestinal gut lining. (And hopefully decrease the chances of HIV transmission) Remember to have the baby's HIV PCR done exactly 6 weeks after the last drop of breastmilk was fed to baby.

• My doctor's handwriting no no no no and then I go to the pharmacist and he reads it and figures it out within seconds. Please explain to me what's up with most Doc's handwriting.

It's not a doctor thing at all. Some people write well, and some people don't. I'm a doctor and I have very neat handwriting. But I have always written like this. So it has nothing to do with being a doctor!

• Can HIV develop between/among people who are all HIV-? Take a polygamous relationship for example. I think not. But I stand corrected.

HIV does not 'develop' between or amongst people. It gets transmitted primarily through unprotected sexual intercourse - from an HIV-infected individual to another individual. In a polygamous set-up if all members of the sexual network are HIV-negative and remain that way, then the chances of HIV transmission are very small. All it takes is for one member of that closed sexual network to get HIV and the whole group is put at risk.
Is it possible for a circumcised male who received oral sex from a probably positive female to get the HIV virus. Might have some other STI from the experience?

The chances of transmitting HIV during oral sex are very small. This is however conditional. If you have open sores on your penis and your partner has cuts or bleeding gums, then the chances become higher. The same goes for some other STIs. If your partner has sores in their mouth caused by the herpes virus, they can spread the virus to you through oral sex. My advice: use barrier protection such as flavoured condoms during oral sex.

How come we still see and hear of people that re skinny, bedridden and can't function because they are HIV positive?

Stigma in our country is still a very big problem. Many people are aware of their HIV statuses. They know where to get help and treatment and yet they choose to stay away and eventually die. It is heartbreaking for me to see people still dying from AIDS-related illnesses in 2012. We still have a long way to go to break down the barriers that stigma and denial create.

Realistically, how long can a person live with HIV?

HIV is a chronic disease and if well-managed, you can expect to live a full life. It has been said that if a 20-year old starts treatment, takes it well and looks after himself, he can live to a ripe old age.

Is it true ARVs disfigure one’s body shape?

This used to be one of the problems with ART but that has changed. There is an ARV antiretroviral called stavudine d4T that causes lipodystrophy - abnormal fat distribution in certain patients that are taking it. As a medical doctor, I have no way of knowing beforehand who will get this side-effect from this drug or not. So because of the problem with d4T, President Jacob Zuma, announced on 1 Dec 2009 that South Africa would no longer be using d4T in its public sector ART antiretroviral therapy regimens. The drug d4T has been replaced by TDF tenofovir.

Hi doc, is it safe to do four play/blow jobs and stuff when HIV+? Thanks

It is safe especially you use barrier protection ie condoms and you check that neither of you has any cuts, sores or open ulcers in your mouth or genital area. My recommendation is to make flavoured condoms a fun part of foreplay. Use them when performing oral sex. For females, cut the flavoured condom open and cover the genital area with it before the act.
Hi doc. If a woman is HIV & breastfeeds her baby, how long must she do it & after that time what must she feed her baby

HIV-positive women that choose to breastfeed have to do so for SIX months full. During that time the baby can only get breastmilk, Nevirapine syrup and medication that has been given at a healthcare facility. The baby must NOT get any solids such as cereals, mielie-meal porridge or mabele. The baby must also NOT get any fluids such as tea, Gripe water, umuthi wenyoni, or whatever else is thought to be necessary. The mother should make sure that she has disclosed her status to any secondary caregivers like the gogos of the baby. They are the ones that are most likely to give solids and/or fluids before the 6 months exclusive breastfeeding period is up. I have outlined the weaning regimen in a previous blog post so please do take a look at that.

my friend is hiv & chose to breastfeed her baby. she wants to know when she must stop breastfeeding her baby.

The 2010 PMTCT Prevention-of-Mother-to-Child guidelines recommend that babies be gradually weaned over 4 weeks. This means that after 4 weeks baby will no longer be taking breastmilk. Baby will be on a No 2 formula and also on solids. Some basics: new baby bottles, bottle sterilizing stuff, rice cereal, No 2 formula eg 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 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 Make sure that by the end of Week 4 baby STOPS ALL breastmilk feeds. Baby has been weaned and will now be on solids and No 2 formula. Note the date and make sure that baby goes for a PCR test exactly SIX weeks after stopping all breastmilk feeds.

Doctor says i stop using tampons because they might be causing infection, i have a very heavy flow and she has prescribed pills to reduce the flow, i am scared of possible accidents in the first 2 days if these tablets do not work, how valid is this?

You haven't specified what kind of infection your doctor was referring to. I'm going to assume that it is vaginal Candida 'thrush'. Tampons can lead to vaginal thrush but it is not a common occurrence. Hormonal changes around the time of menstruation are most likely the reason why you might be getting vaginal thrush around the time of menstruation. Take your doctor's advice and give the tampons a break. Just to check if they really are the cause of the infection. Secondly, when a woman bleeds heavily we do give a hormonal tablet to try and decrease the flow. Give them a try.
Mapantiti le mohlokomedi

_Yare mapantiti a ntse a dutse a emetse ho tloswa diseleng bya tjhankaneng, ho he ho se ho kena mohlokomedi ka sekgetjhana sa pampiri se ngotswana mabitso. Mohlokomedi ke ho qala a bitsa mabitso he._

“Josefa!”

Josefa ke ho itlolaka a bile a qhomela ka loring.

“Mohlouwa!”

Mohlouwa ke ho itlolaka feela jwalo le ena.

Mohlouwa ke ho tswela re, “Kgeoge!”

Ha se be le lepantiti le itlolakang. A fetajwalo he Mohlokomedi are, “Tsietsi!”

Tsietsi ke hore refu! a khwela lori.

Mohlouwa ke ho pheta re, “Kgeoge!”

Tsho! Ho sebe le lepantiti le itlolakang.

Mohlouwa ke ho hoa are, “Mosioua!”

Mosioua ke ho tlolela ka loring.

Mohlouwa ke ho hoa are, “Mosioua!”

Mohlouwa ke ho tlolela ka loring.

Mohlouwa ke ho atamela lepantiti lena le setse a mmotsa are, “Athe, wena monna, lebitso la hao o mang?”

Lepantiti ke ho araba lere, “Nna lebitso laka ke George.”

Mohlouwa ke ho halefa haholo a bile are, “Ntse kere George, man. Ha o utlwe ditse-beng?!”

Monna wa semumu

Ka tsatsi le leng banna ba bararo ba sebetsang mmoho ba ne ba dutse tafoleng ba ja dijo tsa mothseeare. Ha ntse ba dutse jwalo monna e mong ho bona a be a se a nyamellwa ke leqa la nama. Kaha e ne e le semumu, ke ha a ngola pampering fatshe ka sekgowa are, “Guys, who took my piece of meat?” Ha sebe le a mo arabang. A ba sheba, a be a ngola fatche hape are, “I want my meat. Whoever took it, please return it before I get cross.” Le teng ha sebe le motho a arabang. Ke ha a ngola fatshe kgetlo la boraro are, “You guys don’t know where I come from. I come from from Limpopo. I want my meat back, otherwise.... Daily Sun!”

A so qete, ho tjho jwalo. Ke ha hio se ho dutse maqa a mabedi a nonneng sejaneng sa hae.
I bet surgeons are the most difficult patients to operate on. Writing a feature aimed at both exhibiting my writing craft and telling a compelling story of a fellow writer whose work I greatly admire had me feeling like I was attempting to paint a portrait of Picasso; it invoked thoughts of that Pedi saying about kgomo ya moshate and being guilty whether or not you eat it. I’m a writer; I write and writing is all I do, but write now righting is not my write path. Mokebe Thulo is. Comfortable as I am in my writer box, so is she in her creative label; she writes, reads, paints and knits.

Mokebe's day job entails creating and editing online content for Vuzu.tv website and running the social media strategies. This BCom Law graduate with an insatiable passion for marketing believes business organisations can maintain a one-on-one personal interaction with its clientele by establishing strong presence on facebook and twitter, hence maximise customer recruitment and retention.

To produce content for this feature, Mokebe and I met in Downtown Jo’burg and took a walk down the historic Main Street, as we explored the Sounds, Smells and Sights of the City that Never Sleeps. Her love for this city stems from a variety of choices it offers - from catering for a party animal to serving a person that's into live arts - as opposed to most cities that offer either or. Though she acknowledges there would be great value and mutual benefit for both herself and her community if she were to resettle in her hometown of Welkom, in the Free State, Mokebe admits she finds it hard to resist the kid in the candy store experience Johannesburg offers her as most of her preferred activities are just around the corner.

Her earliest memories of creativity are music her parents - whom she labelled as her heroes - used to play in the house. She fondly recalled listening to Tracy Chapman and thinking she was a male artist, throughout her childhood. Though now much older and wiser, Mokebe and Tracy got back together and still take melancholic trips down Nostalgia's Main Street, every now and then, through the sounds reminiscent of two people that provided she and her two sisters the best they could ever be offered in life to ensure best possible chances of success.

On a more sombre note, at age 12, Mokebe Thulo had a near-death experience when she did not respond to medication after she had a sinusitis operation. She related the story, as she pointed to a scar on her neck, by her throat, of how the world was almost a genius short because she missed the entire third term of her academic year - laced in pipes and tubes - but came back to claim the second spot in her class; the only time she was glad she came second.

I don't do puns, neither does Mokebe; she told me so. So decorated is her schooling career that she was Head Girl in Primary school and Deputy Head Girl on High School; the latter achievement was one of the few times she hit just below Bull's Eye.
Mokebe grew up in an Anglican Church to very open-minded parents that were accommodating enough to allow her to follow a spiritual path, once she was old enough to make her own choices.

Regarding the state of the entertainment industry in South Africa, she quickly singled out the unnecessary rudeness displayed by talent search shows' judges, but conceded that it is a vicious cycle as viewers demand such behaviour from judges because they have seen it displayed elsewhere and producers provide it because viewers demand it.

A self-confessed feminist, Mokebe believes all women should conscientise themselves with feminist values, by virtue of being female. As a result she argues that advocating social, political and all other rights of women as equal to those of men should not be seen as anything special, but a given. She used Cheris Kramae and Paula Treichler's quote, "Feminism is the radical notion that women are people" to support her views. In an almost fatalist tone, Mokebe Thulo concedes that women haven't advanced as much as they could majorly because they are an army at war with itself.

When the subject of monogamy popped up and whether or not it's a sustainable ideal, she quickly pointed out that it's a subject that continues to intrigue her and she has engaged in plenty a debate on the matter. Her view is that women have been brought up with the ideal that, given the right set of circumstances, a monogamous marriage can be sustained, but she finds that the set of "circumstances" are far and few in between if just taking a look around us is anything to go by. Ultimately, she is of the opinion that everything is a choice and that each of us makes a decision at different times in our lives based on knowledge and experience at the time.
To conclude our conversation, Mokebe and I played a Rapid Fire Drill; I came up with a word and she had to say the first thing that came to mind as she heard the word. Here's how it went:

Word: Success

Mokebe's response - Me

Beauty

- Confidence

Sushi

- Kenny Kunene

Twitter

- Catalyst

Respect

- Women

Men

- Clueless

Mokebe Thulo is on twitter; follow her @mokebe
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