

21 October 2017

[Greetings, and] Honourable Guests

We get up in the morning mostly with a view to continue doing what we started yesterday. Continuing a journey of moulding and being moulded into patterns of cultural acceptance. As the Jazz musician, Gregory Porter put it: *“We are like children. We’re painted on canvases, picking up shades as we go.”*

If we have the energy and a questing mind set, we may even find something new to do. We may decide to take a detour and not go to the office, but visit the movie house, or take time to watch the once free roaming animals at the local Zoo, or go to the library to read, or listen to the other voices out there and try to understand how things may work better.

But for most of us this detour is only a pipe dream; it is a privilege that can only be enjoyed by a few. Not in the way I believe you are thinking right now, meaning the rich and the powerful, the decision maker, the boss, the principal.

No, I am referring to those amongst us who have the courage to take the lead, who show up with confidence, who trust themselves, who love life, who have taken control of their destiny; the wild ones, the brave, the outliers, the game changers, the creative artist, the reflective thinker.

In a similar vein, George Bernard Shaw stated that the reasonable man adapts himself to the world whilst the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself and therefore, he claims all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

I wonder who you are in this scenario. The reasonable or the unreasonable?

Ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered here today to celebrate the achievement of a people, as represented by Dr Tirhani Mabunda. A person who, in many ways, has now become part of a growing number of individuals all over the world who are re-connected to their inner self, and in doing so, came to appreciate the inter relationship between community and self.

A person who is free to express his view, to challenge the status quo, to reach out to the unknown and the complex and if needed, the chaotic. A man who learned how to balance the ordered and unordered energies of this world in an attempt to mitigate disorder and disaster. ***An unreasonable man.***

In many respects, such development resonates excellent with what we, at The Da Vinci Institute, define as an alternative way of showing up in life; what we refer to as a **Mode 2** way of looking at reality. **Mode 2** is a reality in which the assumption is made that all of us are accountable to make a unique contribution to life. In a **Mode 2** way of thinking, there are five constructs that are central to co-creating new understandings of the world we live in.

1. The first construct talks to **social accountability** – the intent and desire to continuously keep **the other** in mind. To design and develop what people **need**, by working in close proximity with all relevant stakeholders across all sectors of society and to take **pleasure in closing the gaps** that may exist.

2. The second talks to **diversity** – not the kind that South Africans have created, by looking at the other as representing a similar or different colour grouping of people as defined by a regulatory framework. No, one in which we embrace, amongst others, the **difference of mind, movement, orientation and belief**. A context within which we invite each other to what is special and sacred, a context within which **respect is paramount and difference is honoured**.
3. The third involves the importance of **heterogeneity** – where the norm is to appreciate **otherness** and to weave aspects of other into one's own tapestry of thought and being. A world where no absolute truths exist or are yearned for, but where everyone challenges the other to delve deeper into our inner selves, to reflect and to open up to **alternative understandings and possibilities**.
4. The fourth relates to **transdisciplinary engagements** on matters of interest to one self and the world at large. Not to get trapped in the often one-dimensional frames as prescribed by a single discipline specialist or guru, but to borrow as much as possible from as many disciplines as possible, when developing an argument or position on a matter of interest.

5. The fifth construct focusses on the **professional application** of what has been formalised through learning and to appreciate the role that everyone should play in developmental matters.

In contrast with the above, the existing mode of learning **tends to promote single truths, in-depth subject matter expertise, one dimensional homogeneous perspectives, and limited interest in either the socio-economic context or the need to be relevant to the surrounding world.**

It is against this background that one needs to ask what is the relevance of a Mode 2 learning methodology for school education and in particular the Nyukani Education Centre. If the Nyukani is interested in changing society and freeing peoples' minds from pre-conceptions related to either success or non-success then a Mode 2 engagement could serve as a suitable framework. Mode 2 can facilitate the development of the Nyukanites to enter a world of **experiential learning**, where people learn to appreciate the importance of understanding and defining **their own reality** as opposed to accepting the current reality or the realities presented to them by other people.

In this regard I remind myself of a comment made by Steve Biko in 1968, when he said: How long are we going to allow other people to tell us who we are?

Once one experiences the magic of formalising one's own reality in one's own words, the next step will be to make a **reflective observation** of one's perceived reality by allowing the mind to consider **as many other perspectives** as possible. Thus, in an attempt **to formalise one's own understanding** in one's own words, one gets to **actively experiment** with those newly defined concepts in practical ways within our communities. And in so doing, change society.

Will this potentially disrupt Nyukani? Yes it will.

The reason being that in such a framework, **coordination and subordination of people by people** do not have a place, because people will have become more **collaborative**. They will start to formalise small communities of practice, and start working more **cooperatively**. In this context, nobody needs to become the sheer leader, or the anchor, or the spokesperson, or the representative, for nobody.

In this context, learners, teachers, fathers, mothers, priests, politicians, bankers, shopkeepers, farmers, house wives, doctors, to mention but a few, will **respect the voices of the other**. In this context, people would **challenge each other and have robust engagements**, and in so doing become who they are destined to be. In this context, there is no room for a patronising system of collective corroboration and colluding, to prevent people **from being** who they should be. In this context, all will be **reaching out to the future to probe solutions** for current challenges.

In visiting the ancient city of Machu Pitchu, high up in the Andes Mountains a Shamaan quietly said to me: **If you want to be real in the now, you should elevate your mind to where the condors fly, allowing you to be able to see tomorrow rolling in, whilst at the same time, seeing yesterday fading away.**

We all live one life and if we are interested to be real in the now, to unleash all our energy to this world, then I believe this will be a better place to be.

In closing: Max Planck said: *“When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.”*

The Da Vinci Institute is looking forward to the possibility to engage Nyukani and its people on matters related to learning and development and the possibility to see its alumni continuing their educational journey by taking up study assignments at The Institute.

Thank you.