

SPG: shifting mindsets, breaking barriers

When Mpumi Nobiva started SPG for Millennial, she wanted to create a forum to nurture youth talent and leadership by bringing likeminded people around the table to discuss and find lasting solutions to contemporary challenges.

SPG brings together people who are accomplished in their respective fields to tell their stories, particularly how they picked themselves up during dark moments and when they faced failure.

In an interview with Transform SA, Mpumi Nobiva the founder of SPG explained how she grew up under the tutelage of her grandmother who taught her to strive at all times to excel in what she does and to hold herself accountable.

"I am a person who tries my best to inspire courage in each moment, I don't wait for anyone else to do what I believe I can do for myself. When it comes to inspiring others, especially the vulnerable, I try to do my best," she said.

Nobiva said she was inspired to start her own movement when she was asked to share her life story at the Oprah Winfrey Academy. Thereafter she was invited to do the same at the Grahamstown Arts Festival. She was asked to give insights on how to tackle various issues facing society today ranging from climate change, HIV and AIDS to poverty and leadership. Nobiva became the most sought after motivational speaker around the country and eventually was invited to the United States of America.

She was also appointed AIDS Ambassador Internationally for Relate Bracelets. This led her to create a bracelet that was under 'Share your Story' which was positioned to spark a wave and a new force to bring her discussions to a higher level, especially within the media in South Africa

"I am happiest when I connect with the world and share in a meaningful way my thoughts and experiences to the people who are listening to my talks," she said.

Nobiva lists difficulties in securing funding to pursue her work among the challenges she faced.

"I was an international student in the United States. I had five interns who were also students and I didn't have the capacity to pay them. I had to find a way to create a value proposition to say – if you intern to this there is value in return. I can promote you. I can encourage you. I can invite you to my platforms. I had to negotiate the value for other people to see what I wanted to see for myself," she said.

Nobiva also adds the challenge of securing appointments and interviews with people who are at the standard and the level that the organisation works with as being an uphill task.

"These are very busy prominent leaders and business leaders who have very tight and moving schedules that can change in an instant. So it is very difficult to get confirmation and make sure that production is aligned with those dates. We launch videos every month and our first video was on Dr Robert J Brown who is the CEO and founder of B&C Associates which is the oldest owned African-American public relations firm in the United States. So just bringing those kind of people to the platform is a great thing, but a lot of logistics and admin goes behind putting that sort of platform together," she said.

Nobiva explained that empowerment, to her, meant taking it one step beyond the inspiration.

"So instead of just inspiring people and saying





“When it comes to inspiring others, especially the vulnerable, I try to do my best. The important thing is not to seek validation from others about what you can be.”

you can make it happen, empowerment is saying this is how you do it. That is empowerment. Empowerment is saying; ‘I talk the talk but I also walk the walk,’” she said.

Nobiva has valuable advice for someone who wants to follow in her footsteps and the starting point is that they should not seek validation from anyone but oneself.

“Align yourself with mentors, with friends, relationships that build you so that you can always be full in your awareness of yourself and what you can do. Even then have a closer relationship with yourself to not rely on that circle for your creativity and for the permission you give yourself in terms of expressing who you are and what your purpose is,” she said.

Nobiva said she was optimistic about strides taken regarding women empowerment in South Africa, but added that there always was room for improvement.

“South Africa has a lot of prominent business women like Khanyi Dlomo who are doing great. She is the epitome of what business leadership for women should look like. I really think that the conversation about women empowerment is moving in the right direction and I think women in South Africa are finding more and more of their voice and giving themselves more and more permission to own who they are without necessarily feeling confined to principles that held many of our parents back,” she said. **TSA**