



RAYMOND ACKERMAN
ACADEMY OF ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

Bheki Nkosi

CLASS OF JANUARY 2013

Story told by
Bheki Nkosi
& Carol Williams



Living Large and Pursuing Dreams

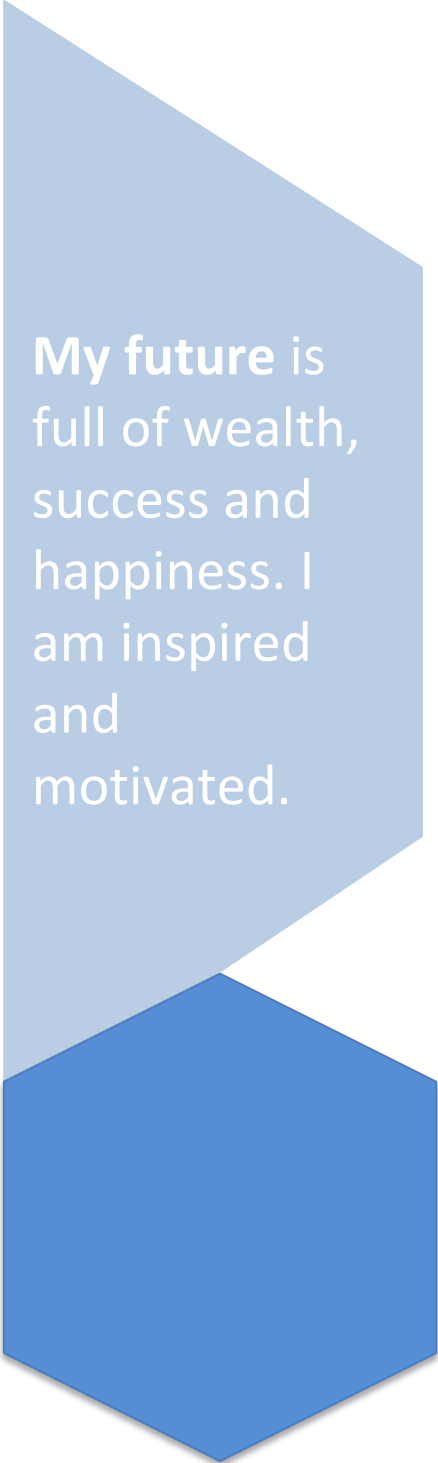
Bheki is an incredibly engaging and talented young man, who runs an exciting start-up business called 'Eventful Ceremonies' in Pretoria, Gauteng. Bheki attended the Raymond Ackerman Academy from January to June 2013. He is one of the nicest and most genuine guys you'll ever meet. He is not afraid of hard work and is determined to make a success of his business and life in general.

Bheki was born in Soshanguve, a township situated about 25kms outside of Pretoria. He spent most of his early years with his grandmother in Mpumalanga and returned to Soshanguve to start school. His dad was a serial entrepreneur who did everything from selling oranges to driving taxis to owning a petrol station.

Even though Bheki dreamed of becoming a businessman he ended up choosing all the science subjects when it came to making subject choices in high school. He says that it was because all the cool kids were doing science and so choosing the business subjects (in which he had more interest) didn't seem like a good option. "I decided to do science as that's what being clever looked like", says Bheki with a laugh.

In matric he decided that he wanted to start working so that he could earn some pocket money. He started working at his dad's petrol station and had the opportunity to learn many things about running a business. He was a petrol attendant, ordered stock and got a handle on how the finances of the business worked. He also started a number of businesses with a friend of his, many of these failed. Their plan was to make money quickly, this is never a good motivation, says Bheki. After a few disappointments with studies being stopped due to financial constraints, he thought that things would never look up. This was when he found out about the RAA and his journey here began.

SOME OF THE CHALLENGES I FACED GROWING UP were financial. It took some time for my dad's businesses to take off and during this time I had to go and live with my granny and then with my aunt. This was tough but eventually my dad's businesses took off and I was able to move back and live with my parents. Another challenge I faced was having to abandon my studies twice due to financial constraints. I began to wonder if I would ever finish anything, but this all changed when I came to RAA.



My future is full of wealth, success and happiness. I am inspired and motivated.

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER I DREAMED OF BEING a businessman. My dad was an entrepreneur and I wanted to be just like him. He inspired me to pursue what I am today.

MY ROLE MODEL GROWING UP WAS my father. He was the person who made me want to live this dream of being an entrepreneur. My mother and older sister are my role models because they have sacrificed so much for me and for my family. My pastor is my mentor and role model and I really look up to him. Mr. Raymond Ackerman is my role model because of all that he has achieved in his life.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE OF BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR was in high school when I started selling sweets at school because I wanted an extra income. I also used to borrow my cousin's TV games and charge the neighbourhood kids to play. I had an awesome tazo collection and sold these to the other children at my school. Tazos were like gold those days.

MY EXPERIENCE AT RAA opened my eyes, changed my way of thinking, my behaviour and how I carry myself. My business is standing today because of this. I wouldn't know about marketing, HR, accounting, communication and business numeracy if it were not for this course. It gave me everything I needed in a short amount of time. Everything I learned was helpful and the way that things were taught made me realise what I need to do and how to do it.

THE BUSINESS IDEA I CAME UP WITH during my time at RAA was selling branded t-shirts at charity events. I ended up helping one of my classmates with her idea during final presentations. We presented 'Graduation Hats' as our idea. The idea was selling graduation hats to high school learners for their valedictory services. After leaving RAA I started developing this idea and this is how my current company, 'Eventful Ceremonies' was born.

Bheki is also part of the Graduate Entrepreneur Support Service (GESS) programme. His business has grown significantly over the last year or so and he now employs 6 other people.

BEING PART OF THE GESS PROGRAMME is awesome! I receive business and personal support. It helps me in the running of my business and it keeps me accountable. It helps me to stay focused and disciplined. The GESS team is behind me and they back me in what I'm doing.

EVENTFUL CEREMONIES is in the business of creating memories and educational fun. Our services include organizing school outings, coordinating graduation ceremonies as well as going around to schools offering creative, fun and interactive workshops and activities for young children to engage practically with the curriculum.

MY MESSAGE TO THE CURRENT RAA CLASS would be to take this seriously. This is an opportunity that you have and someone else doesn't. Make it count!

MY PHILOSOPHY IN LIFE IS to do good things and good things will happen. I try to be good to people and to do the best that I can with what I have.

MY MESSAGE TO YOUNG, ASPIRING ENTREPRENEUR WOULD BE to not let your dreams die...that nearly happened to me. I nearly became a metro cop. That would have been easier as I would have earned more money. Instead I have decided to put my focus and energy into the things that I want and to see what comes from that.