

Learner for life

By Nnini Mabuse

My name is Nnini Lebohang Mabuse, was born and raised in Gauteng. How would I describe my life's journey would be hmmm...? I really don't know I cannot put it to words, how ironic huh.

I studied, Multi-disciplinary drawing office practice at African academy, somatology at Face to face beauty and make up school, project management at Damelin.

It all started when I had completed my education and thought I was ready for the workplace, but the work place was not ready for me, I thought to myself because I have a scarce qualification especially for a black female, I am guaranteed a job, but life was the total opposite. I kept asking myself what is wrong with me, did I choose the right course? Family members would always try to encourage me, and say it will be ok just pray, were they saying that to encourage me or they felt pity for me? I know they meant well, but that was the last thing I wanted to hear because I was hearing that for most of my life. I was in a rut in a black whole, I didn't know where up, down or left or right is, but one thing is for sure I knew where centre was and that was my faith, but for some reason I was distracted, because I had arrogance that made me believe in a façade that I would be able to get myself my dream job, house, car etc..., in record time but boy did I get a rude awakening.

Like my many attempts at odd jobs, just to be "independent" like many of our youth today, I lived a life that I could not afford, a life that blinded me, convinced me that I was invincible but I had not even reach half way to my destination.

One disappointment after another I was at my lowest, secretly envying my friends and others for their lives, asking myself, questioning God telling him what is wrong with me, crying almost every day, asking myself did I make right or wrong decisions, did I waste my talents on something I was not meant to do? was my path already planned for me and if so did I miss it. I was scared of the unknown no actually petrified, I kept asking God to give me a sign, anything just to let me know that the path I was in was the right one. I was desperate.

One day I was with talking to my cousin, she would mention SAGDA an organisation that helps graduates enter the work place by means of an internship programme, but I was in an internship programme before and I was reluctant to apply based on my horrible experience, I said to her I would apply, but I didn't at the time I said to myself I will try again by myself to get a job but like the many unsuccessful applications once more I was discouraged I felt like giving up.

I then remembered my cousin I called her and she gave their contact details, I researched online about the organisation and it seemed legit, one can never be certain these days about bogus recruitment agencies who prey on desperate graduates seeking work, who then exploit them asking for certain fees for "placement" or "training". After my research I

decided to do it, I literally had nothing to lose. I emailed my cv and said a prayer before sending it then with a click it was gone.

They had informed me that there would be an induction training before going off to the job that they would place me in, the purpose of this would be to prepare me for my possible employment. When I attended the session I had no idea what would happen, but I had faith, I believed that this was the right direction to something better.

The session helped me, in giving me confidence, to see a small gap and me an opportunity that would benefit me, it gave me the tools I needed to enter the workplace with a clear focus and understanding that even though it is an internship, it is up to me to make it a permanent position, the choices I make from now on will determine who I want to be.

After months of agonising patience, I received a phone call from a lady by the name of Zaziwe and she informed me that there will be interviews for position at a well-known company, a company that fits perfectly with my qualification as a draughtswoman. I was elated.

On the day of the interview I was confident, excited, nervous and scared but I had faith. As I made my way to the interview at the premises of the company, I received a phone call, it was Zaziwe she informed me that the interview was cancelled, it turned out that the company had already hired someone else, and I was 10 minutes away. I went numb, I could not understand what was going on, I did not accept it, as I went back home I thought to myself I should have carried on and kicked open the door and demanded for a chance at the interview, I held back my tears until I got home, I need someone to give me a chance, my mother said the job was not meant for me but for someone else, it was their path to take and not mine, but I could not understand, I kept asking myself why would life be so cruel as to give someone a taste of hope only to be disappointed at the starting line. I was depressed the hope I had almost withered away.

A month went by and I received a call from SAGDA saying there is a job interview, once more I had hope, but I was cautious They had told me of the company called Colourtech Holdings, so I researched and found out that it is a printing company, which did not coincide with my qualification, but I said to myself I have gone this far, I have been through a lot to turn this opportunity down, so I had my faith and decided to go for the interview. The day of the interview was held at the premises of the company, the drive was long, when we finally got there it was nothing like we expected, it was at the outskirts of town at a place called Bapsfontein, as we were shown around the company and said to myself how will I fit in, I then said to myself oh well I guess I must start from somewhere right? We then met the CEO Mrs Sonja Groenewald who welcomed us with open arms, she didn't seem to mind that my qualification doesn't match with her company then she said something that gave me hope, she said she will teach me what they do, this was an indication that she would hire me, I was gobsmacked this was a challenge and a challenge I was willing to accept, it was totally out of my comfort zone but I had to try and see where it takes me.

The interview was on a Friday we started work on Monday, I could not believe what was happening, this was not real I thought to myself. As I started work the CEO said she would

first place me to work at the production floor where the heart of the company is, she wanted to see how I would adapt to the to the work, to understand how this well-oiled machine operates, she wanted me to dissect it analyse it and put in back together. I first started at quality control, were I was responsible to check the quality of any products that come out of production like textbooks, flyers, business cards etc anything that was printed then after a month at QC I was taken to the logistics department, there I was responsible for receiving books to be dispatched I learned so much, I used computer software's I heard of but I was a baby learning how to sit up on my own first before I could crawl. After 2 months working in dispatch I then moved back to QC. Then after a month at working at quality control, I was then moved to Seyfferdt publishers a company under the Colourtech group, I was appointed as a publishing apprentice where I would assist in the layout and final creation of the various text books that they produce once again I was faced with a new challenge in learning other computer software's , one of my key responsibilities would be to create a textbook from scratch, this job was challenging as I had an engineering design background , it wasn't easy and yet I had to prove to myself every day that this will not defeat me. I put my pride aside and worked like it was my last day at work. I thought to myself I wold be a learner for life everyday was a lesson to be learned. I learned to enjoy the work I was assigned to do, never did I think that my love for reading would get me a job, in creating a book, was this the path I had to go through, I wasn't sure but I had to take a chance and throw caution out of the window.

In this position I gain experience, I made mistakes but I learned from them, I am still learning to this day.

After working in this position for 8 months, I was appointed the office manager for Seyfferdt Publishers, a position that I was scared of but, a position I had to embrace, I was thrown in the deep end of a huge dam and I had to learn how to swim, I am still paddling not yet swimming but with every stroke I am becoming stronger. Every day is a lesson only I can determine what type of learner I would be.

Conclusion

A learner for life, my purpose has not yet been determined but my journey to my purpose has been a unique one and I cannot wait for the next chapter of my life, I am ready for more.

“What you feed your mind determines your appetite”

Tom Ziglar

“Never be afraid of the unknown”