

We need 365 days of activism from all men in SA

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I want to start by emphasizing the overdue call from the singer Lloyiso when he says “YeMadoda Sabelani, YeMadoda Nqandani, Yiyo lengozi, Sithi Lengozi” simply meaning we need to answer the clarion call of our daughters, sisters, mothers, grandmothers, our woman and all of society to protect them from us as men because we are the danger to them not feeling safe in their homes, school, work and the streets.

I was raised by a single mother and 3 brothers. She often lived her days in silent tears and despising anything that had to do with men because of her emotional and physical abuse experienced at the hands of men. Meanwhile my eldest brother was criminally imprisoned for 18 years, regardless I was still expected to be an example to my little brother, grow up to be a gentleman of character, become a husband I've never seen, bare children and be a fatherly example I've rarely experienced. It sounds rather controversial but the development of the boy child is of utmost importance for the moral etiquette of society and safety of all woman.

It all starts with 365 days of Activism from all of us as men.

It's hardly spoken about proactively but immensely challenged reactively. Often accompanied with slogans, condemnation and many saying “I'm not one of those men”. Well that's not enough unfortunately gentlemen, it's high time we as men take tangible action and its starts with acknowledging that; The legacy of colonialism, apartheid and continued patriarchy, which saw the brutal and systematic oppression of black people and women, in particular, has left our society with deep emotional and mental scars. Some of the ways in which the pains of these deep scars manifest themselves are seen through the senseless and brutal headlines that WE as men continue to make.

We live in a society of fatherless homes, abusive husbands, drug-abusing criminal men and men who generally run away from their responsibilities without any accountability. Young boys in our communities grow up exposed to such conditions and yet are expected to be upstanding citizens of the Republic without having been equipped with the necessary life skills and guidance to break this cycle consistently.

Men of character and principles that can be role models to future generations are few and far in between.

Little proactive steps are being taken by us men to address the consistent development of the boy child that immensely contributes to society's atrocities such as crime, rape, abuse, violence, absent fathers and the cycle of breeding this immoral status quo is not challenged with the vigour it deserves.

"Manning up" has been characterised by having 5 girlfriends and it being cool. Chilling at the spaza shop corner smoking weed and making perverted comments to passing woman, and some go as far as spanking their bum to look cool in their circles. Corrective discrimination and abuse to those that identify differently sexually has become the order of the day in some spaces. In modern-day by virtue of buying you a weave, cell phone and alcohol I own you. We need to do better gentlemen (using this term very loosely). Often with done with no consequences and little of us calling it out in our own spaces.

Noko madoda bekukudala ngoko!

Being a man should not be about how much physical strength you possess or how cool you are to your peers but what principles and values guide your life and the example you set thereof, coupled with a good character and the responsibility to protect society from your individual self and those that are a potential threat to our collective peace.

It's high time we exercise empathy and tangibly act on the injustice we bring upon society as men especially our woman and children who bare the brunt.

As Michelle Obama puts it; "Just the ability to walk in someone else's shoes; the recognition that someone else's experience has value too.

When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. That is the truest form of empathy: not just feeling, but doing; not just for ourselves or our woman, but for everyone, for all those who live under fear because of us men." It's what we ought to teach the boy child consistently to end perpetrators. Most importantly call it out even in our own spaces or circles!

Our daily actions moving forward must be to challenge the status quo with a vigour which enhances hyper-masculinity and the culture of misguided patriarchy through making the moral etiquette of the boy-child daily bread, with the express intention to groom' and develop men who will become upstanding citizens, leaders, brothers, Gentlemen, Husbands and fathers of tomorrow leading the moral regeneration of society.

There are extremely present fathers to their children, good husbands to our mothers, guiding brothers at home, gentlemen of stature and morally etiquettes sons which we should immensely appreciate, however the need for moral regeneration for the boy child is of utmost importance now 365 days a year.

The aim, therefore, must be to achieve moral etiquette where the culture of caring for the boy child is a norm through nurturing each other at home, in the classroom, social spaces, work, leadership and society as a whole to embody etiquette, discipline, respect, principles and values in all that we do to model and develop this phenomenon amongst ourselves and those we interact with to challenge the status quo and defeat this perpetual cycle.

It's all about learning, unlearning and relearning.

What needs to be done:

- Parliament and the President must help launch an action-based 365 days of activism by men with specific tangible change targets in law, policy and government implementation. And calling all men in different spaces to launch 365 days of activism from men in school, work, business, leadership, family and communities across the country.
- Minister Angie: Life orientation in school must have a dedicated focus on the development of the boy child, GBVF and the laws that govern us all to increase the consciousness of the learner on societal issues and how one can be a citizen of good character and call out bad behaviour wherever it raises its ugly head. All state and private educational institutions should implement an age-appropriate teaching unit addressing consent, bodily autonomy and appropriate inter-sex conduct as part of the curriculum.
- Minister Nzimande: All institutions of higher learning must have sexual harassment policies and deal harshly with sex for marks as seen in some institutions.
- Minister Nxesi: We must report any incidences of sex for jobs even if it is done by those close to us
- Minister Dlamini Zuma: It's high time we review and engage our cultural norms set by our elders i.e. ukuthwala
- Minister Cele: Police must be properly trained on how to handle sexual crimes and GBV cases these must be given by victim support services.
- Minister Zulu: Premiers must Appointment of a child commissioner in each province like the DA has done in the Western Cape.

The DA will be Influencing safety, law, policy, policing, justice and correctional services in Parliament through the DA's GBVF policy.

Gentlemen my message is simple; the status quo needs to change now! It's high time we start the consistent development of the boy child with the utmost moral etiquette and use any platform we are on in this cause to be protectors and not perpetrators! Most importantly; We must act against injustice against our woman and children wherever it raises its ugly head 365

days a year, 7 days a week and 24 hours a day! It starts by joining our woman and children now in these 16 days of activism.

I thank you