

The Madiba magic of mentoring

 By Leigh Andrews

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With 2018 the 'Madiba Centennial Year' and July Mandela Month, corporate eyes are firmly focused on CSI and sustainability projects. That's certainly worthwhile, but you can also bring that 'Madiba magic' down to the personal level in your work mentoring efforts. Not yet a mentor? Think Creative Hub's cofounders and creative directors Nkgabiseng 'Nkgabi' Motau and Mukondi Ralushayi explain the importance of being both a mentor and mentee.



Think Creative Hub's cofounders and creative directors Nkgabiseng 'Nkgabi' Motau and Mukondi Ralushayi.

Madiba himself said:

“ A fundamental concern for others in our individual and community lives would go a long way in making the world the better place we so passionately dreamt of. ”

Motau and Ralushayi concur that 'a concern for others' is essential to making the world a better place and succeeding at business.

And that's the definition of mentorship – **a relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person.**

It's a business-boosting way of giving back on a personal level, as mentors typically set aside time each month to talk through the mentee's career hurdles and offer advice and tips to get ahead in the undeniably challenging job market.

“ Really meaningful mentorship at [#Exchange2017SA pic.twitter.com/nxnqa6a8cA](https://twitter.com/nxnqa6a8cA)— Nkgabiseng Motau (@Nkgabi_Motau) [November 25, 2017](#) ”

Here Motau and Ralushayi share their own experiences as mentors and how 'paying it forward' has benefited their careers.

■ **Explain the power of mentoring, especially in SA.**

Motau: There are so many things you don't know as a young professional – not the theory, but rather the learned information.

Having a network of mentors is a way for young people not to have to spend a long time getting to know those things the hard way. It's true that we learn from those who have charted the path, but this is valuable beyond business lessons.

It's also great to have someone validate your ideas and guide you from a growth perspective.

How does mentoring tie in with the power of giving back and the overall feeling around Mandela Day?

Motau: South Africa's history of oppression has created a great deficit of skills in society that can be addressed in part with mentorship.

“ To me, Nelson Mandela was a great teacher who was a great champion of bringing those who come behind you with you. In a way, one could say he was a mentor to us all. ”

That's for sure. Talk us through your own experience as a mentor and how this has benefited your career.

Motau: We're both part of an industry mentoring programme by The Loeries, called Open Chair.



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With this programme, we were able to have face-to-face mentorship with female talent in the advertising space.

“ This is a very fulfilling experience because we learn as much as we teach. We also mentor in more informal ways, always making ourselves available for discussion and collaboration with those who want to pick our brains. ”

What should others look for in a work mentor?

Ralushayi: I think a mentor x mentee relationship should be treated like dating. Get to know each other before committing so that you're guided by someone who has a real interest in your growth and respects you and your vision.

Share some tips on being a better mentor to others.

Ralushayi: Being a mentor is a real commitment:

- Don't take up the job if you can't give the time.
- Be generous with your learnings and networks.
- Leave your ego at the door.



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Wise words, and there's no better time than #MandelaMonth to put mentorship on the map. Follow [Motau](#) and [Ralushayi](#) on Twitter and Think Creative Hub on [Instagram](#) for the latest updates.

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ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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