

SUCCESS IS POSSIBLE FOR ALL WHO DESIRE IT AND WORK FOR IT

An address by Kaizer M. Nyatumba at the Kingdom Business Network's Business Networking Evening in Sandton, Johannesburg

Date: Thursday, 1 October 2015

Programme Director, fellow guests or speakers, ladies and gentlemen, good evening. I look forward to the engagement with you over the next few minutes.

The task assigned to me this evening is one that is fairly easy, but with which I am generally very uncomfortable. I have been asked to talk about myself as a person and as a professional, with that request premised on the belief that one can be counted among those compatriots who have made some strides in life despite various handicaps and challenges, among them our ugly past as a people. While I am grateful for the invitation and appreciate the fact that your organisation has deemed me worthy of it, I will not express a view on the belief on which it is premised.

Regrettably, ladies and gentlemen, I have no choice but to disappoint you this evening. Not only am I uncomfortable to talk about myself, but I also find it to be something that is generally impolite and unadvisable. Therefore, with your indulgence, I have elected to reflect broadly on factors, ingredients or attitudes that I believe to be vital or, indeed, indispensable for success in any venture that one may undertake.

Firstly, it is imperative that we all accept that our circumstances at birth or our backgrounds do not dictate our future. There are far too many men and women in different parts of the world who have demonstrated again and again that unattractive or adverse backgrounds are not a barrier to success. There are many men and women who, born in abject poverty, with some perhaps having grown up without parents or in orphanages, have gone on to triumph despite the odds and to be examples worthy of emulation by all desirous of success.

They have done this, ladies and gentlemen, by focusing not on their circumstances at the time of their birth or at that moment in life when they had to retire to bed on an empty stomach, but by remaining positive, by believing in themselves and keeping an eye on a possible brighter future. Indeed, they have done more than just envisage such a future and hope to will into existence. Instead, they have worked hard to make it a reality.

They have toiled hard to bring it closer each passing day. When their peers went out to play and to court popularity, those who have gone on to succeed have locked themselves behind closed doors to read or study. When their peers retired to bed at 9pm or 10pm, the men and women with a burning dream have stayed up to plan for the future, to read or work.

Consciously, these men and women have made positive choices and stuck to them. They have had a strong and unshakeable sense of identity and self worth, and have

not assumed different identities to win favour or popularity among those whose company they have kept at different stages in the journey of their lives. The inalienable truth, ladies and gentlemen, is that it is those who understand and appreciate the power within themselves as individuals who succeed, those who know that they are not prisoners of whatever circumstances at a given time.

This is not to deny the obvious fact that a poor background does have an effect on a person. Instead, my intention is to stress the objective, self-evident truth that while one's circumstances do have an impact or bearing on one's life at a given moment, nevertheless those circumstances do not determine or automatically predispose those who find themselves mired in them to failure.

We all make of ourselves what we will, regardless of our circumstances at a given stage or our backgrounds.

Secondly, as one works hard with unswerving determination, there are bound to be men and women of goodwill who will notice such effort and lend a hand to help. That help may come in various forms:

- it may be financial;
- it may take the form of somebody drawing your attention to some opportunity that will propel you forward in your journey;
- or somebody may open a door or two for you.

Inevitably, there is always bound to be a kind-hearted person who may be involved in the same pursuit as you are or may have done so in the past and admires either your determination or the little success that you are attaining along the way. Such a person may at some stage be moved by your strides and be an instrument in God's hands to help you along your journey.

I was also fortunate, during my school days, to have had such an angel in the form of my former school principal in Mpumalanga, Mr Elmon G Shabangu. Not only did he pile me with considerably more additional work than the other learners, but he also made it possible for me to end up at a very good and reputable high school then in KwaZulu-Natal.

While such help is important, it is merely a prodding in a direction in which one was always travelling. However much help may be offered to anybody, it is absolutely useless if that person is indolent and does not have a single-minded determination to make something of him-/herself. However generous it may be, help offered to a slothful person can never transform that person into an industrious achiever. Instead, there is a real danger that it can only engender in such a person a culture of dependence.

Ladies and gentlemen, I do not believe that lasting success in any pursuit or endeavour is possible if one is not disciplined and honest as an individual. In my humble opinion, integrity is absolutely paramount for any lasting success, as opposed to success that is ephemeral in nature.

I do not believe in cutting corners. Instead, I believe in working the hardest and leading by example. I believe in steadfastness and consistency in terms of the values that I cherish and live by. For me, integrity is my currency.

As I conclude, I would like to say how sad it is that the number of compatriots who are too eager to cut corners and sell their souls appears to be growing in our beautiful country as our democracy matures. I find it utterly despicable that corruption appears to be so deeply rooted in certain quarters in our country, with many people rushing to make a quick buck in the easiest way possible. Needless to say, that has the effect of turning the beautiful dream of our founding father, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, into yet another African nightmare.

I would like to appeal passionately to each one of you present here this evening never to make common cause with those who defile Madiba's legacy and our beautiful country's image abroad. I would like to suggest that you each commit to work hard for your success so that we may justly celebrate it and rejoice with you when you attain it and retain it throughout your life. I ask that you look upon yourselves as brands whose reputations are worth protecting to the death. If you do that, then your success will endure and will be truly worth celebrating.

For those of you in leadership positions wherever you find yourselves, I invite you to shine brightly in your respective corners, always mindful of the fact that leadership demands tough, ethical decisions of us and is never a popularity contest. I ask that you ensure that when that day comes when you will take your last breath, those who will deliver eulogies at your wake or funeral will be able to say, with all honesty: here lies a man or woman of unquestionable integrity, whose enviable success was truly the outcome of his/her honest work.

Ends

nnn