

*“The silver haired head is a crown of glory,
found in the way of righteousness”*

- Proverbs 16:31

So, I Quit My Job Yesterday.

I decided to quit my job. A turning event in my life but an event that had to happen. This decision is the single most important decision I've ever had in my life. And to be honest, it feels great.

I have always been against employment. But ironically, I found myself employed. I would reason with myself and say that it is temporary. I would reason with myself and say that it is a leg up. At least I am getting paid. Perhaps I could use the pay to build something for myself. When the reality is that for those starting their careers, the truth of the matter is that employment does not provide you with that luxury. The money you earn is essentially pocket-to-mouth money. That money is not enough to build something on the side. The money is literally just enough to cover your basic needs so that you can go to work in the mornings.

The truth is, I loved my job. I enjoyed being a lecturer. It was a rewarding job. There is something liberating about giving someone else knowledge and information. Especially knowledge and information such as the science of entrepreneurship. My only concern right now, to be honest, is the students that I left behind. I am rather saddened by the fact I left them mid-semester. But what I taught them was the science of entrepreneurship. This science is one of the very few that can truly free a person from the clutches of slavery that we call employment. In

my new journey, what brings solace is that I will not only be preaching the science anymore but fully living it. The problem is, that employment is a trap. Employment is modern-day slavery. Where I worked was in another town. And so, I had to find a place to stay. This is real life and not the myths and stories told by parents and teachers. You will not be staying in a beautiful studio apartment or flat with your first paycheck. In fact, you will be staying in a rundown cottage. You will be staying in a flat built with inferior material. You will be staying in someone's garage. A garage converted into living quarters. Those who have endured these early stages will tell you that those living environments are decent and not bad. Yet, those living conditions are an afterthought. They are designed to maximise profit. They are not designed for your comfort.

Where I stayed, most would say I lived in luxury. I did not pay for electricity or water. There was free Wi-Fi (as weak as it was), and it was safe. But it was one of those garages converted into rooms. Waking up in that room felt like I was living in a prison. I was confined to this area and across the yard was the main house. The warden's offices. Or more accurately, the main house was built for the family. This is where one starts when they are working. And we are told that we need to endure the loneliness of living in this confined space just for a paycheck.

It is nonsense. And it is not like the organisation that you work for actually cares about you. They do not. I am fortunate that the individuals I would call my supervisors were great people. They were helpful and they really would try their best to make sure that one enjoys their work, none other than my mentor in my last years in university. You know, I usually felt that organisational red tape holds me

back. That I would want to do so much but because of "policy", I could not. The organisation stifles innovation and creativity. Simply because innovation and creativity break away from the status quo. Innovation and creativity are expensive and organisations are about minimising costs. Therefore, organisational policies are designed to streamline productivity and not to support your creativity or innovative initiatives.

Let's not forget that at the end of the day, in the world of work, you are a factor of production. You are an asset and you are recognised by your asset number, formally known as an employee number. You are expandable. If you die today, they will replace you tomorrow. I saw this happen once. This is a story that I have shared so many times and continue to do so because it still shocks me how little organisations actually care about people. In my previous place of work, we were once called to work on a Saturday. Mind you, this is a day on which we were not obliged to work. But the dangers of having an employee mindset, we sheepishly went to work. On that day, one of our colleagues had forgotten something at his house. He decided that he could quickly rush home to collect it and come back to work. Unfortunately, he never came back. He was involved in an accident and he died at the scene. The only sentiment that the organisation expressed was that he had passed on. But the work had to continue.

Their heartless display was one of the early lessons one learned about the workplace. That the work environment really has no interest for its employees. You might have great leaders who supervise your work. Some might end up being more than supervisors and become lifetime mentors. But as great as they may be, they too are restricted by the

policies and instructions of work. There was this one incident that made me feel so bad. My supervisor (or was truly my mentor) found a loophole in the system to ensure that I got paid more than I was currently earning. Yes, it required me to work more and work harder, but it was worth it. Somehow, someone raised the issue and they said that it is not in line with policy. She got into trouble for trying to help me. As great as she was in guiding me and boosting my growth, the organisational red-tape limited just how much she can do for me.

The other key reason why I decided to resign is that employment robs you of your life. Life is but a summary of the moments you've experienced in time. If most of the time you are in a cubicle (let's not lie to ourselves. The office is for senior officials), how then can you enjoy life? How can you claim to be alive? Most workplaces give you 21 days of paid leave to take a break from work. 21 days out of 365 days are the only days you have to engage in activities you want. 21 days. That's less than a month- even February! That is nonsense. This hit me hard at the beginning of the year. My friend was going through the most in life and I could not show him my support because I was at work. Saying I need to take 14 days of work to support a friend is not a valid reason for an organisation to grant you leave. And mind you, this is one of my closest friends. This is a friend who probably knows me as much as I know myself. This is a friend with who I share deepseated secrets that no one knows. And when he needed support, I could not be there for him because I was at work.

How many more moments do we need to sacrifice because of work? And I am not advocating that we should be lazy and bum around. There are people who find great pleasure

and joy in their work. For them, their work provides them with a sense of purpose. That should be the work we aspire to have. That's the way I feel about being a lecturer. But I also feel I'd rather start my own business that will allow me to continue lecturing somehow and not lecture for another organisation. I am not an employee. Inasmuch as someone else isn't an entrepreneur, lawyer, doctor, or teacher. Being an employee, for me, robs me of living and being alive. I do not ignore the fact that I am privileged. That I have a home to go to and support from family and friends to pursue my passions. This is a privilege that some do not have. But I'd rather wake up to my mom asking me to do certain chores around the house than be in an environment where I am recognised by a number.

So when I resigned, a lot of thoughts did come to mind. Thoughts like what people will say. Thoughts that suggested that maybe I am weak. Here I am throwing in the towel. But then it hit me. Who actually cares? People are busy figuring things out for themselves, who really cares about you and what's happening in your life? At the end of the day, it is your life. What is the point of keeping up with an image that's propagated by a false societal narrative? That someone like myself who is educated and in his late twenties should be working? The false narrative is that you'll think you should be living in a plush apartment and driving a beautiful car. Unless you are a really successful lawyer, doctor, or any other highly specialised job, that isn't your reality. Not at this age. It makes sense why so many people find themselves so indebted. Indebted with clothing accounts, indebted with car installments, and indebted with credit card installments. They are drowning in debt to create the lifestyle of that false narrative. And because of that, they are now slaves to their jobs. They will have to go

through the motions for the next couple of years just to pay off those debts.

I have reached a point in my life where I honestly do care what people think of me. Even my family. My family will guide me out of love this I know. But out of their fears or not knowing, they will not understand my actions. To explain to my parents, who are baby boomers, that I want to focus on my blog and social media presence is something beyond their comprehension. Simply because they come from a time where these things just did not exist. Period. I do not care what my friends think. They too will help and share advice out of love this I know. But my friends too will not understand if I tell them I want to build a YouTube channel, boost my TikTok account and find a way to build my own business that will highlight my love for lectureship. Simply because that's not a Thando they know. They know a Thando who's more conservative and not keen on following trends. When the truth is, I am not following trends. I am just living my life.

This level of honesty with self is a level admired in the bad guys in movies. Tony Montana, Don Corleone (both Vito Corleone and Michael Corleone), Frank Lucas, Detective Alonzo, and the list goes on. Jack Sparrow, loosely paraphrased, once said that people love pirates because pirates do what they want when they want. It is this freedom that the bad guy seems to have that we admire. And the truth is, this freedom stems from the fact that bad guys know that they are the bad guys. Tony Montana always said that he never lies. In his drunk state, he went on to explain that he is a bad guy. And unlike the people around him, he knows he is the bad guy. He is honest with himself and this honesty enables him to be the bad guy.

This honesty too was his downfall because he was not a murderer of women and children. Regardless that he was ordered by the kingpin higher than him to execute the hit. And even as he fell, Tony Montana is a legend. Primarily because he was brutally honest with himself and those around him.

Being honest with oneself enables you to see yourself as you are. Therefore, you not lying to yourself thinking that you are someone who you are not. If a person wakes up dressed in quality clothes, driving a beautiful car but ignores the fact that the lifestyle they seemingly enjoy has resulted in them being indebted, such an individual, therefore, does not have freedom. Because they know that if they stop working, that lifestyle will end. As opposed to the individual who knows has nothing. They know that whatever they do, whatever they engage in will be true. If they build something and make money from it, they know that their lifestyle is limited to the scope of their work. Hence entrepreneurs work hard to be in a position to sell their businesses for millions. These millions enable them to travel even on a Tuesday. Unlike an employee who might be the hardest worker in the room and still earn the same (sometimes even less) than the colleague who is never at work or if they are at work, half of the day they on “lunch”.

The systematic design of employment is not for the advancement of one's own freedom. That is why when you read about successful people, they are usually people who created something for themselves. Very rarely will one read about the super employee who made millions in his or her twenties or thirties by working. Or they achieved a certain mega milestone while being an employee. If they achieve such a milestone as an employee, they are usually old.

Probably a year or two from retirement. Again, there are exceptions in specialised work like law or being a doctor. But for the average person, that level of freedom that comes from success, we will never reach it young by being employees. To achieve such great successes while being young, we will only reach it by being true to ourselves and living life to the beat of our hearts.

I will tell you this. When I decided there and then that I am done, I felt a great sense of liberation rush over me. Driving back to Harrismith I felt so much joy and happiness that along the journey, I pulled over and cried. That is how powerful the emotion of realising your true worth is. No longer was I captive of the system. I have zero aspirations to ever be employed again. Perhaps for a permanent job but the chances remain slim. As a student of entrepreneurship, I know that one day for my businesses I will have to hire people. I vow to myself that I will not entrap and treat employees as expendable entities. I will not treat them as mere factors of production. I know that there are people who find freedom and comfort when led by someone they believe in. For these people, I vow that I will create a work environment that frees them.

To me, employment is modern-day slavery. There is no difference between being in prison and working for a corporation. The only difference, you get paid for the time you serve at a workplace. As the next generation of entrepreneurs and wealth creators, we must change this.

Below the Dust of the Arena.

It is quite a weird feeling. The feeling of being motivated to succeed and yet not feeling the energy to put in the work required for your success. A great laziness seems to rob one of the ability to focus. A great laziness seems to rob one of the ability to go out and “get it”. Sometimes, I wonder, what causes this emotion? This motivation of wanting to succeed but lacking the energy to go after it.

Retracing the steps, one discovers that once upon a time, one never had this problem. One seemed to have an abundant source of energy ready to unleash in the pursuit of that which he desires. In the early years of my youth, working 12, sometimes even 16 hours a day was not a problem. Walking endless kilos a day in the name of the greater picture was never a problem. Only after the first disappointments that the willingness to go the extra mile began to wane down. The first failures beat one down and to some extent, one hasn't fully risen.

My English teacher in grade 7 used to say that one should never find themselves beneath the dust of the arena. She explained that the dust of the arena rises only to about knee level. She further added that if you find yourself in the dust of the arena, it means that you are the one who's dying. Thinking about those words now, I realise that it is easy to get caught in the dust of the arena. It is easy to suffocate on the dust and it is easy to accept defeat and stay down.

But the fact is, all of us want to succeed and in all honesty, all of us have experienced some pain in our pursuit of success. The pain was either direct or indirect, but that pain holds many of us back from putting in the work. Just recently I discovered that I have a real fear of credit. Yet, almost every financial book that I have read has in some way or another stated that credit is a key tool in obtaining financial freedom or independence. I'm one of those that seek to have financial freedom before 40. But little did I know how deep my fear of credit really goes.

This fear I only realized when I opened a credit card account with the bank. Intellectually, I understand the importance of credit. Emotionally, it seems as if I still have a lot to learn. And that in itself is key. Emotions at the end of the day are what govern our actions. Not how well one may intellectually understand a concept, if they are not emotionally tied to it, that concept will remain only a concept.

Hence the dust of the arena. The dust only chokes those that are not fully in tune with their emotions. The warrior who swings his sword with no fear has lost the battle. The soldier who shoots without the fear of death has already died. If a person does not emotionally comprehend the task that they perform, they fail to grasp the true essence of that task that they wish to perform. This is the key.

Emotions are what drive us to perform a task. Emotions are also what drive us not to perform a task. It is emotions that lead us to take action into doing something or not. Leading us back to the original discussion of this post. What causes

us to have a feeling of success but not the willingness to act towards our success? I believe it has to do with our emotions. We do not tie an emotional connection with our success. Or if we do tie an emotional connection, the connection is not strong enough.

That connection can be strong at the beginning. But over time, when your moves do not yield the results desired, when disappointments meet you at every door, it becomes easy for that emotional connection to weaken. It makes sense why the great motivational speakers advocate having a success journal or a vision board, so you get to interact with that you desire every morning when you wake and every night before you sleep. It is to protect and strengthen the emotional connection you have with what you call success.

Whatever that emotional connection is, that connection is what will keep you motivated to act on your dreams. A friend of mine was once hurt deeply by his ex-girlfriend. His ex-girlfriend decided that one night she will spend a night with her landlord. Her landlord drives a BMW X5. Obviously, she did not tell him about her treacherous act. It was only when the baby was born that she came clean. That pain runs so deep in my friend that it motivates him to be wealthy. To him, as he explained it to me, he wants to be so wealthy that his woman will never find another man's riches charming. Yes, it could be argued that she perhaps cheated for other reasons. But to him, because he was a struggling student on NSFAS money at the time, to him, his ex cheated because of that. And that emotional connection is so strong in him, it is safe to say that he will soon attain his success.

My other friend has this desire to sleep with as many women as he can. His case is a bit complex, but I thank him for allowing me to share this. It is a similar story to my other friend. His ex-girlfriend cheated on him. This ex, he loved and pledge himself to her. But the moment his ex decided to let another man have her, my friend tells me that he felt robbed of his masculinity. He explained that he felt that way because she was the only girl he had ever been with. Both emotionally and sexually. He felt less of a man because another man could get what he thought only he could have. So, my friend has this desire to sleep with many women. To him, sleeping with different women is what will prove, to himself, that he is a man. That emotional damage is what motivates his goal.

Yes, that is extreme and it can be argued that my friend experienced a great deal of pain that perhaps he needs professional help to overcome. However, this pain is what motivates him to attain his goal. As complex and manipulative as it may sound. The fact is, the emotional connection to attain his goal is so strong, that it keeps him at it.

The mistake that most of us do, is that we do not tie an emotional connection to a desire that we want. We half bake an emotional connection. Intellectually, we can create the ultimate reasons. For instance, most of us want to be successful. In that success, most of us want financial freedom or to be in a position to do whatever we want where money is not a problem. Intellectually, we create the most elaborate reasons why we need to be financially free. We understand the reasons. The reasons provide us with a logical footing to understand the need to be financially free. But most of us do not have an emotional reason to be

financially free. If we do, it is not strong enough to see us through.

It is the emotions that we attach to our goals that determine the level of effort we are willing to put in. Like my friend with the goal to sleep with as many women as possible. To him, he realizes that guys who sleep with a lot of women usually go to the clubs. They usually spend ridiculous loads of money in the clubs in order to attract the women who are not looking for long-term commitment but just a fling. With this in mind, this is what motivates my friend to get money. For him, to be financially free is to be in a position to spend so much money on women that it won't feel like it is a loss. His overall goal is to be the next Casanova and for him, to be the next Casanova is to be wealthy enough to spend on women who are attracted to money and not looking for a long-term commitment. His emotional connection is the pain he experienced with his ex. He uses that pain, that emotional connection, to propel himself towards his goal.

The same with the other friend. However, for him, the need to be wealthy is to feel more secure. For he believes that if he has enough money, he will be able to provide for himself and his woman and therefore, his woman will not leave. The pain he experienced with his ex who slept with the landlord with the BMW X5, for him he uses that pain to pursue his financial goals. For him, being financially free is being a provider and is a way of not losing a woman.

Both of my friends have these emotional connections to their goals. These emotional connections keep them above the dust of the arena. These emotional connections enable my friends to find the motivation to keep going even when they do not feel like that. These emotional connections are

not fabrications of the mind. They are not intellectually constructed. For if they were intellectually constructed, it would have been easy to convince them out of their goals.

Intellectually constructed connections to goals are reasonbased. They are formulated by reasoning. And reasoning can also be changed. Emotions, not so much. It takes more energy and effort to alter one's emotions. Hence heartbreaks are so painful. It is harder to fall out of love than it is to fall in love. Simply because once you love someone, an emotional connection has been created with that person. Before falling in love, there is no connection. There is nothing tying you to a certain individual. But once the connection has been created, there is now a solid link between you and the person you love. Hence, breaking that connection is so hard. The connection may sometimes break, and the emotions may linger. Some people refer to this as soul ties. Emotional connections to another human or to an ideal or goal are harder to break (or even destroy) than intellectually created connections.

The problem lies there. Most of us have a clear intellectual understanding of our success and what that success requires of us. We have a clear intellectual understanding of what our success means to us. But unless we have an emotional understanding of our success, the willingness to pursue our success will remain futile. Without that emotional connection to our desires and dreams, we will forever remain beneath the dust of the arena; suffocating to our own defeat and failures.

Is It Worth it?

Is it worth it? This life that we have chosen to live. Is it worth it? Why is it that we want to live a life above average? Is there a purpose to it?

Lately, I have been honoured to move and begin life in a new city. The adjustment has been fairly swift and lifechanging, to say the least. For the first time in a very long time, I have my own space and within that space, I can be me. There are no restrictions or judgments in the expression of self. As such, my need to succeed seems to have taken a steroid or two. In doing so, I put more pressure on myself to succeed than I ever have in my life.

However, on some nights, I wonder if it is worth it. Is it worth sacrificing certain pleasures of this world in the name of success? Is it worth facing the cold embrace of loneliness because the world around me does not understand this path that I have chosen? Yes, this is not a path of the extremist who alienates himself or herself by their extreme beliefs. This is the life of saying no to a night out because to you it's a waste of money. This is the life of saying no to date because to you that is a waste of time. The argument could be that one should enjoy life as they have only one. However, I have never heard a Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, Barack Obama, or anyone who has attained great success confess those YOLO philosophies.

Those YOLO philosophies are propagated by those who have chosen a "sof" life". They are the leeches who feed off others' successes. They are the rich kids who have had the

world's treasures and pleasures always at their fingertips. In the same breath, the YOLO philosophies are propagated by those who have accepted life as is. These are the ones that life has been kind to and life has given them the sheer basics to survive. A basic apartment, basic clothes, basic food, and a basic car. Those basics provide them with enough to live another day. They are content with their basic existence. This basic life is not for us.

So we crawl into cold beds at night, hoping that one day our work ethic will afford us a king-size bed covered in fine linen. We stir the Movite and milk hoping that our sacrifices will one day afford us grade A steaks that we will enjoy on a regular basis. We endure the internal battles of today's disciplines so that we enjoy the sweet fruits of tomorrow's victories. We take comfort in the fact that there are those that have walked this path before. We learn from their footsteps and try our best to emulate their steps so that we can reach the same heights of success they did.

When asked why is that we want this life, most of us want it for one reason: freedom. Freedom to live life the way we see fit. You cannot go to Mount Fuji with an empty bank account. You cannot ride the sand dunes of Dubai with a zero balance. A ticket to travel has a price tag that is measured in an economic currency. Therefore, we take it upon ourselves to learn how to accumulate economic wealth to afford the things that have a price tag.

You cannot desire to be with a Queen, yet you conduct yourself as the village joker. You cannot desire to be a King, yet you treat yourself as a slave. It takes time to learn one's own masculinity and takes even more time to learn how to be confident in your masculinity. In the same light, I

have come to realise that it takes even greater time to learn how to express your masculinity in full honesty of self. I believe the same can be said about femininity. Without taking the time to learn one's own sexuality, it is easy to fall into living a second childhood. We see it with the 40year-old buying 20-year-olds drinks so that he can win approval 'among the guys'. The time it takes to understand one's self is spent in churches, zen temples, or on yoga mats. The discipline therefore to spend that time in these holy places not everyone can endure.

Fundamentally, this is the life that we have decided to live. It is not for everyone and that is why not everyone gets the privilege to live in absolute freedom. We admire those that have succeeded in life because they are in a position to enjoy life to the fullest. They are the ones who go on vacation in February. They are the ones who go out on Tuesdays. They are the ones who when faced with the option of saying no, only do so if that option is not to their taste. Their no is not restricted by time or money. That freedom is the freedom we desire.

It is comforting to learn that those that have attained that freedom, the burden of the disciplines that one is experiencing now, was the price they paid. We walk by faith and not by sight. Faith will lead us to our freedoms. This belief is enough for us to continue marching onward toward our dreams.

I Am a Black South African.

I sometimes wonder whether would the forefathers of our independence be proud of us? If Steve Biko, Robert Sobukwe, and Oliver Tambo were to rise from their graves and walk among us, would they be proud and be happy that they died for the life of the Black man of today?

It does not take much to realise that as Black people, we are still far from freedom. The other day, on a post on Instagram, some person commented that South Africa is Iceland. I took offense to that statement and reversed the narrative to say that Iceland is South Africa. In the other comment on the same post, a person wrote a dry joke about South Africa being called South Africa, yet it is the country at the southern point of Africa. I'm very patriotic of my country so I educated the man as to how it came to be called South Africa. The following person who commented got me thinking.

Whoever this person was decided that my explanation wasn't good enough. And so, he went on to protect the colonisers and that they were rightfully correct to the name the country whatever they saw fit. His last sentence is what got me. He said that next time, I should learn my history and ended his comment with a cocky "thanks". Little did he know, who he was dealing with. I replied that the basis of his argument is the Vacant Land Theory that colonisers and Afrikaner trekkers used to validate their claims to various

lands in the country. This propaganda was later debunked as it held no water. Realising his error, he never replied. That incident made me think of the intelligence of Nelson Mandela. He knew Afrikaans fluently and he used it to rally support for the ANC for the '94 elections among the minorities. So much so, he went to Orania to meet the wife of the Architect of Apartheid and spoke Afrikaans with her. Mandela's intelligence is one that is too amazing for words. During the first days of the CODESA negotiations, the National Party thought that they could dictate the proceedings. They undermined the authority of the ANC and yet Nelson Mandela, fearlessly, reprimanded FW De Klerk and the National Party for their arrogance. The interesting fact is that the undermining of the ANC was so subtle; that it was easily missed by the layman.

Such supreme levels of intelligence I wonder, do we, the modern Black Man of South Africa possess? Steve Biko was one of the first people to realise the evils of the homeland laws when many chiefs given the authority over those homelands did not. These powers of observation made me question my own. In primary school, between grades 1 and 3, there were two different sets of restrooms. The one was for English learners and the other for Afrikaans learners. The restrooms for the English learners were the pits. The ones for the Afrikaans learners were beautiful, with paintings of Barney the Dinosaur all over the walls. They were clean and inviting for the learners while the ones for the English learners were equivalent to ones you would find at a taxi rank. On face level, there is pretty much nothing wrong with the situation except the hygiene issue. However, the English learners were mostly Black and Indian children, and the Afrikaans learners, well, white. I later realised that this system of segregation is no

different from the more explicit segregation laws of the Apartheid era. It made sense why Black children in grade 6 or grade 7 would believe they were inferior to their white counterparts. Their foundation was rotten, to begin with. I was angry with myself because I realised this fact when I was 22 years of age when the situation appeared on social media. And so, I wonder, would have Steve Biko, and Robert Sobukwe understood my ignorance? And if they did, now that I know better, would they be proud if I began to act better? The system of racial division in South Africa has been different from the start and is not like other countries. The closest is America but that in itself is totally different from South Africa. The race matter in our country is very complex. Thus, one understands and appreciates the intelligence of Thabo Mbeki, Nelson Mandela, and the likes. When asked why he didn't remove the busts of old Apartheid leaders in the Union Buildings, Thabo Mbeki said that the history that is Apartheid shaped the South Africa of today. Mandela understood that for a peaceful transition in '94, he had to learn Afrikaans so to educate Afrikaners about the evils of Apartheid and why it must come to a stop. He understood that speaking a man's language can easily bypass his mind and go straight to his heart.

This is the intelligence that I speak of. With this level of maturity in dealing with such delicate issues, many think Mandela sold us out. Not many have the maturity to understand this extreme level of intelligence. Even an outspoken leader such as Julius Malema does not say Mandela sold us out. This is where I sit and ponder on the question. Will Mandela be proud of us today?

It is sad that many of our youth mention taking arms and going to war for our land. Yet, Mandela and them made it a point that in '93, South Africa does not go to war. Those that have experienced war here in our country or in other countries in Africa all mention the fact that war isn't something to wish for. I find it so funny that most of the people I personally know that yell war does not even know how to stand in a combat fighting stance. How do you expect such a person to wield a gun? During the Fees Must Fall protests, those that I know that yelled war told me to be safe when we were standing up against campus management. If university management invites fear in your heart, how can you survive the adrenaline of a man that has the full intention of killing you? It is easy to yell out a popularised rhetoric, especially when one lacks the intelligence to comprehend its consequences. I believe that is what made our forefathers so remarkable. They went against the masses because they knew that the consequences would bring more harm than would good.

The other half simply do not know what's happening in our country but know everything that's happening abroad. There are people who can engage actively in debates about the political structure of America and yet have no idea about the political structure of their local town. There are those that know the history of slavery in America and yet that individual has no idea of the significance of the Battle of Isandlwana that gave the Zulus the respect of the world. There are South Africans who are so preoccupied with the affairs of other countries that you would think they are merely visiting our country. Is this the freedom that the leaders of the struggle died for? A generation of youth liberated in the ideologies of the foreign world and yet oblivious to the ideologies of the MK, Black Consciousness

and Ubuntu that were intended for the new South Africa we live in today?

White South Africans seem not to have this problem. That white boy who decided to challenge me, knew his history. Yes, it was white washed but he knew what he was talking about. In primary school, every other Friday, the Afrikaner children were allowed to wear their Voertrekker uniforms. Again, as a Black child you knew that that club was exclusively for white children. One grows up and realises that from an early age, those white children were taught their history. By teaching them their history, they developed a great pride in their identity. Thus, it is very rare to find an Afrikaner who is ashamed of being Afrikaans- regardless of the atrocities that their forefathers committed.

It is an interesting thought to wonder, as the modern Black South African, are we still under the spell of Apartheid, and so, what are we doing about it? As much as it causes the heart to pump faster and the eyes to see red, I refuse to be looked down upon- especially by a white person. In fact, no Black man should ever let himself or herself be looked down upon by anybody. The thing that one desires is the maturity and intelligence of the greats like Mandela, Biko, and Mbeki. These great men found ways to restore honour and dignity of the Black man and yet found ways to work hand-in-hand with the white man. Mandela did not allow the National Party to treat the ANC as children. Instead, Mandela acted like their big brother and educated them to produce a better and brighter nation.

This extreme level of leadership, I believe, is the reason that South Africa is not plagued with the many ails that ravish our continent. Yes, we have high crime rates, there

are great injustices towards women, the inequality of our nation is greatly imbalanced, and the list does go on. However, South Africa is the best place to be for any African. One leader, during the xenophobia attacks asked the question why is it that many Africans flee their nations in order to find a future in South Africa. Simply because South Africa is the best African country. In the spirit of Ubuntu and for respect of the dignity of fellow Africans, South Africa rejects the idea of having refugee camps for those that come to our nation. In a world where Black people are not loved anywhere, South Africa is the closest to a safe haven for any African.

Our country is not perfect, and it is those imperfections that has one wondering whether would Steve Biko be proud of us today. One is still learning to replace the hate for white people with compassion the same way Nelson Mandela did. As my cousin once told me, nothing good comes from hate especially if that hate is towards someone who doesn't know you hate them.

The thing that makes one bleed with pain is the ignorance that is found in way too many African youths of our country. History is a powerful tool especially for us South Africans whose history is extremely white washed by the evils of Apartheid. Because you find Black people dancing their souls out on days like 16 Dec. I once went on a rampage about the ignorance that we display for that day. One Afrikaner lady told me that she cannot speak for Black people but for them, it is a special day because that's the day they defeated the Zulu- the Zulu who had defeated the mighty British army. That war that the Zulu lost to the Voortrekkers happened way before the Afrikaners ruled the nation. Again, a situation where the white lady armed with

her history could celebrate something that gave her the identity she's proud of. Most Black people on that day, is simply an opportunity to pull out that All-White suit.

As Black people of South Africa, we are the most privileged and yet we haven't reached uhuru. We have not reached uhuru due to the ignorance that rules the minds of many. What Thabo Mbeki did after '94 is what needs to be done even today. Thabo Mbeki went the extra mile by organising the best African minds to reconstruct the fabrics of our society. Through the African Renaissance Conference of '97, the spirit of Ubuntu was birthed. Under his leadership, as young children we were educated through TV shows such as Soul Buddies and them, about the spirit of Ubuntu. Thabo Mbeki gave organisations such as the Black Management Forum platforms to propose and implement laws that gave some economic power to Black people. This is not so much to reminisce in days past, but rather to extract that which worked and to implement it today.

When I think whether would Steve Biko be proud of us, I believe he'll proud of us if we have pride in ourselves. The way in which we can be proud of ourselves is understanding who we are. That understanding comes from the histories. There is no prouder a nation in our country than that of the Zulu. There are jokes of how Zulus only speak Zulu. There are jokes that Zulus are stubborn and refuse anything outside their custom. As a man who lived most of his life in a small white town in the Free State, that level of stubbornness, that level of 'my way or the highway' one can easily find in Afrikaans mense as well. And like the Afrikaans mense, Zulus know who they are and they are proud of it. So much so that the King of the

Zulu nation went to England in royal Zulu attire to meet the Queen- in the modern era. A smart way to remind her that her predecessor's 'mighty royal army' they once fell under the Zulu.

This is why the Zulu nation is one of the most respected African nations in the world. We fellow South Africans can learn something from that. We can use that sense of pride in self as a basis of building our legacies. That sense of pride of knowing that I am Black, and I am a Black South African is something that we can use to build the generations of tomorrow. As much as Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, and them laid the foundations for the freedoms we enjoy today, we must not forget that the house is still not complete. They built the foundations, we still need to erect the house and make sure that it stands. We need to learn the intelligence that built the foundations. This will eradicate the ignorance that plagues us. Upon this, we'll have pride in who we are and perhaps finally, we'll know uhuru.

Ignorance is Bliss.

Yesterday there was a discussion on campus. The point of discussion was to find out people's views on freedom and what it means to the citizen of South Africa today. At first, I did not want to partake in this discussion. After all, it was a discussion for the students and I, the lecturer, will surely be out of place. However, as the discussion continued, a discussion that touches deep in my heart, I could not help but add my opinions.

Obviously, I entered the discussion illustrating the history that led to the '94 elections. It felt like I was hitting a brick wall. The participants seemed blasé about the great feat it was for us to be a democratic state. It seemed that they were oblivious to what the freedom fighters were freeing us from. It was a weird experience because it was the first in my life that I was in a discussion with a fellow Blackman and yet the fellow Blackman seemed to be oblivious to the cost, the true cost, of the freedom we enjoy today.

Deeply disappointed, I texted some of my friends about this experience. One friend told me that I should not call it ignorance. That the problem runs deeper into the fabrics of society and in how we were raised as Black people. My other friend told me that for some, ignorance (or rather, not wanting to know for she said that calling it ignorance is ignorant in itself) is bliss. The Black experience is a heavy one and the moment one goes deeper the rabbit hole of the Black experience, the darker and more dangerous the hole gets.

It truly was the first time that I found myself in a situation where I was trying to explain the essence of being free in today's world for the Blackman. What deepens the sadness as well was that it seemed as if I was the only one with facts. Facts that could be traced if they were challenged. Even the facilitator who you would assume should possess some intelligence about the conversation proved to have none. No one spoke from an intellectual understanding. Is this the "brain drain" that African scholars are crying about? That the generation of today pays it no mind to find out who they are?

A senior lecturer at UFS once told me that it is imperative that more Black youth enter the academic space. Because we are creating a new world for the Blackman but there is a shortage of minds to create philosophies and theories about the Black experience of the new world. This is profound because looking into the histories, it is the theories and philosophies of Steve Biko that gave rise to the student uprisings of '76. Dr. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X preached Black intelligence and it is their theories and philosophies that inspired the Afro Americans to rise up against the system. It is the minds of Molefi Asante and Dr. Henry Clarke that rewired the perspectives of African minds to view the world through African eyes. It is the minds of the elite ANC and other African parties that disarmed and defeated the National Party to enable the wheels of democracy to begin rotating. Yes, other methods were used to get the ear of the world to the plight of the Black man. However, those protests, demonstrations, riots, and so forth were led by intellectually elite African men and women. An elite that seems to be void in the world today.

Or is it perhaps that at the end of the discussion, alone at my place, I got emotional? Because I am one of those South Africans that cry when listening to songs of the past? Like Jonas Gwangwa's Freedom for Some; Mbongeni Ngema's Rolihlahla. Again, it was the first time I encountered a Blackman who seemed not to appreciate the gravity of the freedom we enjoy today. But it goes back to what Morpheus said in The Matrix. He said that some minds are so entrenched in the system, so far gone that they are not ready (nor willing) to be freed from the system. In fact, they are prepared to die for the system. Yesterday was a reminder that indeed, there are still those that are trapped. Blindly loyal to the system that continues to enslave them. I guess; aluta continua.

Where Are We Going?

It bothers me a great deal that the modern youth doesn't know who Verwoed is. It is indicative of a culture that is brewing in the modern world of our country. You know, it can make sense if the modern youth doesn't know Stratcom or the other secret agencies that operated in the Apartheid era. However, not knowing the man who created the evil system is a real concern that should not be ignored.

What could be the cause of the ignorance that seems prevalent in the youth of today? Is it because the freedoms that we enjoy are so good, they warrant no necessary action for us to understand who we are as a people? The need to identify ourselves with our heritage as Black people is as important today as it was in 1994. The need to unify ourselves as Black people is as important today as it was in 1997 when Thabo Mbeki initiated the African Renaissance Conference. The Conference hosted various great minds of Africa spanning from Commerce to Education, all with the intention of building and creating a philosophy that will guide the future generations of the country. Instead, it seems, the then future generations are a bit concerned with attaining the "sof" life than understanding the true significance of being Black in the world of today.

It goes without a question that the next question would be; where did we go wrong? Where and when did we lose our identity and settle for the scraps that they left over for us? Those scraps are the internships that promise false financial freedom. Those scraps are the executive positions that the Employment Equity Act bestows on us and yet, careful

analyses of those positions reveal that those positions carry no authoritative power in the company. Those scraps are the black faces that are paraded and celebrated by companies in the name of being Pro-Black when the reality is that those black faces are exactly that, faces and nothing more. We celebrate these scraps and fail to stand aside and question them. We celebrate these minor victories and fail to realise that we still not yet fully free and independent as a people.

The truth is, unless we build our own systems, we will always be slaves. Jews are admired (and envied) because as a people they found a way to be fully free. As a people, they found a way to build themselves into a cultural powerhouse. We as Black people, need to take the time and learn from the Jews and emulate them so that we can be free. Unless we are content with the gradual eradication of our history and pride as a people; as seen with the ignorance of the modern youth not even knowing the grandmasters of our mental slavery.

It honestly breaks my heart that indeed, the modern youth do not know the history of this country. Not only do they not know the history, but they also seem not to care about it either. Yes, it could be argued that in the days past, there was Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement that preached the narrative of Black Power, as the Panthers before him in America. In today's world, we do not have that voice. We do not have a voice that glorifies the beauty and power of Black Power. We do not have a voice like Bob Marley that taught millions about Africa and the intellects of Africa. In today's world, there is no voice that is loud enough to reach the millions like the voices that came before us.

The modern youth is concerned about the drip and sauce. You find young boys named Themba by their Black parents calling themselves Tido among their friends so that they can be accepted. These young boys are so confused about their identities, you will hear them preach the philosophies of Marx, and yet because of the drip, they will be drenched in Jordan, Adidas, or even Supreme. It is really a concern that the state of philosophies that are prevalent in today's society. It is an area that we need to look into if we intend to build a unified Black community in South Africa.

I Am Great.

Finding one's passion is the easy part of hearing your calling on Earth. The decision to pursue a particular avenue is a privilege reserved for all humans. When reading *Think and Grow Rich*, the theme revolves around that. Even though that might or might not be the secret that Napoleon is sharing in his principles of success, the power to decide one's fate occurs in every chapter of the book. To decide who you want to be is easy; being that person you decide to be is the tricky part.

One can decide to be the best fighter in the world. They can find inspiration in the greats such as Iron Mike, Ali, Jon Jones, and the likes. They can watch all the fights of their role models. Unless that person goes to the gym, that decision will remain but an elusive reality that exists only in their mind.

Others actually begin to work towards being the person they decide to be. An artist, who decided to be one of the greatest painters of the modern era, begins to paint. The artist begins to understand how paint works, begins to learn how to blend paint, and how to mix colours. The artist takes the time to learn the techniques to provide the strokes, textures, and shapes that they want to paint. The great thing about this person is that they have begun their journey to greatness.

However, they are still far. The artist needs to paint more artworks in order to be recognised as one of the greatest. Usually, like most people, they hit a plateau. They reach the

end of the horizon. The land is vast and un-ending as they continue towards their greatness. It is in this area that many fall off the wagon. The minute success that they achieve banishes them to a world of comfort. Others begin to gain a bit of wealth that blinds them from their true treasures. At this point, in this vastness of comfort, the desire to be the greatest of all time slowly dies out.

It is said that anyone can be great. The difference is in the willingness to go the extra mile. All the greats emphasise the importance of hard work. Arnold Schwarzenegger, in one of his famous speeches, said that while you are busy horsing around, someone out there is getting better. When you think of how his greatness was defined, one understands his words clearly. Arnold is regarded as one of the greatest bodybuilders of all time. At the level of his competition, even the slightest ill-discipline in diet or training could have easily dethroned him off his seat.

The UFC has a promotional show they broadcast before major fights. In the build-up towards Nunes and Spencer, they broadcasted each fighter's preparations to the fight. Nunes is regarded as the best female MMA fighter of all time. Spencer was regarded as the fighter who could perhaps dethrone the Lioness. What's interesting is that during the show, when they interviewed Spencer, she was out with her team. They were enjoying quality time in a local attraction. At the same time, when Nunes was interviewed, she was putting the work in. She was in the gym, working on drills and fixing her techniques. When fight night came, Nunes totally dominated Spencer.

The bit of time that Spencer used to go out with her team, Nunes used to work on her fighting. Thus, that slight

difference in time management gave Nunes the edge. At that level of competition, such factors play a great role in one's success. The key thing that one learnt from that fight is that greatness is something that is worked for. Conner McGregor credits his success to an "insane work ethic". Jon Jones keeps posting working out videos and writes the caption "the 1%". Luck, as it is said, is charmed by hard work.

It is easy to see this principle of hard work when it comes to sports. Usain Bolt once said that for him to break records in seconds is the accumulation of hours in training. "Champions are made in the gym" most boxers say. And, this discipline is seen when it is on display. The discipline of a consistent diet plan, workout routine yields the results that are desired. However, at some point, it is easy to reach a plateau. A stage where the body no longer responds to the dieting and working out. And so, at this stage, to escape the plateau, one has to challenge themselves with even harder tasks.

These challenges lead to an improvement that leads to your success. The 1% that seeks to better themselves are the ones that reach their promise land. These are the ones that make the time to learn new techniques for their craft. They are the ones that go the extra mile. They understand that the extra mile is the point where many do not reach and so, there are more rewards at the end of that mile. Success births greatness but greatness is only a by-product of hard work.

The key thing to understand is that hard work is the continual improvement of self. Someone who studies overnight, every night is not necessarily working hard. The

reason is that someone else with a more effective study routine can obtain similar results with less the effort. Therefore, this person does not sacrifice their health in pursuit of their wealth. They say that the smart entrepreneur is the one that can create systems that will ensure the business can operate without him. There is a video of a cyclist who finds an effective way to go faster without having to pedal harder. She easily overtakes most of the other cyclists. One cyclist attempts to pedal harder but remains in the dust of her intelligence. Working hard is finding means of improving yourself without burning yourself out.

What good will a billion be if most of it goes to your medical bills? The art of an insane work ethic indeed comes from engaging in that which you love. This enables one to find ways as to how to be better and more effective. A boxer will run an extra mile so that he has the stamina to survive the championship rounds. In the last lap of the race, that's where the great are separated from the rest. In order to be ready for that last lap, it requires one to be well equipped with the training and skillset to survive it. An artist usually finds it easy to paint his first few paints. However, it is the last pieces of work that he is remembered for. Think of the greats such as Basquiat, Picasso, Reinhardt, and them. Before reaching that level of greatness, these artists had a minimum of at least a 1000 paintings to their name. They are remembered for less than 10 of them.

An insane work ethic has nothing to do with the "hours you have put in". If in those hours, you still on the same level of skill as you were before putting those hours in, then there is no improvement to your being. Thus, greatness will remain

a shining star on top of the mountain. An insane work ethic is one that leads to the enhancement of self in one shape or another. If you cross night and yet attain the same marks you received in the previous year of your study, you not improving. If you work out for an hour more than usual and yet continue to lift the same amount weights as you did the previous month, you not improving. If you are generating a certain amount of income monthly, the same amount for the past 5 years, you not improving nor becoming someone of value in the marketplace.

An insane work ethic is the ability to more efficient. Being more efficient is the ability to increase your productivity with fewer resources. Bruce Lee's one-inch produced an insane amount of impact using every little amount of resources. Successful social media influencers have worked hard enough to ensure that they generate enough income with the least amount of effort. This is seen with the influencer who can generate income of R30 000 and more with a single post. Chances are they worked hard to get there. They invested in themselves, and in the equipment to produce quality images. They kept at it until the snowball got so large that it began to roll itself.

At that stage, even the smallest amount of snow can cause an exponential effect. This principle is seen within the world of investing. In the first few years, one's investments does not grow that much. A wise investor will keep putting money in their investment. This consistency will pay off when the power of compounding takes effect. At that stage, the investor can finally enjoy the benefits of their investments. The consistency in the contribution they gave to their investment will result in the fruits they enjoy. If the investor somewhere in the journey lost discipline and

resorted to comfort, their investment will show. If the investor never forsook their hunger for a financially free life and poured in more to their contributions, their investment will show. Investing, like sports, is also something that requires a form of hard work for it to yield the rewards that are desired. The Ray Dalios are to investment what Michael Jordan is to basketball. And each of them, their greatness is defined to the insane work ethic that they dedicated to their craft.

Investing and basketball are two worlds apart but the principle of hard work is the same. The trick is finding what an insane work ethic is for your passion. An insane work ethic for someone who desires to be a philosopher is not the same as for someone who desires to be a runner. The runner will spend more time on the tracks than on books and the philosopher will spend more time with books than on the tracks. Yes, it is wise for the runner to read books inasmuch as it is wise for the philosopher to run on the track on occasion. However, the discipline to understand what makes you great in your line of work is key to finding success in it.

An insane work ethic must lead to an improvement of sorts. For the student, she must find ways to reduce cross-nights of studying and yet produce her distinctions. The entrepreneur must find ways to create systems that will yield more levels of productivity with fewer resources. The 1% have mastered this. This is what enabled someone like 50 Cent to make a million dollars from an Instagram hashtag he created. Virtually no money was invested into his hashtag but because he is 50 Cent (the brand he has worked very hard to create over the years), he generated a million US dollars from it.

This continual improvement is what leads one out the plateau and into the land of the promised- the land of greatness.

You Failure!

If there is one thing that I wish entrepreneurs would talk about in their journeys is failure. And not in the romantic sense where they describe failure as a learning curve. Not in the motivational sense that if you fall, you should pick yourself up again. I wish they would describe in detail the emotions that they felt when they failed. And this post will detail why I think they should talk about their failures.

It is said that 5 out of 7 SMMEs will fail in South Africa. That is little over 70% of SMMEs that will fail. That is a high number and it is not caused solemnly by Covid. There are several reasons why SMMEs fail and these reasons can be found in many textbooks. What isn't found in textbooks, is the emotional and mental strain that failure has on the entrepreneur. There is a local entrepreneur who I respect a great deal in my hometown. He once shared a story of how he had a full inventory of stock for his business and how the stock was subsequently stolen. He explained how that theft of stock broke him and threw him into depression. He did not go into detail about how he recovered but it was the humbling experience to hear this man, who's probably knocking on a million now, share how he felt in a moment in defeat.

The thing that makes it so difficult for the entrepreneur to deal with defeat and failures is because the defeat or failure falls fully on your shoulders. You cannot blame a boss. You cannot blame co-workers. You cannot blame the work environment. The only person you can blame is yourself

and the lack of preparation you undertook to avoid the failure.

One of the primary reasons why successful people (some of them) do not talk about failures, is because they can easily bounce back. And let me explain what I mean by that. One thing that I have noticed is that the higher you are in life, the more opportunities will present themselves to you. The higher you are in life, your fall will not be on the ground. It will be on the comfy cushion of a rainy day cash reserve. If you are a start-up entrepreneur and you have invested all your money into a business, when that business fails, all your money will be gone too. It is not easy to recover from that. For you, that is not a life lesson that will teach you about business. For you, that is a disaster that will permanently alter the course of your life.

Another thing about really wealthy people, most of them come from money or have connections to money. Let us not deceive ourselves with this fact. Very few entrepreneurs actually started with nothing. Very few successful entrepreneurs started with absolutely nothing and were able to connect with money along their journey. Most successful entrepreneurs already had a leg up. Elon Musk had the opportunity to go to Canada and came from money that give him a leg up in Canada. Bill Gates' parents were highly influential people and sat on various big company boards. Theo Baloyi was (or rather is) a certified accountant who worked for PWC for 5 years. These people already had money or access to money to ensure that their business ventures succeeded or go on an accelerated boost to reach success.

It is true, they did work smart and hard to gain success. And their smartness and work ethic are what make us admire

them. Because in the same breath, there are plenty of folks who came from money and ruined their lives. The fact that these people knew what to do with their money and the connections they had to money is what makes us respect them. But in the same breath, their “self-made” narrative tends to lead us astray.

When Elon Musk experienced those nervous breakdowns, he had the money to afford the best mental experts. When most of these successful people experience breakdowns and great defeat, they can afford to book into 5-star, private resorts that are not found on Airbnb or Booking.Com for a week or even a month to recoup. Shortly after the vaccines were made available in Europe, a scandal ensued about how Rupert rushed to a hospital in the Netherlands to get vaccinated. Obviously, people had a great debate about this act. But the truth is, that is what money can able you to do.

As a young entrepreneur, when you fail, you do not have the luxury to bounce back so easily. Failure crushes your spirit and drive. Failure has the ability to render you emotionless. The best place to see this is in sports games. In important games like a cup final, the defeat sometimes weighs so heavy on the losing team that they can’t help but cry. Regardless it is on national (or international) television. Defeat to capture the Copa America made Lionel Messi retire, temporarily, from international football. That is how sharp the pain of defeat and failure is.

Failure rips one’s heart into pieces. As you lay on the ground, gathering strength to get back up, the broken pieces further dig deeper into your body. Questions of doubt, your confidence, and your worthiness take centre stage. Failure has the ability to render you motionless and robs you of

hope of a brighter day. Like weed which is a gateway to stronger substances, failure is the key that opens the gates of worthlessness, hopelessness, and depression to enter your system. Failure is the stroke of lightning that has the power to completely destroy you in a moment.

Unfortunately, failure is something that these successful people do not discuss. And if they do, they use failure as a topic for their sermon on getting up from the ashes. When the strength to rise from the ashes is in fact not that easy to gather. Anyone that has experienced great failure will understand how devastating failure is. To a great degree, we can take measures to reduce the factors that enable failure in our lives. But failure, like a heavy thunderstorm, is an unavoidable life event that we all (or will) experience in our lifetime.

The essence of this discussion was to discuss how failure is not discussed in detail by these successful entrepreneurs. Most of them when they discuss failure, they brush over what happened. They say things like “it was tough, but I pulled through”. They do not highlight the strategies and techniques they used to “pull through”. The problem with this is that it sets a false narrative about entrepreneurship and the novice entrepreneur will enter business expecting a smooth sail. That if they experience a sat-back, he or she too will find a way to “pull through” with the same ease as their role model. Their role model perhaps forgot to mention that they had millions saved in the bank. Their role model perhaps forgot to mention that they had luxurious cars, jewelry, clothes, and homes that they could use as collateral in exchange for a quick change in a moment of crisis. Their role model perhaps forgot to mention that they have the private number of the CEO of the bank they bank with. This young entrepreneur has the false notion that in

the event that they experience defeat, the power of positive thinking and the law of attraction will help them pull through”. And this is truly not the case, especially in business.

Last year, it was the first time in a very long time that I experienced such a defeat. I had been successful in some form or shape in my endeavors that I forgot how bitter the taste of defeat is. It was the first time in 7 years that I had to ask myself whether I am on the right path or not. The pain of failure made me crawl into a hole of despair where I questioned my very will to live. Thank God I was not suicidal. But I was hopeless, I was a corpse in a living body. And my drastic weight increase is a result of that state I was in.

The failure to get a business off the ground broke me in a way that I did not expect. I had gotten used to getting wins in my endeavors. I had gotten used to getting lost in dreams of a brighter tomorrow. I had forgotten how dark a bad day can be. Lucky for me, this was not my first dance with defeat. I was better prepared to “pull through”. It took a while but one found the strength to bounce back.

Failure is simply one of those elements in life that no textbook can ever teach you about. It is one of those elements you have to experience to understand fully. It is best that you be prepared when that day happens. As an entrepreneur, the best preparation will be to have cash in your bank account. At least 3 months' worth of cash that can cover overheads and urgent expenses. This way, the blow of defeat can be softened on a bed of cash. This, as an entrepreneur, will help you “pull through.”

Time Tick Tocks.

Have we realised how much time social media steals from us? You know, I was watching a documentary on YouTube called The Social Dilemma. A very thought-provoking and revealing documentary about how the social media business model operates. The documentary reveals so many issues about social media and how social media companies make a profit. The main issue that I got from the documentary is that social media thrives on grabbing your attention at all costs. And that got me thinking.

Primarily because yesterday, I realised how this can become an issue. Yesterday, I woke up early. I went for a light jog and came back to officially start the day. I planned my day with the aim to be as productive as I can. The moment I sat on my chair and opened the laptop, a notification appears that I have been tagged on a Facebook post. Lately, there are these idiots tagging me in pornographic posts, so I try my best to untag myself immediately when Facebook tells me that someone has tagged me to a post. At that moment, I remembered one guy in the documentary making an example of the attention-grabbing techniques used by Facebook. He said that it would be easier if Facebook would show you the picture you've been tagged on rather than telling you that you have been tagged. Instead of Facebook asking you to review the post on the notification, it forces you to the platform to review it. That's one of the strategies that they use to grab your attention.

This got me thinking why is there no setting to block people from tagging me period? Quite frankly, I get

annoyed when the 35-year-old local rapper tags me on his latest suck-in-the-90s mixtape. I get annoyed when someone tags me so I can see him or her on a mountain or at some resort, with some self-praising caption. With the strategy of growing my social media following, there are imbeciles who tag me in some virus-infected links disguised as pornographic content. It is not like Facebook does not know about this. Perhaps there is a method to completely block one from being tagged on unnecessary posts. But this is only but one of the strategies these platforms use to grab your attention. This is important because it is from your attention that these companies make money.

There is another guy in the documentary who said that he is addicted to his emails. He asked why there isn't a tool or a code that can make emails less addictive. And if you think of it, in some form, aren't we all addicted to our emails? Emails are official. Emails have a sense of being productive. For those of my generation, emails were usually associated with successful and wealthy people. Having an email address was a status symbol. I believe that the belief that having an email address is a status symbol is ingrained in our subconscious. And so, we take pride in having one. Even when hosting companies advertise having a personalised email address for your business, they focus on making your business stand out and look "professional". Therefore, we access our email address having a sense of importance and feeling that we are somewhat productive because we sent an email. We feel productive that we read an email. When the reality is, that emails, like meetings, can lead to unproductive habits. It can lead to people being addicted to sending and reading emails and missing the true essence of being productive. One of the greatest

filmmakers, Christopher Nolan, it said that he doesn't use emails, let alone own a phone. Yet this man has directed one of the greatest movies of our time. Yes, he directed Inception, Interstellar, and the Batman Trilogy to mention a few. E-mails at the end of the day, are the grandparents of all these instant messaging platforms we have grown accustomed to. It makes sense why the really rich say that they check emails for just an hour a day. The rest of the day they dedicate it to actually being productive.

Yesterday was an interesting day because after I went through my emails I thought that perhaps, now I can work. I made the mistake of going to YouTube. Working or reading while listening to rain sounds is one of the most powerful things I have discovered. So, I was going to YouTube to find one of these rain sounds videos. The power of YouTube recommendations, I found myself watching episode after episode of various videos from my favourite YouTubers. The time I realised that I have not started working, it was already 4 pm.

The whole morning and the afternoon I spent it on social media. And if it wasn't for the documentary, I would have considered it just a normal day. That got me thinking. It made me think of what Steve Jobs once said about computers. He said that computers are tools with the potential to greatly advance the human race. And to a great extent, social media is also a tool that can greatly advance the human race. These platforms allow you to connect with old friends and distant relatives. Being someone who grew up on Hip Hop, watching a YouTube channel like Hood Vlogs is so interesting because it shows the true, unedited, and raw streets of Compton and those areas. Because of YouTube, I can learn about the art of filmmaking and watch

a daily vlog of someone who lives in Japan (a place I wish to call a second home one day).

Social media only becomes a problem when we use it unchecked. Because the greatest threat that social media possesses is that it robs people of time. And time is the currency we use to pay for living our lives. It makes sense why most content creators would say things like that after they post on Instagram or Facebook, they delete the app and will reinstall it when they want to post again. Some of our favourite celebrities do not have social media accounts. The ones we follow could be fan ones or ones created by their PR teams.

In essence, like television, social media is the latest evolution in the way we consume media. And like television, there are primarily two kinds of people who use the media. Those that produce content for the medium and those that consume it. Unlike television, content creators for social media do not need expensive equipment and contacts in production companies to create content. Most phones today have decent cameras to create content. I am one of those people who believe that if one can buy data to watch re-runs of your favourite shows on Netflix, then one can definitely use that data to create content for YouTube or the Gram. I do not believe in the myth that we do not have access to information. Not in today's world. Some of our favourite content creators share so many nuggets of wisdom with their posts that we can choose to follow their advice or not. Mind you, the advice they share is usually based on their own success.

At the end of the day, social media is here to stay. Perhaps at a later stage or in the next generation, there will be a new

form of media that will replace social media the same way TV did to the radio, the same way social media is replacing TV. The key important element we should keep at the back of our minds is the question of how we are using the media to enrich ourselves. Are we watching, learning and strategizing on how to create content for these platforms? Or are we slaves, selling our lives by the hour by consuming endless content from these platforms? That's up to us to decide.

Parents = Slave Masters.

Ever been angry at life? Angry and feeling the pings of frustration eating away your soul? Angry at the fact that there are so many expectations set for you in which, you do not care about? Artists have in many shapes and forms expressed the need to escape society. Escape to a world of freedom and self-expression. To a great degree, that's all that we want.

Here's an unpopular opinion: parents failed us. Strong and harsh words that many youths say directed at the people who birthed and raised them. That might not be the case for most people as their parents neglected them from an early age. A friend of mine once said that he doesn't feel bad about the notion that his parents failed him. He said that they might have birthed him, but they had no right to dictate what they thought was good for him or what was bad.

Like many African children, my friend could not discuss sex, sexuality, or anything to do with women with his parents. They shunned the idea away. Here is a young man who is seeking guidance about his masculinity and how he can express his masculinity to women he loved and yet, those that are "responsible" for his upbringing shun the idea away. Instead, they told him that he is too young to be in love and to be with women. Yet, he feels lust. He feels the need to seduce. He feels the need to love. Fundamentally, there is no age minimum or maximum for these emotions that strike the young male.

Another friend of mine, could not discuss with his parents what he wanted to be in life. My friend was the smartest kid in the class. He was the guy who aced every science paper, every math test, and every English essay. He was and is intelligent beyond measure. His parents did everything in their powers to support him- with his studies. However, as book intelligent as my friend is, he wanted nothing to do with books. His heart was and is still with drama. He loves works of drama and in his spare time, he engages with actors who have made a career in drama. Then the time came when we began applying to universities and so forth. Following the propaganda by parents and teachers, most of us went forward applying in auto-pilot mode. On the assumption that the teacher knows best. Failing to realise that they might know best academically, but they don't know what is best for us. My friend knew better, he applied where his passion was. He applied to study drama.

The backlash he got from his parents was incredible. My friend told me that his parents were furious and from being furious, they became sad. They told them that they invested so much in him for him not to waste his life on drama. A great insult to the soapie stars his mom adored. They told them that there is no money in drama and yet, they are a typical Black middle-class family. Meaning that the luxury they indulged in was bought on credit and the family actually did not have wealth. They went on and on and finally, his father told him that his son will not be a man of drama. His son will work in a hospital as a doctor or in a law firm as an attorney. He will not send his son to university just to live in poverty. An even greater insult to the many artists his father listened to and admired on the screen.

It is these invisible bars that imprison us. It is these invisible bars that put forth the notion that parents have failed to raise us. Indeed, they birthed us. Fundamentally, their role thereafter is to guide us into greener pastures. Their role is not to dictate what they think is right or wrong for us. They have no right to do that. Many of the youth get trapped feeling somewhat bad for feeling that their parents failed them. That somehow, there is a law that says that parents are always right and we the children, are wrong. Biblical laws cannot transcend into everyday life laws. We cannot impose our beliefs on the next man or woman. So much so, that many of the youth are beginning to escape the clutches of the church. I believe this is because the church continues to polish the shackles that hold us hostage instead of breaking us free.

This is our life. The way we live is the way we live. This fundamental right to life should not be taken by anybody, not even our parents. I have met people who simply hate their parents. Hate. They despise their parents and are at peace with that fact. Interestingly enough, these people who escaped the stronghold of their parents are happier and live a fuller life. It is something to think about. Are we letting ourselves be attached to pity emotions that keep us enslaved to our parents? Some say that the only thing that parents have on their children is money. To a great degree, this is true. The child stays in his parents' house because the child is not yet financially strong enough to stand by himself or herself. Yet, the rhetoric in society preaches that money is evil, the meek shall inherit the Earth, and so forth. I once read a prayer that gave thanks to the Lord for the "the little that I have". Absolute nonsense.

It is nonsense that we are in the 21st century and yet subscribe to ancient philosophies of life. The institutions of marriages and families need to be revisited. More accurately, the influence of society on these institutions needs to be revisited. This influence on these institutions by society continues to limit people of their abilities and enslave many in their “worthy” ideals.

In all honesty, though, marriage is beautiful. It is ugly when it is expected the woman should be the only caretaker and homemaker. It took me a great deal to understand that marriage is also ugly if the man has to provide alone. Marriage is beautiful because it can enable a man or woman to unleash their fullest potential. Through marriage, many men and women have become greatly successful in their own right. This is the beauty of marriage. Unfortunately, it gets smeared by the ugliness of society and its unworthy ideals.

The same can be said about families. It is beautiful to be part of a family. This need to belong to an intimate group of people is inert in all of us. If we do not find intimacy within our immediate family, we find intimacy with friends who become family. Many believe this is why many become part of gangs. Gangs treat each member as a family and conduct themselves as a family. The family structure without a shadow of a doubt is an important component in the fabric of society. However, families tend to fall into the trap of feeling that they have an image to maintain. Like my intelligent friend, his parents believed that for his intelligence to be accepted in society, he has to follow the path of a lawyer or doctor. Or else, his intelligence might be viewed as mental madness in society. In what his parents’ thought was protecting him, it was actually destroying him.

So much so, my friend no longer functions normally unless there's a narcotic substance in his veins.

In the many facets of life that we, the first generation of freedom, are transforming, the relationships that we have with our parents is one that needs serious revisiting. In the name of protecting, caring, and loving children, parents lock their children in expectations that their children cannot fulfil. They themselves become victims of their own emotions and will not acknowledge this when their children are failures. Failures according to their own definitions. To a great extent, we need to do better with our own children.

A Strange Land.

Back in the world of employment. I had told myself that the only way I'd go back is if the job is permanent because as a student of wealth creation, one can never underestimate the financial pecks that come with permanent employment. So, I find myself back at it. Back at the waking up in the morning to report to an unknown boss who probably doesn't even know of my existence.

To a great extent, it's not bad. I am blessed that I am based in one of the most affluent areas of South Africa and so, waking up surrounded by such opulence keeps one on their toes. Keeps one focused on the end goal. Fundamentally, one's understanding of wealth has dramatically changed over the course of two months. In two months, I quickly learned that all that I knew of wealth was merely the iceberg. The countless documentaries, lifestyle vlogs, talks, presentations, books, literature, and theory I read all amounted to naught the moment I began rubbing shoulders with wealth.

Interestingly, I am yet to rub shoulders with real wealth. In this environment, I know no one. There is not a single soul that I can call and propose to hang with. I am a distant traveller in a strange land. The excitement of the new world excites me for there rests treasures to discover.

The beauty of being a distant traveller in a distant land is the opportunity to start anew. The opportunity to rebrand oneself and establish a new identity for self. It is important to rebrand oneself time and time again. This may seem off

to some. That by rebrand, it is meant that an individual casts out who they are for someone new. And this is not the case.

Rebranding of self is the shedding of old skin to allow for a new coat of skin to cover you. The old has the terrible tendency of holding one back. The old has the tendency to lose form and lose strength. Evolution is not a theory proposed by Darwin to suggest how animals and plants came to be. Evolution is a theory of improving old systems to new ones.

Therefore, as humans, we do not evolve merely physically. But we do so mentally. We do so emotionally. The trials and tribulations of days past add scars to our skins that harden us. The joys of days past open new pathways for love and hope to flow. We grow on a continual basis.

That's the beauty promised with unknown land. This growth is unlimited. In a familiar environment with familiar people, one cannot grow to their utmost potential. A friend will remind them of their past. A family member will hold on to an image they have of them. Inasmuch as this usually comes from a place of love, it stunts one's capacity to grow and evolve into an improved being.

The primary reason is that in most cases, we fear judgment. We fear what would my sister say if I did this. We fear what would my brother say if I did that. We fear what would my friends say if I began doing that too. These fears of judgment hold many of us back. On the surface level, many of us have an "I don't care what people think attitude". And rightfully so, the opinions of others should not matter to us. However, cut deeper below the surface, humans being

social creatures, the opinions of others render many motionless to pursue their dreams. It isn't really their opinion that bothers most. It is the judgment that flows with those opinions.

People fear being who they desire to be because of this judgment. A person would want to be a filmmaker and one would suggest that they start creating Tiktoks or YouTube videos. The usual response is that one doesn't have the necessary equipment or something of this nature. When the truth is, the lack of necessary equipment masks the fear of being in front of people. It masks the fear of being called out and being judged by people who know you and who don't know you. There are people who overcome this fear and with a two-plate stove post videos cooking delicious Sunday meals. There are people who overcome this fear with their basic Mobicel and share funny Tiktoks. It is never what people say that holds them back. It is the roots, the fear of being judged, attached to what they say that do.

Hence being in this new world with no soul that knows me, there is a sense of liberation. A sense of freedom to be who I truly desire to be. Without judgment from those who care for me. The shedding process has slowly begun. It began with my view of wealth. I realise that everything I knew about wealth, everything I've studied for the past 10 or so years about wealth is nothing but a drop in the ocean.

And so, my knowledge about wealth creation is evolving. Entering a new phase that I am greatly excited about it. And as such, my entire existence is entering this new phase of evolution. I am a distant traveller in a strange land. New treasures and quests await me has begun.

Focus.

Focus: What Bruce Lee attributes to being a warrior. The ability to focus is probably the second most fundamental attribute that plays a key factor in one's pursuit of success.

The first attribute must be the desire to win itself. The desire to lose weight will make it comfortable to wake up in the early hours of the winter to run. The desire to build muscle will make it comfortable to go to a friend's backyard gym and hold that cold bar to build the muscle desired. The burning desire is highlighted in *Think and Grow Rich* and in *The Richest Man in Babylon* as the first fundamental starting point for one to attain success.

The second attribute must be focus. The reason is based on the law that states what the mind thinks about, that is what you will attract. Ever lost a set of keys or misplaced a phone? The focus to find it becomes very heightened. The mind begins to create mental images of where it could possibly be. The mind continues to create these images and naturally, the seeker seeks the lost items where the mind suggests the items are. When the burning desire burns strongly, the seeker will not stop seeking the lost set of keys or phone until it's found. With persistent effort, one will find those keys.

The same applies to the desires that burn within us. Whether those desires be more wealth, more influence or to better manage one's weight, the moment the mind begins to focus on that desire, the mind begins to create mental images of how to attain the desire. The moment one seeks

more wealth, the mind will open up to more business TV shows, one's social media timelines will be filled with more entrepreneurs, and people pursuing wealth. The same applies to the person seeking to lose weight. They will begin to see more Instagram fitness models and notice more people drinking USN supplements or Herbalife weight management aids. The mind begins to seek ways to attain the burning desire that is consuming it.

This is where focus comes into play. The easiest way to understand the power of focus is by observing the power of focus in a camera. When the camera is out of focus, the image is very blurry. When the camera is focused on a subject, the part in which the camera is focused on is clear and everything around it is blurry. This is metaphoric for the same focus of the mind. When one is focused on weight management, everything else becomes blurry. One becomes obsessed with going to the gym. They seek better diet plans to fuel their body. They are consumed by the burning desire to effectively manage their weight. And if they are persistent enough, they will fulfil their desire.

However, if one is out of focus, the desire will not be fulfilled. If one desires to lose weight but their focus is blurred with one too many cheat meals, they'll not fulfil their desire. The blur in the mind is more complex than that of a camera. An area to see when the mind is out of focus is with celebrities and those who achieve major success. The ones who remain focused, the fame and fortune don't hinder their success. They remain at the top of their game and attain even higher levels of success in their field of profession. The ones who lose focus, are the ones that fall from grace. They get entangled in drug-rings, scandals and lose their fame and fortune faster than they got it.

A blurry mind, a mind out of focus cannot shot straight. A mind out of focus shots aimlessly and hopes for the best. A mind in-focus shots with a clear vision and evidently becomes the best. A focused mind is a disciplined mind. A focused mind is the adhesive that ties in all the other attributes of success together. I write with confidence about weight loss because, with a focused mind, I moved from 100kg to 75kg in little under a year. This process could have been quicker had I not lost focus middle of the way. The consistency to work out even in the cold winter of Harrismith has taught me the powers of being focused.

The ability to focus is indeed a superpower that allows the average person to be a warrior. Focus, together with faith, unlocks a supernatural power within a person that makes all things possible. The burning desire to succeed is the first step. Focus, tuning your mind to fulfil the desire, is without the second most important step for those wishing to succeed in life.

“I Don’t Vote.”

Why doesn't the youth vote? This question has been on my mind. At first, I asked myself, why should I vote? Is there even a need to vote? Why should I vote? The narrative that my single vote can make a change is a fallacy. Well in today's world that is. Having close to the then 30 million Black South Africans believe their single vote can make a change, at that time of '94 made sense. Even 10% of that population would have had the potential to outvote the White South Africans at the time. And let's not forget that at that time, it was the first time that Black South Africans and other disadvantaged groups had the opportunity to cast their vote.

Before we engage in what it means to cast a vote, let us break down the system that governs the vote. There are three main electoral systems. There is the plurality electoral system (used by the United States of America), the majority electoral system, and lastly, the proportional representation system which is used by South Africa. This system basically states that based on the percentage of votes a party receives that will be the number of seats that the party also receives. Meaning, that if a party wins 62% of the votes (like the ANC did in 1994), they received 62% of the seats in parliament.

The fact that the ANC had such a dominating presence in parliament is what enabled the ANC to change the South African constitution in 1996. So, let's say that the ANC did not win by 62%. For some reason, the ANC won by 51% and the National Party won 49% of the votes. The day that

the ANC proposes a change to the constitution, the National Party opposes it. It is possible that on that day, the National Party can target just 3% of ANC members to partner with them. These might be less prominent members in the party but have a seat in parliament. These members might even be threatened with their lives in order to be coerced. By convincing 3% of the ANC members, the power that the 51% ANC representatives have in parliament will fall to 48% and that of the NP will raise to 52%. Therefore, in such a situation, ANC might be the one who has most of the votes, but the power will remain with the NP.

We thank the Heavens that this was not the case. But this example is used for the following purpose. Leading to the elections, I was in town. As I was standing, minding my own business, I saw this old lady struggle to carry some of her groceries. She was really struggling so I figured that I should help the old lady. I rushed quickly and asked her if it was okay that I help her carry her groceries. She gladly accepted my offer. As we were walking to a taxi, she complained about the potholes. She, like many old people, mentioned how back in the day it was never like this. The roads were clean and well-kempt. Then, out of the blue, she asked me if I am going to vote. I told her that no, I don't think so. It was like I opened a can of worms! She began to lecture me about the importance of voting and that my vote will make a change. She said that in some wild event that the party I like is sitting 50-50 with an opposition, it is my vote that could make the change. She was way too old for me to engage about that notion, so I nodded and helped her, finally, to the taxi.

The old generation, to some extent, has every right to believe in that notion. For them, indeed their vote meant

change. So, for the old people, to some extent, their loyalty to the ANC makes sense. It is the ANC that gave them freedom. They lived during Apartheid. We read about the discrimination, missing people, and strategic killings of leaders. They experienced the discrimination, they knew some of the missing people, and they felt the pain of the death of their loved ones. They lived through Apartheid. They know it. Hence it is common for the elderly to complain about the smell of burst sewerage pipes but be thankful that at least they have a brick RDP house that is better than the mud house they lived in prior 94'. Old people have pledged their allegiance to ANC and to a great extent, it is justified.

This is not the case with us the youth. Especially we Black youth and the DA noted this. However, DA is not for us. On face level, one could think that the DA is racist. But under careful analysis, one realizes that the DA is not racist. They just do not know what we Black people go through. They are for the White liberals. A White liberal might feel some empathy towards the plight of the Black man. They might want to be a voice of reason and provide those in poverty with better opportunities. Their intentions might be true and sound. But at that the end of the day, they do not know our experiences. In all my years of riding the public bus, I have only seen one White person ride along with us. In all my years of riding public taxis (especially long-distance ones), I have literally seen only one White person ride a taxi. I know in areas like Cape Town and such this is not the case but bear with me.

A White person will not know how degrading it feels that you'll cross the street as a Black man and all the drivers, Black or White, will quickly roll up their windows. A White

person will never feel how embarrassing it is that you'll be minding your own business walking down a street and an elderly woman, Black or White, will clutch their handbag with all their life. They don't know how annoying it is for a person to bestow you a white name because your Black name is hard to pronounce. I am one of the millions of Black South Africans who experience this on a daily. And mind you, I am from middle-class Black South Africa. So, imagine the experiences lived by Black folk in far worse socioeconomic conditions.

White liberals do not know this experience simply because they never lived through it. Hence it is common for a White person, even a liberal, to tell us Black folk to forget the past and move on. Hence it is common for White people, even liberals, to disregard racial experiences that we Black people experience. This "intellectual arrogance" as Andile Zulu puts it, displays the attitude White people, in this country, have toward racism. This attitude was displayed clearly with Gareth Cliff on his podcast when he told ONE South Africa Movement representative, Mudzuli Rakhivane, that her racial experience "is completely anecdotal and unimportant to all of us". Us, presumably being those on the podcast, were the viewers, Rakhivane, Cliff himself, and another special guest, DA leader John Steenhuisen; who you'd think as a leader of one of the biggest political parties in the country would do something did nothing in response.

Yes, with their posters in Phoenix, perhaps the DA is racist. However, I know some White DA representatives in my town, and I know that they are not racists. Some have suffered atrocities that could provide them with every reason to be racist. But they not. They try their best to go

above and beyond for their followers, especially Black folk who live in abject poverty. However, in the grand scheme of things, they just don't understand the Black experience and therefore, can never fully represent us in government.

So as the youth, especially Black youth, who can truly represent us? These are some of the many questions that the youth ask themselves. And truth is, we live in a different world than that lived by our parents. Numerous articles state that the youth do want to make a change but not through traditional measures. Dave Alexander of the John Hopkins University states that the youth would rather sign petitions and be part of demonstrations rather than cast a vote. The reason is the youth has no trust in established institutions.

This indicates that this is not only a local concern. Globally, the youth are distrustful of the established systems. The Mail & Guardian in their Oct 29 – Nov 4 issue highlighted the fact that less than 30% of South African youth trust parliament, local council, or opposition parties. And according to the same article and findings of the New York Times, less than 57% of South African youth are eligible to vote. That is a 16% decline from 2016.

So obviously, there are plenty of reasons for this. Political scientists say that there are three primary reasons why the youth do not vote. The first reason is tied to habit formation. The premise of this reason is that habits are formed if we see someone else (especially someone we look up to or our peers) do what we want to do or intend to do. So, if we pay careful attention to some celebrities and public figures, they are more concerned about their social

media brand than they are about casting a vote. Peers of young 20-year-olds are concerned about securing a pair of Jordan's than they are about making a change about the state of their municipality. Even for someone like me who gets close to tears whenever listening to freedom songs, there is nothing worth noting prompting me to vote. Those I look up to for political advice, this time around they did not cast their vote either. These are people who are very politically mature. I know I am not on their level but I also know I am above average when it comes to political understanding. The fact that they did not vote, when they actually did in 2016, further solidified my habit of not voting come election time.

The second reason political scientists claim to be a reason the youth do not vote is the opportunity costs of voting. In this case, voting took place on a Monday and it was declared a public holiday. Most people were raving about the exploits they will be indulging in that weekend and not fusing about which party to vote for on Monday. Some were organizing gatherings and dichillaz and not worrying about making it on time for voting. Remember, this is the first time, in a very long time that the country returned to level 1 lockdown. A level reminiscent of the old pre-covid days. Therefore, people were looking forward to enjoying some of the freedoms that they had forsaken, involuntarily, due to Covid. The youth, in general, did not have the event of Election Day over-shadow a fun-filled day of festivities with friends at parks or clubs. The opportunity of cost having fun and enjoying some freedoms that were vacated for the longest time was too great to justify standing in a boring tent or hall to cast a vote. This is only one of the many opportunity costs that warrant the youth not to vote.

The last reason they say is alternative participation. This basically suggests that the youth would choose to engage through alternative methods rather than traditional ones. They would rather engage with memes about politics than enter a debate in a council seating. They would rather share celebrity political comments than share their own. The established political institutions have lost trust with the youth of today. In the context of South Africa, corruption robbed the trust of the youth in the ANC. The clear stance to represent White liberals has robbed the trust of the youth in the DA, especially us of colour. The “we will take it and take it now” attitude of the EFF causes a majority of the youth to be very uncomfortable with the EFF. In the political landscape of South Africa, there is simply no party that clearly represents the needs and wants of present-day South Africa. More accurately, the needs and wants of modern-day youth of South Africa.

The reason I did not vote, and probably never will, is basic. I believe economic power leads to change, not political power. Political power to the entrepreneur is the end, not the means. By this I mean, as an entrepreneur, you can dictate the will of politics to your preference. If you have R10m that you want to invest in a town, the politicians of that town will do their best to get your money. Yes, they will want to pocket a million or two, but the fact remains that they will dance to your chord. It is premature thinking of an entrepreneur to understand politics in order to make politics the means and not the end. By this I mean, it is foolish to learn and understand politics in order to establish connections that will give you tenders or similar preferences. This is foolish because what happens if your connection is fired or resigns? The source of your income diminishes too. And understanding the basics of politics, it

is easy to understand how that premature thinking is financial suicide to a true entrepreneur.

I'd believe that like most children from middle-income homes, we got introduced to politics in university. For me, it is here that I began learning the nature of politics. How politics will affect you, no matter how indifferent you are to them. But I was fortunate to have a position as a leader of a student structure in the Economic and Management Science faculty and I experienced student politics first hand. Only because of my grades, I did not become the secretary candidate for the campus SRC. And that was a blessing in disguise that I realized later in life. It is those early experiences that opened my eyes fully to the nature of politics and why Steve Biko preached that a Black man should know his politics.

And so, inasmuch as it is a constitutional right to cast a vote, it is also a constitutional right not to cast the vote. The youth have the right not to participate in the traditional channels when expressing and addressing their political needs. The political climate has changed from the generation of our parents to us. We are no longer under the propaganda of "one man, one vote" that granted our democracy. The youth grew up in the RDP house that was given to our grandparents. The world is concerned with climate change and the equality of people of all people. We are fighting to destroy the traditional use of pronouns not whether I can enter a store based on race. Even though our political landscape still has elements of Black vs White, it has over the years become more than that. Unfortunately, our political leaders fail to see that. And because they fail to see that, they fail to represent us.

And that is why, we the youth, do not vote.

Success: An Elusive Mistress.

Ever wondered what cards the universe has dealt you? Ever wondered what makes you unique and stand out? There are people who seem to be enjoying their lives and living according to the beat of their own heartbeats. What are the cards that the universe has dealt you and why does it feel like the universe never bothered in the first place to give you any?

Lately one has been struggling with the concept of talent. I've been asking myself, what is my talent? If I have any. Naturally, we look at successful people and it seems like they were born to do what they do. Looking at Kylian Mbappé, did he grow up knowing he'll be a soccer star? One who, at the age of 22, has already won the World Cup? Again, looking at Kylian Mbappé, he reminds me of a friend of mine. Ironically, they even kinda lookalike. Like Mbappé, my friend's soccer skills were off the charts. We knew that if we had him on our team, we will win. No question about it. But unlike Mbappé, my friend did not make it as a pro soccer player. Why? Why is it the case? My friend had the talent and the work ethic of Mbappé and yet, he never got recognised by any major soccer club in the country. Thinking about it, it makes me sad.

I once watched a documentary on Cristiano Ronaldo. It was an eye-opener. In the documentary, most of his friends mentioned the fact that when he was young, he sucked at soccer. But his relentless work ethic turned him into one of

the best players in Portugal and later the world. Many soccer experts like to say that Lionel Messi is someone who has a natural talent for soccer and that Cristiano Ronaldo is someone who simply outworked everyone in the room. It can be argued that Lionel Messi's work ethic is impressive hence he is still one of the best soccer players in the modern era. It just seems that these people knew what they wanted to do and succeeded at it.

So, I wonder, before the fame and fortune, did they feel this way? Did they feel like they are drifting into nothing? The classic example I can think of right now is that of the local rapper. Every town has that local rapper. That rapper we all know has been rapping since forever. And yet, this rapper remains local. Yeah sure, there could be many factors that keep the local rapper local. However, these rappers have a dream. They work hard on their dreams. They continue to produce music. And yet, success does not smile on them. Lady Luck isn't charmed by their ways and watches on as their choke to Madam Despair's kiss. Why is this the case?

Jeremy Lynch, a very successful YouTuber, once said that hard work is the sure way to success. He then shared a video explaining the science of consistency. It was an eyeopener too. The video explained how by just showing up and putting in the work, consistently, led to success. Anyone who has worked out will understand this principle. Muscles aren't built in a month or two. They take time. And the trick, to gain those muscles, one has to show up at the gym consistently.

It takes time for anything worthwhile to be built but in the same breath, it takes great effort and a decent amount of work ethic to build it. When I think of this, this idea calms

me down. It reminds me that success does not come overnight. Perhaps the reason my friend did not make it into the big teams was that he was comfortable. In our hometown, he was the best there was. With PlayStation, I was the best there was in my hometown. But the moment I started playing with kids from out of town, I realised that I'm actually an average gamer.

I guess the reason why someone people do not succeed with their talent is that they think their talent is enough. By that I mean, they don't realise that someone mediocre who's putting in consistent work will outperform them. Thinking of the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo who is reported to have been the worst of the bunch. His work ethic, however, ensured that he shined brighter than any other player. This is wonderful. But it leads me back to the original question of this post. Did Cristiano Ronaldo know that he will be a soccer player? Did he have a sense of purpose to be a soccer player?

When we are born into this world, do we know who we will be? Is it some coding in other DNA that will direct our lives? Do criminals know that they will be criminals? Did Nelson Mandela know that he will be the greatest leader our country has ever seen? Dr. Alan Bagg once explained God's will is our will. Meaning, that if our will is to go to hell, God will gladly lead us there. He further explained that at the end of the day, the decisions we make in life are what dictate "God's will" in our lives. Thinking about this, it makes perfect sense. One cannot say they want to lose weight and yet continue to eat junk. One cannot then pray for God to intervene and help to reduce the weight but continue with the bad eating habits. Our will, in this case, is not to lose weight. We might think it is, but the truth –

reflected in our actions – indicates that we actually enjoy the junk food.

Our will might be to succeed but how badly do we want that success? Most of us want to be millionaires. And yet, most of us have sacrificed a third of our lives building someone else's dreams. Unless of course, you have a plan to escape the rat race but speaking of being a millionaire yet slaving for a paycheck is tantamount to the one who wants to lose weight but continues eating junk.

Whatever that defines your success, what are the attributes of those that have attained it say about it? Son once said that he used to spend 4 hours or more juggling the ball with his feet- every day. He said that sometimes he would get so deep into the zone that he would not be able to walk afterward. And interestingly, not from sore feet, but from seeing double. Tupac was known to reprimand producers who didn't take his work seriously. Kobe Bryant would say that he would arrive 2 hours early to practice and leave 2 hours later.

All successful people have left us clues and hints on how they were able to succeed in life. What's most interesting is that at some point in their lives, they simply made a decision. Will Smith once famously said that one should just decide. One should just decide who will they be and how they'll ensure they become that person. And that's it.

This makes me realise that some do not succeed because we have not really made that decision. Thinking of my own life, I have made so many decisions about the fate of my destiny. In Grade 7, I learned that I have ADHD. I'm the type of person that chases "the dopamine." I am the type of

person who if I like something, I want to try it myself. And so, because of this, I have tried a lot in my life. My friends call me the typical Life Orientation teenager. After watching that documentary on Cristiano Ronaldo, I wanted to be a soccer player. Every day, without fail, I'd practice on my own. And indeed, I improved over the years. But my mom quickly killed that dream because she never allowed me to play for the local youth team. I've always loved music and in my first year, I wanted to be a producer. And I went in hard. I created an average of 3 beats a day for a full year. If I remained consistent, I believe I could be very far by now. In 2018, I hated how my body looked and began working out. Again, I went hard. If I remained consistent, I'd be well enough to enter physique competitions. And yet, in all these endeavors, I always stop and seek out the next "high".

Personally, this is what is holding me back from success. My definition of success is very simple: be wealthy. However, I always change paths to those riches. Personally, this is the one aspect of me that I've come to realise that indeed it's holding me back.

After watching Will Smith's "The Best Shape of My Life" on YouTube, I realised that successful people are also humans. It was really interesting and the mind-blowing experience to see Will Smith get mad. He actually got angry on camera and decided to quit filming. Will Smith, the guy who's always smiling on camera in his mini-series revealed another side of him that showed that at the end of the day, he is human. A human who found success.

It is a reassuring show that even though as a human, we have areas of faults and defeats, success is not exclusive.

Success is something that any human can achieve if they put their mind to it. Success is not something one knows one will attain. More accurately, success isn't something that is engrained in our DNA. Success is the accumulation of daily habits. The accumulation of the decisions we make daily. Success is being consistent in our disciplines. Success to lose weight comes from the daily decisions to eat right and work out. Success to be financially free comes from recording one's spending habits and living within one's means. Success is not inscribed in us. Success is the continual improvement of self.

This understanding of success makes sense why someone like Drake remains one of the greatest rappers in the modern era. The difference between Drake and the local rapper is the work ethic and the consistent effort they are willing to put into their craft. One commentator once said this about our local soccer stars. Apparently, one of the local soccer players who is playing abroad got into trouble with the law. The commentator went on to highlight that the player in question is not even in the first division of that country's soccer league and yet he is behaving like he's one of the best. He further added to say that the best like Messi and them work hard to be on top; that they are not content being mediocre. That even when they are faced with troubles, their relentless willingness to work harder than the next man makes the public forget about their troubles. He concluded that the Messis and Ronaldos are so bright that their personal dark clouds aren't big enough to cover their brightness.

Success is one difficult concept to break down. It is difficult because success to some seems to come their way. They seem not to work for it. However, like a good magician,

they hide their research, their failures, and only show us their tricks. I once told my friend that I can't watch motivational videos anymore. Simply because I know that I will succeed. What I want to learn are the strategies. Strategies that enabled Jeff Bezos to make investors comfortable with no profits in the earlier years of Amazon. Strategies that Robert Iger used to extend Disney's market share. The narrative that they just worked hard and found a way for someone like me is no longer enough. What are the strategies that they used that enabled them to outsmart the opponent and enable them to win?

Arnold Schwarzenegger once said that he doesn't feel bad to give his opponents bad advice when it's time to compete. This makes one understand that he understands that his opponents are probably outworking him in the gym but the finer details, the details he has mastered, he will not share with his opponents. This is what enabled him to be the greatest bodybuilder of all time. That's the strategy that he used, and it worked for him. Michael Jordan said that his competitive drive propelled him forward. His strategy was to think of someone defeating him. The notion that someone is potentially better than him is what drove him to be better than everyone. Michael Jordan is another case where we learn that he actually did not like basketball and that his heart was always with baseball. And yet, Michael Jordan remains and will do so for the longest time imaginable remain the greatest basketball player that ever lived.

Michael Jordan once said that all his endorsements came because of his play on the court. This tells us the strategy that Michael Jordan used to attain his success. Greats like Stanley Kubrick follow a similar narrative. Stanley Kubrick lived filmmaking. He was not afraid to experiment. He was

not afraid to try out untested methods of filmmaking. This made Stanley Kubrick, arguably, the greatest filmmaker of all time.

Truth is, the list doesn't end with successful people. But the moment we began learning their strategies, their success become attainable. The magic behind it, the higher-than-life allure of their greatness breaks down to easy-to emulate steps. And therefore, it offers us solace that at the end of the day, these people are human like you and me. The difference is that they decided who they want to be and went for it.

Think about it. The average human spends 8 hours asleep and 2 hours eating and cleaning themselves up. Another 8 hours are dedicated to their work. Therefore, they are left with about 6 hours in a day for themselves. The problem with employment is that it might be 8 hours, but there's a hidden cost of 2-3 hours of you refreshing and recouping from the stress of work. So in essence, the average human has 4-3 hours dedicated to themselves. These hours shrink immensely if you are in a relationship or have children. It is through this mathematical breakdown of our lives we can get a picture of why people remain trapped in despair. They are trapped in the system and success for them will remain an elusive mistress.

My dad likes making the joke that while we watching a soccer game, that player is actually at work. Great soccer players, all they do is play soccer or seek ways to improve their soccer game. It is not a practical joke for Cristiano Ronaldo to remove that Coke bottle during his press conference. That level of competition, the greatest detail to one's nutrition determines who wins the Ballon d'Or. When you watch high-level bodybuilders, they are very

meticulous about their nutrition because, at that level of competition, even the slightest miscalculation in nutrition will determine the shape of their physique. People like Christopher Nolan make great films because they know film and live filmmaking. It is not their side hustle or something they take for granted like most local rappers when they talk about their rap careers. They seem content getting the 3 or 4 groupies after their gig and you hear the Drakes, Black Coffee who say that they travel so much that they do not know what winter is anymore.

Yeah sure, there must be a point where it all stops. There must be a point where one can sit and enjoy the fruits of one's labour. But we will be fools to think we can enjoy those fruits if we do not put the work in first. And most importantly, we take the time to root out the weeds that aim to strangle the seeds of my success. In my case, chasing the dopamine is a major proponent as to why I am not yet where I want to be. And this I realise now after making the most important decision in my life. Quitting my job has freed 8-10 hours of my day to dedicate to the passions of my heart. I understand why most successful people say that for you to succeed, you cannot do it working for someone else. You simply cannot. And it's not because you cannot succeed in general. It's simply because you do not have the time to attain success. Your work takes it all.

Success is a beautiful mistress who's seduced by the brave and bold. The brave and bold become brave and bold because they have scars that have proved their toughness. They have battle wounds that have made them brave and bold. Success is not for the meek and weak. But the beauty of Success, she is willing to dance the night with anyone

willing to take her hand. This is what makes her so beautiful and attainable.

The Coup Clutch Hold.

I have been home for about two weeks. I once watched a YouTuber who had decided to quit his job and work full time on his channel. He said that he thought that by having all this time to himself, he will be free to think more for the channel and explore more of his creativity. Instead, the opposite happened. He felt lost in a sea of responsibility. He felt the pressure to make his channel succeed. After all, this was the only income channel he had.

Within these two weeks, I pretty much felt the same. I came home with the vigor and energy to get my blog going. Felt that nothing could stop me now. I felt ready to pursue what I wanted and give my all to it. But that's not what happened.

The first thing that happened was the readjustment. The readjustment of my parents having to understand that I am not home to be an errand boy. Within those first days back home, my parents were laying it thick on me. Thando do this, Thando do that. And each time I refused. Them being my parents, found this as a sign of disrespect. It is a weird feeling. I am glad though that they now understand that I'm not here to laze around hoping to get another job. But I am sad that I feel like a stray dog in my own home. They acknowledge my existence but do not ask about it. Yes, I caused it. It still feels strange though.

Over some time, the full force of my realities started to kick in. The realization that I have to get an income started kicking in. With entry-level jobs, it's not like there's a

pension payout you receive when you resign. You go as you came. The fact that I'm approaching my thirties and life still feels like it's a hit-and-miss start to kick in. The self-doubt about whether I made the right choice starts to kick. For a moment, I regretted resigning from my work.

But then again, I quickly remembered why I resigned. It was at that point I understood why Tony Robbins and those guys say that when making a life-changing decision, you have to really get a lot of emotion behind it. That slight regret was quickly abolished by the emotions that forced me to resign in the first place. That indeed I knew what the complications and consequences of my actions were. And so, there was no reason for me to feel like I am losing in life when in fact, I am working towards my own freedom.

This state of mind led me to ask myself why? Why would I feel like I made the wrong decision when the truth is that the decision, I made is the most important of my life? Why is it that when facing the pressures of life, I thought of finding a way back into the rooster coup instead of realizing the power of my own wings? The answer came to me in an unassuming manner.

This one morning, my mom's car broke down on her way to work. Now, I did state I do not like to be sent around but in this case, the matter seemed serious. So, I hopped in the car and went to help my mom. Where her car broke down, there had been an accident. A fatal accident involving two trucks, a mini-bus, and an actual bus. It was a tragic accident with the lives of some taken. The accident happened rather close to town. As I was tending to my mom's car, crowds and crowds of people kept flooding downward. These people were going to work. Some saw

the accident and clearly were in trauma and yet still, to work they went.

School children too didn't turn back. They kept on going. Two schoolchildren passed me, and I told them that if I was them, I was going to call my parents and go back home. My mom beside me said that they can't do that and that they must go to school. Then it hit me.

I wouldn't have turned back either! I would have kept on going to school too. There have been so many incidents in my high school years that were similar to that one but to school I went. Because of the programming that occurs in our homes and schools. I could already hear the White teachers who've never been on a public bus or a public taxi making their foolish remarks like "if Chepo could make it to class, why couldn't you?". I could already hear how my mom was going to find a friend close by to help me avoid seeing the tragedy of the accident and help me get to school. It's only when I am older, I realise just how deep the chains of mental slavery have clutched us down.

The ability to rob one of free will is what makes us continue being slaves. A person is a slave to their work if they go to work in order to pay their bills. If they stop working, they'll repossess their car and destroy their credit score; making them financially barren. If someone in a relationship lets one party make all the decisions, that person is a slave to that person. The moment that person wants to regain their will to live and make their own decisions, conflict arises. I stood there seeing mental slavery personified. Large crowds just walking to work. Large crowds just walking to school. There were the few that decided to turn back. A lady in a beautiful BMW

simply turned around and went back. A few other cars did the same. It occurred to me that perhaps these people are those that understand that their lives come first. That in such an event, work and everything else, come second.

It was this event that made me realise why when I got home I found it so hard to breathe. I found it so hard to find reassurance in the decision I've made. Simply because, the mental programming that has occurred nearly over my entire life, is a default setting. When the new system was installed, my body somewhat crashed. My body is not used to this line of thinking and this level of finding freedom in my own decision. Under careful analysis, most of my decisions were made for me. Even those which I'd believe I made myself. Under very careful analysis I realise that the few decisions that I've made for myself have always, without fail, been met with backlash. Because those decisions go against the status quo. They go against what is expected of me. As such, they are refused by the system.

It is quite an eye-opener to see how deep one was enslaved by their own mind. And this was not caused by some evil superpower. It was caused by those we call family and friends. In their pursuit to guide us and protect us, they fail to see that they damage us. I believe that this is why every second young adult is so depressed or facing some serious mental challenge. It is simply because we realise just how much of our lives we live in servitude of others and not of ourselves. And so, the moment we wake up, we realise just how messed up our lives are. Only a few possess the strength to clean up the mess. At this point in life, one understands why people become addicts to drugs, sex, or alcohol. The pain is too much.

I guess it is a reason why some remain in the coup. In the comfort of what has worked over the years. They might see and understand that they are slaves to the system, but at least they get to live comfortably and without mental breakdowns. At least they get to enjoy the few luxuries that the system provides to those who follow it. Like hamsters caught in the spinning wheel, they are happy to run an endless race as long as they are fed their little treat once in a while. As opposed to us who have chosen to break free. We who have chosen to venture into the wildness in order to be free. We who refuse to be a slave to the system but rather to be a player in it. Because we have seen that the ones who sit at the table eat the full meal and not the leftover crumbs they give to the slaves. We want that full meal. But it is not easy to climb up that table. It is not easy to gather the strength to climb that table. We've been eating those crumbs, so where do you expect to find the energy to climb the table?

That energy comes from within. Arnold The Terminator once said that bodybuilding isn't for everyone. He said that few people are willing to cross over that pain of working out. And if they do, that is still not enough to get you into the very best of the best. Think about it. If you have ever been to the gym, most people the moment they reach that pain level, bail. A few will press on and still their bodies would be half okay. That is mind-blowing if you apply that metaphor in other areas of life as well. That being the best of the best, you need to breach through levels that the best already have breached. You have to outwork the hardest worker in the room.

Taking that metaphor to the case in point in this post, by simply breaking free from the system is not good enough.

That's the point where the pain begins. That's the point where the "muscle building" starts. And most people, at this point, is where they turn back. Remember, to be the best of the best, breaking through the pain is still not enough. So even if you break through the pain and continue onward, it still isn't enough. And it is at this point that I believe most people resort to addiction of some kind to deal with the pain because it really isn't easy. It really isn't easy to walk a path absolutely no one that you know has ever walked. You literally building the road that you are walking on.

It is this simple fact that makes it so difficult to act on your own accord. It is this simple fact that makes it so difficult for many to rewire the programming in their minds to find freedom and be who they truly are. I believe that it is because of this that we have so many young adults facing depression, anxiety, and addiction problems. That's what makes being free so difficult to attain.