

THE FEATURE

JULY 2022

MAGAZINE

**HUMAN
TRAFFICKING IN
TODAY'S WORLD.**

**BULLYING THE
DISABLED**
Breaking The bias

**DIGITIZATION
AND EMPLOYEE
WELLNESS**

**BREAKING
DOWN THE
SPINSTER
NARRATIVE**

#Opinion

**FRIENDSHIP WITH
EXPECTATIONS**

**PEARL
MAAKE
KANCUBE**
Breaking barriers



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What a cold July it is, but fret not, we are here to provide good reads and keep you warm with our content. Another exciting month ahead of us with so many developments not only worldwide but in our own country as well. With the easing of the requirement to wear masks, many South Africans have shown relief, whilst many remain cautious. For an introvert like me who shops online even for bread, this news has little impact, but for the businesses and manufacturers of these products, there is indeed a big financial shift coming. It is a sigh of relief that we are slowly returning to 'normalcy' however for employers and employees, the real conversation of reintegrating people back into the office is also going to take shape soon. A lot have come to enjoy the working from home arrangement whilst others are eager to return to the office and take a 'break' from home. I hope whatever the situation is, productivity and employee engagement will take centre stage. I am excited about our July issue as one the key topics we deal with is bullying experienced by people living with disabilities. Our cover girl Pearl chats to us about her work in the media industry as well as what it meant being an older sibling. I related so much to her story as I was one such benefactor of having an older sister step up for me when our parents died before I could finish high school. We also introduce our new food blogger Kgopotso, who's dishes are real hearty meals. I wish you a good one!



Miriam Dube

EDITORS NOTE

ION

How to survive a friendship with expectations



#OPIJ
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Like in any relationship where two or more parties are involved, conflict will always arise. Friendship is also a type of a relationship where conflicts come because of a pile of expectations from the other party. From keeping secrets to asking favours, it can boil down to the other friend not meeting the expectation of the other.

These expectations vary, we sometimes expect our friends to meet specific standards of behavior. We hope they will treat us with respect, help us through thick and thin, lift our spirits when we feel low, thus making it hard for one to always meet these standards of relationship as growing up also comes with its perks. The tricky part about these expectations is that they can make it hard for one to form other friendships outside the current relationship, depending on the level of toxicity that they are being exposed to.

Once a friendship hits rock bottom, it can leave you feeling distressed and lonely. It can leave you with a feeling of grief and not being able to focus on other aspects of your life. Rather than having to deal with the loss of a once valued friendship, a platform called Discover Counselling suggests that friends who are struggling and want to strive for a healthy relationship need to speak to an experienced counsellor to help them with their journey.

The platform also lists friendship problems that are common and can be picked up in any type of a relationship, these includes:

- **Lack of connection**
- **Arguments that are volatile or out of control**
- **Poor communication, leading to misunderstandings and disagreements**
- **Inability to resolve conflicts**
- **Constant tension or living like roommates**
- **Poor boundaries**
- **Lack of empathy and understanding**
- **Financial differences**
- **Responsibilities**

This month, we celebrate International Friendship Day. The day is observed every year by the United Nations on 30th of July. According to the UN, "this day incites people for celebrating friendship regardless of race, colour, or religion. It is believed that friendship is a basic tool to a prosperous and peaceful world. This is also a key source to maintain social harmony and mildness among societies. By developing the trends of friendship among people, societies, and countries we can achieve a better level of stability, solidarity, and peace."

This year the day will be observed under the theme, "Sharing the human spirit through friendship" This theme is said to reveal the one aspect of friendship that by sharing emotions of happiness and serenity you can conquer the hearts of others.

"We understand; relationships are hard. It takes a lot of communication and energy to make relationships work. It also takes a lot of skill to make them work well, and to be able to resolve difficult issues."

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Breaking Barriers **PEARL MAAKE KANCUBE REFLECTS**

Decision making is a critical part of life. The impact of the decisions we make today as young adults become visible with age. As young people, we are interested in enjoying our youth and having the best times of our lives. For Pearl Maake kaNcube, this was not really the case. Her focus was more on being a sister to her siblings. As the first born of four siblings and the first to matriculate in her family, she had to make it a point that she walks so that those coming after her could run. Of the many hats that she wears being a sister is definitely her favorite. “Personally, my favourite hat is being my mother's daughter and an older sister to my siblings. I love breaking barriers for them to see that it's all possible because one of their own is doing it.”

She hails from Meadowlands zone 5 in Soweto, and spent a couple of years in Lesotho, Mafeteng. She also spent most of her life staying with her grandparents, where she learnt family values. “I lived at my grandparents’ house with nothing less than 16 family members at a time. All my mother’s siblings and their children stayed at my grandparent’s family home. I mention this because that's how I learned a sense of family and most importantly a sense of sharing.”

Pearl has many titles under her name. Apart from being a sister, she’s also a mother to two beautiful boys, a philanthropist, a business woman, and a wife to one of South Africa’s most favourite and well respected actor. She has founded Wisdom Entertainment Holdings, which is a record label and later moved on to Wisdom Mobile Marketing Solutions, a company that helps artist with personal brand management.



“Our niche is black legendary personalities. Our services are purely pro bono simply because we want to do away with the stigma that black artist die poor. One of the main reasons black artists die poor can be attributed to poor management or lack thereof. PR services are a must and a lot of people in the creative industry thinks that if you can get a client a radio or newspaper interview you are a PR specialist, which is what kills a lot of these artist’s careers.”

Pearl’s list of achievements is inspiring. Her most recent achievement is graduating with MBA equivalent degree from Stanford University. She is also planning to further her studies to PHD level. Those who know Pearl would attest that she has always been an advocate for education. At a very young age, she made a choice to make education a hobby, rather than looking at it as a requirement. The strategy has been working for her. “If I could go back in time, I would shake my own hand and thank my younger self. I would reaffirm my decision-making abilities and not doubt how I go about the choices I made. There are so many things I have stopped myself from doing in my older age because of the sacrifices I made as a young adult.”

Drawing from her hectic work schedule and the many roles and responsibilities she has on her back; she reckons how being an entrepreneur has affected her family. “...I had to let my children stay with my mom to avoid having childminders raise them. If God trusted her with raising me, I would like to believe she didn’t do so bad... so, I trust her to do the same with my children.”



She says being a woman entrepreneur is not easy but hard work that yields results. She has seen first-hand that with hard work you can achieve even more than you have envisioned. She recalls how she stepped outside her comfort zone when she had to manage a Maskandi artist, who is obviously from a Zulu speaking background. Being a pure speaking Sotho woman and not knowing any of the Nguni languages was a difficulty she had to overcome as her Zulu is nowhere near good. However, her work ethic was too loud and impeccable. Her work is motivated by being a brand manager to one of South Africa's greatest icons and a leader in the entertainment industry. She says it gives her an extra push because "if a person has worked so hard to sustain their career for over 4 decades, what is it that you can bring to their table in a short space of time?"

Pearl's ultimate goal is solidifying the relationships her company have with their clients. Stabilising their position against their counterparts and expanding their footprint to the rest of South Africa and expand to Lesotho and Zambia in the next 5 years. "I have recently ventured into the world of production through the Sello Maake kaNcube Foundation. The immediate and distant future looks promising because we took time to build a solid foundation and now, we are ready to take off."

Pearl's journey just goes to show how far hard work, determination, and planning can take you. Her life is testament that education can really transform lives and proves that the change could only be realised by the person themselves as well as the investment needed to carry out one's dream and purpose. We spoke about the risks she has taken to pave a way for her family. Like many older siblings whether ready or not, they are often faced with circumstances that require them to grow up quicker than everyone else and take the baton.

Sometimes its not because of an absent parent, but because the parent is ill or doesn't make enough to get everyone through the day, so older siblings find themselves needing to step up quicker than expected. It is siblings like Pearl who didn't shy away from that responsibility and could only be described as an unsung hero of this generation.

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PRUDENT

Breaking Down the Spinster Narrative

Growing up, especially living in a two parent home or perceived loving home, most girls start to already dream about their own marriages one day and start building up their own imaginary future homes. This you will see when kids play house where they often emulate their parents on both the good and the bad. Naturally you would think that this is ultimately what most women want for themselves, however over time, time and experience usually shapes the decision of whether or not to get married.

Truth be told, that sometimes it is actually not by choice, but simply because the right person never showed up and before you know it, women have reached some sort of resolution about the way forward. There are many women who have been dreaming about taking the long walk down the aisle since they were little girls.

Yet, there are just as many women who just don't have the desire to get married. The idea of marriage has never appealed to them since they were young enough to know what it meant. They celebrated their friends' nuptials and even played along in the bouquet toss, but at some point they asked themselves is this really what I want for my life.

Many people often say that when the right person comes along, one may re-evaluate their decision and probably change their minds. Not wanting to be married and continuously dating are two different things. Therefore, most women continue to date, have kids, but not necessarily plan to get married. There are many reasons that women don't want to get married and, It isn't as simple as you think.



Women Don't Want the Long-term Commitment

Some women don't want to spend the rest of their lives with a single person and would rather fill their lives with as many people that they want to. Marriage is a big decision for any person to make. According to statistics, the amount of people walking down the aisle has been declining since 2011, in all forms of marriages that South Africa recognizes, and the number of single women is at a pretty 48% of the population. There is a greater number of divorced women than men in South Africa and as such, many women fear that their blissful marriages may end in divorce, this however doesn't stop them from having relationships, they just go into them with the idea that it will never materialize into a marriage.



Women and Their Pocket Book

To the woman striving to keep her own being, the same can be said about their finances. The modern woman wants to be in control of what they spend and how they spend. Finances can make or break a marriage, so women don't want to give themselves that grief. While they do share their finances if they live with a partner, most women would like to keep their financial independence



Old Ideas Versus New

Many women these days think that marriage is an outdated custom, because to them you can show your love for someone even without a ring on either of your fingers. There is a great number of feminists that think that marriage is just another ghost of our patriarchal times and would rather just be happily single, sipping their wine at the end of the night. The idea of being alone doesn't bother them as they prefer to either have a pet or have a long-term live-in partner. In fact, women in stable long-term relationships prefer having a partner that just stays without the formality of joining families.



Strive to Have a Career

Modern women want to be in control of their careers and have the sole decision making capacity to decide how to progress it. Very often when one is in a marriage, some mobility moves must be discussed extensively before a decision is made and often opportunities tend to pass because the 'home' factors outweigh the career ambitions. Not just women, but people have an innate desire to build something with their own hands as this makes them proud and confirms their own ability to be successful without the help or nudge of others. Women in particular have it hard in corporate to earn a seat at the big table and as such, the last thing most want is to feel tied down by domestic relationships.



Modern Women Are Choosing to Have Less Relationship Dynamics

Throughout the world, there has been a change in how women view their relationships with some even choosing to be polyamorous. Polyamory is an ethical form of non-monogamy where all parties are informed. Polyamorous women love the idea of love, but don't want to be restricted to a single person. Instead they choose to have different forms of relationships that feed all of their needs. There are many polyamorous married couples, yet the young female will often be unmarried in her earlier years.



The Relationships They Have Seen Around Them

There are many women who grew up in loving homes that were filled with love and happiness. However, there are just as many that don't have a home with a healthy relationship dynamic. To these women, they don't want to repeat the cycle of their parents, so they opt to have a rather more fulfilling relationship without the wedding band.



The Woman's Relationship with Children

The topic of children is a topic that can make even the strongest relationship falter. There are some women that simply don't want kids because they don't feel the need to have them or don't have the maternal instinct that the world has instilled in them to have. This doesn't mean that they are bad people or less womanly, it just means that marriage and the accompanying children aren't in their life plan. Alternatively, there are some mothers that want to be single mothers. Since in-vitro fertilization, there has been an increase in single women choosing to have children because they've always wanted kids: the idea of having a partner with the kids however never appeals to them.




Age Has a Factor

There have been studies conducted those millennial women, aged in their twenties, no longer feel the need to get married. They no longer believe in the Cinderella wedding with their Prince Charming. This isn't to say that they have become jaded against marriage, they are simply less inclined to get married.



Breaking Down the Spinster Narrative



A person is shown from the back, wearing a dark hoodie. The back of the hoodie features a word cloud of terms related to human trafficking. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern around two central, larger words: 'HUMAN' and 'TRAFFICKING'. The words vary in size and orientation, some appearing vertically and others horizontally. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

CHILDREN RECRUITMENT ISOLATED
SERVITUDE HOSTAGE ILLEGAL CONFINEMENT
VIOLATION POVERTY LABOUR ABUSE PERSUASION RIGHTS
BUSINESS COERCION SEX HUMAN CRIME MANIPULATION
PORNOGRAPHY
SERVITUDE DESPAIR FORCED LAUNDRY
FORCED TRADE TRAFFICKING SLAVE
ADDICTION
EMOTIONAL ABUSE EXPLOITATION
WOMEN VIOLATION SLAVERY AWARENESS ORGANS CONCEPT
PRISON FEAR

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN TODAY'S WORLD.

Research shows there are about 4.62 billion people who are on social media which almost makes up half of the world's population. Social media is a great platform for personal brand growth as well as business growth for which most people use it for. Just judging by the amount of people who have accounts or using social media actively, its impact and reach is evident in our daily lives.

In today's world, when looking for a partner, online dating and meet ups have become a way of life and particularly popular amongst young people. With this said, this method of dating has also presented its own challenges and exacerbated the ones we already had. Some found true happiness and others are merely there for fun and hookups, while others are there with perverted thoughts. These platforms have now become serious hotspots and luring mechanism for the unsuspecting. We have heard of countless people sharing their horror stories on hookups gone wrong, getting scammed, and worse others have gone missing.

One of the worst things that can happen to a person is being kidnapped or held hostage with no idea or hope how to return home, and then sold off or trafficked. In countries where unemployment is at its worst, the level of exploitation that leads to forced labour, threatening working conditions and other forms of exploitations creates an even bigger risk for the communities.

In a 2008 research report, The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that atleast 2.4 million people are trafficked at any point in time in the world. This numbers must by now have grown significantly over the past 14 years. Women, children and men are all victims, but it is the young women and girls that pay a high price of being trafficked for sexual purposes. Human trafficking has impacted the lives of millions of people around the world and has robbed them of their right to freedom amongst other things.

As an organisation advocating for the rights of everyone, we hope that trafficking gets the much needed attention it needs so that it doesn't grow into an even bigger problem than what it is today. Here are some survival tips we have prepared for you.

- Make sure you are aware of your surroundings. If you are driving, focus on the road and look around at stops and robots, especially at night.
- Avoid driving at unfamiliar places at night
- Develop a habit that when you are unreachable, those close to you can quickly make an assessment of the situation.
- Make sure atleast one person knows where you are and what time to expect you back.
- Avoid meet ups at private homes or places for dates . Always tell someone who you are going to meet with.
- Google job interview addresses before you go, especially for companies claiming to be agencies or mass recruitment opportunities
- Trust your instincts, the voice inside you or your gut always warns you when something doesn't seem right



DIGITIZATION AND EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

COVID-19 brought about many challenges that no one was prepared for. It affected economies, industries, livelihoods, and businesses alike. The most challenged being businesses as both the economy and livelihoods depend on them to some extent. But if you think about it, it was not necessarily the business itself that was challenged, but rather, the business mind. Business and industries had to answer the age old 'to sink or to swim' question, where deciding to swim meant navigating new, uncharted waters. Businesses had to ensure that their reputable customer satisfaction stays intact, they had to breakeven when economies were falling apart and still retain jobs.

It seemed that the only way for businesses to stay afloat was to pivot and finally do what has been preached since the advent of the fourth industrial revolution – that is to digitise.

But what is digitization? Is it a stable enough internet connection that enables remote work, or programs that do away with human interaction and manual tasks? Digitization is adopting technologies and online processes that streamline and manage the day to day running of a business. Because of digitization, employees can now pick how and when to function. With all the data and information being converted and made available on digital platforms, employees can easily access and change it from any place.

Innovative advancements and digitization have made it conceivable for us to modify our work timetable to our needs and way of life – striking the seemingly illusive work-life balance.

So, what does this mean for HR or how does HR now need to function as we adopt this new way of working? Now that the country is slowly opening, it doesn't mean people will go to work immediately, therefore keeping teams engaged and enabled at home remains key. Here's seven ways to ensure employee wellness and engagement for remote employees.

1. The People aspect

It is widely known that COVID-19 has come with many adjustments, with managers closing down their offices and subjecting their employees to "Work from Home". While managers re-look at ways of doing things, it is important to always remember the people aspect of it and the measures they need to take as a business to ensure that employees remain present, well, and not forgotten as they are out of sight. Now more than ever, a strong presence demonstrating care in employee wellness is ever so important. Accompanying this, is also managing boundaries. It's easy for employees and managers to fall into the trap of working 12 hours a day, as they are home and has no switch off time. Because they are home, doesn't mean they are ready to receive calls and mails from 6am, and or well after 7pm.

2. Schedule daily catch-ups

Create a sense of normalcy by always scheduling catch-up meetings to check on your employees and their struggles with the tasks ahead of them. Whether it's through video call, a direct phone call or even WhatsApp chat box, scheduling these check-ups is an important way of setting priorities and fostering connections. Prioritizing employees will need to be clear and informing of what is next.

3. Provide your employees with resources

Often pressure comes with lack of resources. Resources such as stationery, laptops and relocatable office furniture to enable workers to have a dedicated working space are essential. This will encourage remote employees to set-up an office like in their communal spaces. This will also lessen the stress and increase productivity and engagement. As part of the incentive, provide a wellness channel for employees to help them deal with work pressure and stress better. This can be in a form of a subsidized wellness programs to encourage employees to get involved in their own personal wellbeing.

4. Pay attention to struggling parents

It may seem minor and it may be easy to say that each employee is responsible to manage his or her time, and family commitments whilst working from home. The disruption in the school schedules has inconvenienced many parents, and particularly those who may have children with special needs or demanding personalities. With the uncertainty of job security, many domestic workers have also lost their jobs and as such, the responsibility falls fully on the parent(s). This can place serious coping hardships on such employees and, organisations should make sure they have support groups in place to support affected employees. This does not imply any kind of special treatment, but acknowledge their circumstances and put measures in place that would create an environment in which they feel supported. Failure to recognise this fact, may start to affect performance, morale, which will eventually be the manager's problem to deal with.

5. Acknowledge employees performance and efforts

Employees put much effort in making sure the company reach its desired goal, they can go as much as putting in extra hours of work. Employee recognition is the acknowledgment of an employee's efforts, hard work and behaviour at the workplace that have contributed to the organization's success and objectives in some way. It is very important for employers to acknowledge and appreciate the efforts being put in the company by recognising and rewarding employees. The adoption of the reward strategy to show gratitude to employees will eliminate the idle mentality of those who doesn't do work. The inability to recognise effort and expect employees to still put twice the effort and avail themselves in the same way will have your employees feeling disengaged, unappreciated and spending much of their time surfing the internet for jobs with your work tools.

6. Be transparent

Confronting frustrations that come with work pressure can help ease work conflicts and increase productivity. Much has been said about how transparency in the workplace can create a collaborative culture with motivated employees. Transparency is the magic ingredient that breaks down information silos, improves team communication, and keeps work visible even when employees are out of site. The communication channels needs to remain open, business updates must be shared regularly and leadership visibility through engagement sessions. That piece of communication is going to be key in order to eliminate any misconceptions about what this pandemic meant for you as a business and what is next. Do not leave staff uncertain enough to mislead themselves. Open and transparent communication on the next steps and direction are very important.

7. Inspire Creativity

Though working from home may be all well and good for some employees, and has saved them a lot of traffic woes and saving on transport money, this could also easily be interpreted as a chance to 'holiday' at home. It also quickly creates room for latency and doing the absolute bare minimum to maximize on leisure time. The removal of travel to work, could easily have given employees back about 3 hours in their day, and removed travel fatigue, which would mean some now have more energy to push themselves even harder and think creatively about their work. It is therefore important to make sure you keep employees motivated and inspired through meaningful work and projects. Use some of the engagement time with them to make an assessment of how you can introduce stretch opportunities and what they think can comprise of such. This will keep them involved and 'busy' enough, not to waste the free time they have but to enhance their work and enrich themselves with new knowledge and personal growth.

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BULLYING THE DISABLED

— *Break the bias!*

For decades, people with disability have been bullied and discriminated as members of society due to their physical challenges and features.

For decades, people with disability have been bullied and discriminated as members of society due to their physical challenges and features. I have been disabled for over 20 years and I have experienced bullying from a very young age. Luckily it was not at the point where I lost confidence or suffered from chronic depression and other mental health conditions. However, it still doesn't make it any better because there's a lot of disabled people in South Africa who end up suffering the effects of bullying even in their childhood and adult life.

Approximately, the national disability prevalence rate is 7,5 in South Africa, with more females being disabled compared to males. Persons with disabilities are also normal people who can do things abled people can do. It is really demeaning for people to put labels on you when you start engaging on things that they think people like me cannot do. A while back, I started engaging in topics such as sexual health and sex life for people living with disability since I am a social media influencer. As a result, I began having an interest in doing pornography, which has been normalized for years.

People started portraying me in a negative light and criticising me. I trended on twitter because a lot of people were surprised to see a disabled person doing pornography, which left me feeling discriminated. People started bullying me when I started creating content that contained nudity. I had no idea why this was the case because people post their naked/half-naked pictures all the time.

There was nothing new or out of the ordinary about what I did, the only 'exception' was my disability. The cyber bullying escalated to a point where I trended in other countries and different social media platforms. All this left me with one question, "are we doing enough in terms of educating people about disability?" It is time people understand that disabled people are also humans, and it doesn't make it okay for me or any other person to remain in their shell because we fear public opinions.

The media and society have proven several times that the lives of disabled people are not valued, and it is evident in the laws and in the media on how disabled people are constantly silenced and oppressed. Bullying is one of the many things disabled persons experiences at the hands of those who are supposed to be protecting us and making us feel inclusive and active members of society.

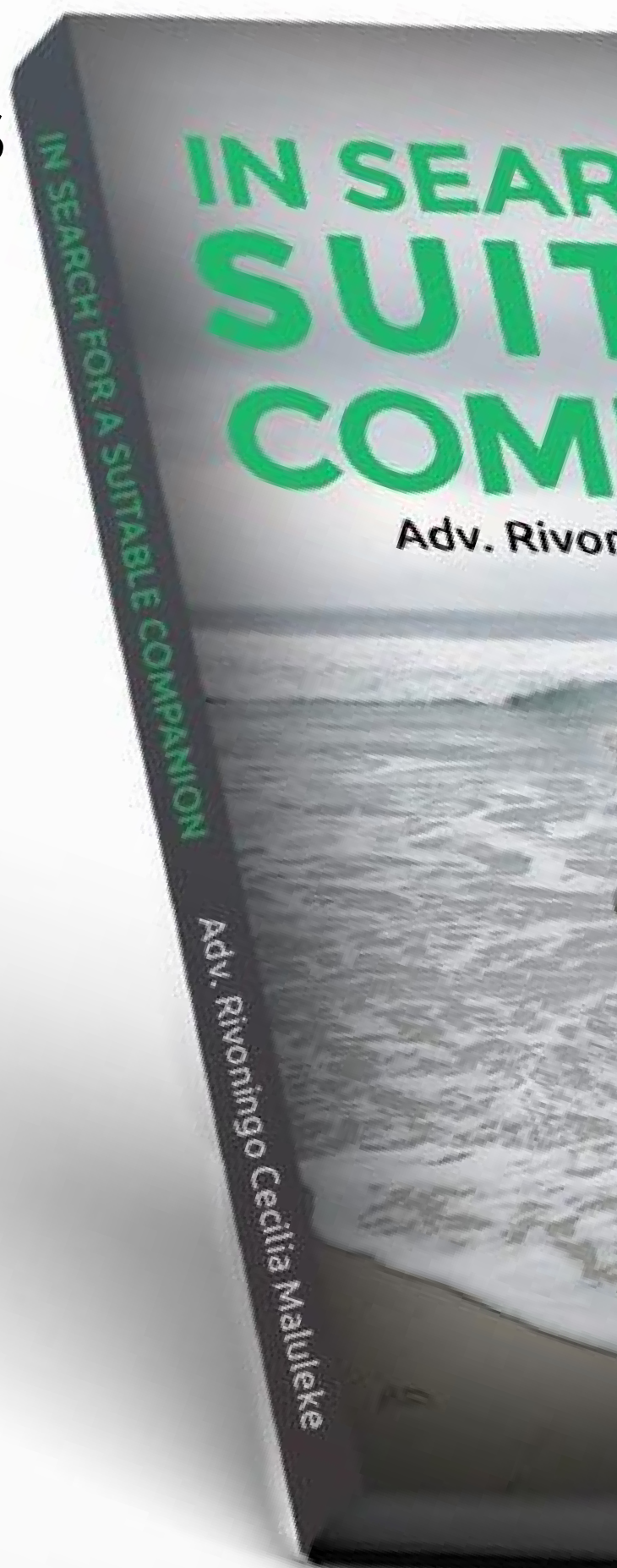
Bullying has no age or gender and most of us have experienced it in our childhood and adulthood. Bullying of any form is not okay and bullies need to be educated because they are causing harm in the lives of many people. Let us not normalize bullying especially towards disabled people because no one can just wake up in the morning and decide to be disabled. Let's break the bias.

BOOK AUTHOR RIVONINGO SPEAKS ON 'SEARCHING FOR A SUITABLE COMPANION' IN LATEST BOOK

Rivoningo's religious and guidebook on dating "Searching for a suitable companion" focuses on people's personalities as an important aspect to finding a perfect companion. The book is written to give some advice to adults who are in need of finding a friend and possibly get married. Everyone needs to have someone to share what life offers them. In the book, Rivoningo suggests that the perfect approach to finding your match is to ask important questions that will perhaps give you a glimpse of a persons' personality on a first date.

Rivoningo – an entrepreneur, woman of God, a mother of two and a professional lawyer– says that having a successful relationship or marriage always boils down to how partners lay the foundation at the beginning of a relationship. "I have noticed that foundation is one common thing that is causing people to struggle in their relationships or marriage. We often overlook people's character or personality at the beginning; however, it is one thing that you are likely to deal with for the longest time in your dating life."

She uses her experience and knowledge of marriage and romantic relationship to uplift both young women and men who are yet to come across the challenges that often comes with marriage and families. She urges young people to not get carried away by the pressure that comes from "Bo-malume" uncles and aunts who keep asking "when you are getting married" at every family gathering. It is very important to try learning a person's behavior before asking for their hand in marriage or accepting a marriage proposal.





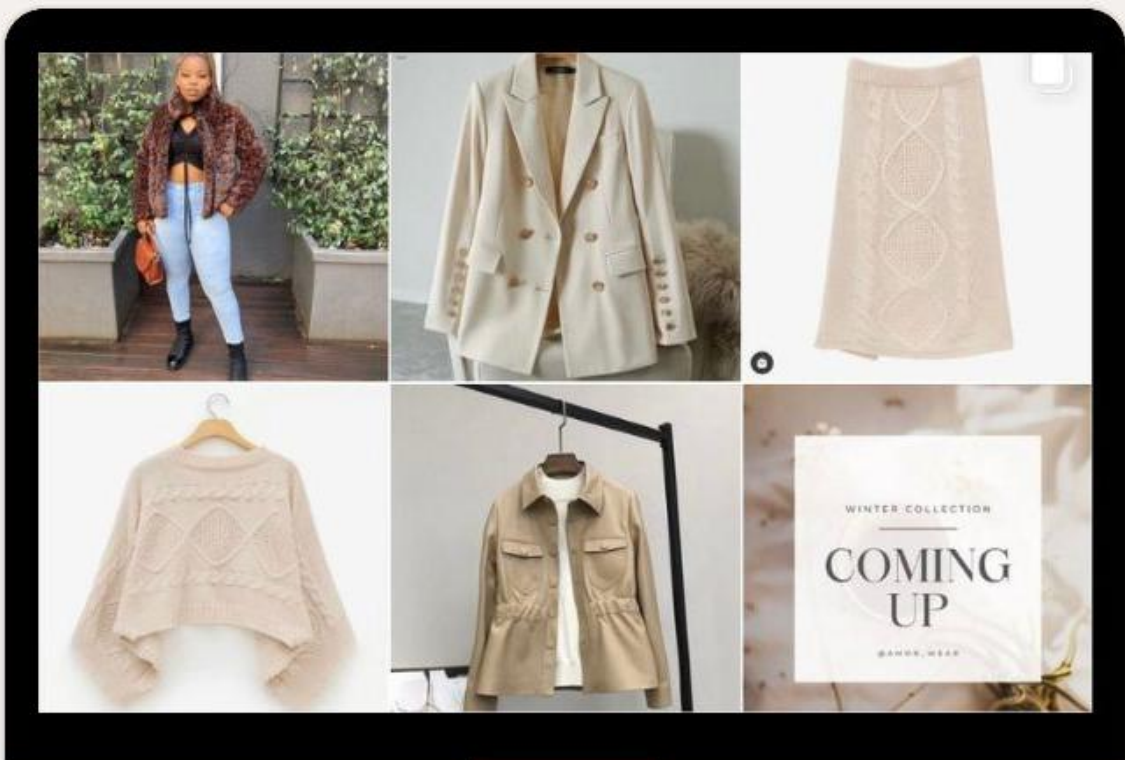
As we know, it is a norm for people to get into relationship for material gains or are motivated by extrinsic motivators in the form of rewards that does not create effects which are long lasting. Stereotypically, it is seen that the state of happiness does not last if it is motivated by tangible gains. This is another aspect that Rivoningo highlights which goes back to the question of personalities and character. Knowing the type of a person you go out with can come with a sense of security and can be rewarding as you get into different stages of the relationship. “Instead of asking about your date’s favorite colour or how much they earn, ask question that which paint a clear picture of who they are,” said Rivoningo.

Another factor in a relationship that causes conflicts and eventually leads to break-up is the income gap between partners. In most cases when a woman is earning more than a man, it is like that there will be problems in their union because it has been normalized in our society that a man must be a provider and a protector. So, how is he going to do that when the wife or girlfriend statuses are intimidating? Always, find out your potential partner’s deal breakers at the beginning of the relationship. Sometimes you will find that there are financial factors that can be a deal breaker for them.

The book also highlights South Africa’s marital laws and further explains the laws in detail to assist in making wise decisions on the type of marriage you want to get into. The book is a good read especially to people still looking to get into marriage. It reflects on her experience as a mom, singer, marriage, relationship counselor and a wife.

Winter Collection

CHECK OUT!



FASHION

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INTRODUCING OUR NEW FOOD BLOGGER

Kgopotso Boshomane

For as long as Kgopotso Boshomane can remember, she has always been surrounded by people who enjoyed their time in the kitchen. "I come from a family of cooks, my brothers and sisters know how to cook. And I hear that my late mother loved cooking with all her heart." Growing up in a traditional African household, cooking is always part of the daily routine.



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KGOPOTSO: YOUR DREAMS ARE NEVER OUT OF REACH

It is also a norm that women, at some point as they grow, need to acquire cooking knowledge and skills to be deemed fit to take care of the household. Although she was never interested in cooking as a child, now as an adult, Kgopotso's love for cooking is sterner than ever. She started watching cooking shows from a passive perspective until she felt in love with the art of culinary. She started with simple meals for her partner, which at the beginning he did not enjoy. Kgopotso had to put more effort in preparing a meal they would both enjoy.

Kgopotso Boshomane, also known by people close to her as Thandi, hails from Polokwane in Limpopo province, and currently resides in Pretoria in Gauteng. She is a professional nurse and a self-taught cook and a baker. Today, over 100 thousand of people from social media are enjoying Kgopotso's food content and even receive guides and tips from interacting with her on Instagram. She says she has built her Instagram following by being consistent and giving her followers what they loved. "For me to get to 100K followers, I had to be consistent and understand the type of content my followers loved. I also share some detailed recipes and reply to my DM's. Sometimes, I would even go live to allow my followers to ask me any questions and every time I reach 10K I would have a giveaway until I reached 30K."

Kgopotso also does catering for events. There is no event that is too small or too big for her. She has spent a lot of years perfecting her craft and her first cooking gig has earned her a great reputation as a connoisseur caterer. She says her first gig gave her the extra confidence she needed as people came to her with compliments that were humbling. "For my first gig, I cooked for 150 people in Johannesburg 7 years ago and everyone enjoyed my food. I remember I even shed a tear when one lady told me how delicious my food is. She was like who cooked this food? And I told her that it is me who cooked, and she was like are you sure, I mean you are so tiny, and I don't imagine you pulling such a delicious meal. She held my hand and said you are good in this and never allow anyone to tell you otherwise." Since then, Kgopotso has never looked back.

One can imagine how it feels like to live your dream and do what you are most passionate about. For Kgopotso, chasing her passion despite her professional nursing job that she's also passionate about has made her life worth living. She advises her younger self to never allow anyone to tell them that their dreams are out of reach. "Your dreams are valid and only you can make them happen. Always allow God to lead you and pray for his guidance".

