

**“With the theme for 2020, Mandela Day – take action, inspire change, and make every day a Mandela Day– is more important than ever before.”**

Hi there, I’m Curwyn Mapaling, a community service clinical psychologist and an executive committee member of the Community and Social Psychology Division of PsySSA. The focus of my PsyCAST today is ... none other than ... Mandela Day.

As I thought about the upcoming Mandela Day this Saturday, the 18<sup>th</sup> of July, I was reminded that his legacy ...and his vision for our country simply cannot be confined to one day, it’s just not possible... even less likely 67 minutes. How then should his legacy be honoured in 2020? ...A year marked by days of isolation and uncertainty brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, ... the ever-present upsurge of gender-based violence ... and where we once again have to remind the world that Black Lives Matter?

And so, I turned to “Nelson Mandela By Himself: The Authorised Book of Quotations” for hope and inspiration. As Mandela himself said:

*My inspiration are men and women who have emerged throughout the globe, and who have chosen the world as the theatre of their operations and who fight socio-economic conditions which do not help towards the advancement of humanity wherever that occurs. Men and women who fight the suppression of the human voice, who fight disease, illiteracy, ignorance, poverty and hunger. Some are known, others are not. Those are the people that have inspired me.*

Are we then able to be the women and men that would have inspired Mandela during this time? Can we spend 67 minutes, or more, fighting the conditions that go against the grain of our humanity?

I would like to specifically draw attention to the second last sentence of that particular quote “some are known, others are not”. This coming Mandela Day is significant for so many reasons, more notably being that the Nelson Mandela Foundation and millions of others will be honouring the late Ambassador Zindzi Mandela, daughter of Nelson and Winnie Mandela. The voices of so many women struggle icons and activists sadly remain lost ...or are often forgotten. Mandela also said, “We can’t forget the people who have actually brought about these changes.” and so we remember Zindzi Mandela, and all the others before her for the change they brought about.

Such a large part of Mandela Day is publicised and for a second I thought to myself, “How and why am I celebrating it?” Altruism shouldn’t be linked to a day or simply “doing it for the gram”. We are seeing more and more that charity is becoming perceived as being less relevant with increasing calls for redistribution of resources, land, and other monetary means.

For the moment I am unable to separate Mandela Day ...and what it means to me ...from the hopelessness and despair, I have no choice but to see it in our current context. As I reflect on what it means to honour his legacy, from my personal as well as my professional identity I find myself asking the question, “What does take action and inspire change mean to me?” as a young Coloured male who identifies as Black, in this time of gender-based violence and Black Lives Matter. For me, it means that I will live everyday with integrity and vow to consistently make a positive difference in the lives of others, utilising my entire personhood for the good of those in the communities I serve.

Prof Stevens and the PsySSA Presidency have alerted us to what the time ahead will require of us. As a ‘new generation’ psychologist practicing in a profession that requires compassion and empathy...compassion and empathy in inequity... compassion and empathy in systemic injustice. There is a divide and there are tensions in what we envision as a country versus what we have available. If we lived and practiced these ideals every day we would be able to combat the inequality collectively. We would exercise our autonomy in service of Ubuntu, and the rights and needs of the collective. The notion of Ubuntu that is embedded in how we relate to each other conflicts with the Westernised idea of care that so many of us have been trained in. This tension is highlighted as the system we find ourselves navigating is riddled with poverty...inequality, gender-based violence... and now the pandemic. There aren’t any parallels between Ubuntu and how we view the concept of care from a Western lens. As a community service psychologist, I would have wanted to serve the community clinics longer but there are restrictions, we need to tick the boxes... and now we need to stay safe too.

I want to end off by asking my peers an altered version of the solution-focused brief therapy intervention, the miracle question. As the next generation of psychologists being shaped and influenced by the current concerns of humanity, how can we not just honour this one day a year ... but...how can we create a future or society that truly embodies what Madiba stood for?

Thank you for listening, I wish you all a meaningful Mandela Day.