

## **Psycast: Heritage Day – It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten**

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Recently I hosted a webinar discussion for our post-graduate students with two esteemed South African scholars as guest speakers on re-imagining inclusive education from an Afrocentric worldview. The purpose of the conversation centred on the need to bring back a relational ethic of ubuntu and care into our schools and classrooms. But the students were more intrigued by the challenge put forward to them by one of the speakers for teachers and education researchers to be creative in resuscitating indigenous knowledge systems - ways of being in the world - in order to foster competencies in learners to address 21<sup>st</sup> century global issues.

The esteemed professor remarked that the value or success of a worldview lies in its ability to be applied to different people, across different periods, times and spaces. A philosophy or way of being must evolve as societies evolve. Why shouldn't we be looking at the concept of African Humanism as we redefine our education system post-covid? What richness lies buried in our old ways of knowing that could ignite the solutions and ideas needed for tackling our current crisis of physical and mental health and guide us towards collective wellbeing?

It made me realise that as we cautiously attempt to move forward as a society in times of unprecedented change and uncertainty, looking back becomes our lifeline for moving forward. There is an African proverb that says: *"It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten."* As we step out of our 180 days in lockdown and see the resulting devastation to our communities, our education system, and our economy, it is abundantly clear that even before this pandemic hit there is a lot that we as a society had forgotten. Perhaps, as the proverb states, it is time to go back to retrieve what we have forgotten? Unfortunately, for many South Africans remembering is a journey blemished with misrepresentations, distortions, and deeply rooted pain that are yet to be fully acknowledged and healed.

But our heritage is also one of national consciousness: a collective celebration of life, community, diversity, and resilience. South Africans are known around the world for their warm and caring nature, their kindness, adaptability and sense of humour. Being Proudly South African is not just a hashtag, and when difficult times hit we always find ways to band together, willing to reach out to others and mete out our compassion and opinions in equal measure. So let's not forget these qualities and virtues as we excavate our heritage.

But back to our webinar discussion on revisiting Afrocentric philosophy in education, the invited guests wrapped up the session by reminding the students that *"we must not be ashamed of going back. To be good teachers and to learn good practices we must remind ourselves what it truly means to be human"* .. to be humane. I have found that this year of upheaval, anxiety and national grief has made me take a step back – both personally and professionally – to re-evaluate what is truly important in my life. What stories, memories, and hopes of this year will I create and choose to take forward with

me? What changes in myself, in my teaching, in my relationships, in my country do I want to actively pursue? As Kierkegaard noted: Hope is passion for what is possible.

So I dedicate this Heritage Podcast to you – my friends, colleagues, students and fellow South Africans – what if this Heritage Day we choose to look back, to remember the values of our humanness that can drive our passion for what is possible?

Whether you choose to partake in community festivities now that we are finally on level 1, to break out your Jerusalema dance moves in public, or opt for a virtual tour in support of some of the country's fantastic museums, galleries or archive collections from the comfort of your home. Whether for you Heritage Day is about 'Braai Day', or a chance to zoom with family members around the country, or even if it's simply a much deserved rest day from work ... Let's all come together to celebrate who we are, what we are grateful for, and to unite in our commitment to co-create a post-covid heritage for our country's future that will be worth remembering for generations to come.

Thank you.