

A portrait of a young Black woman with her hair styled in braids pulled up into a bun. She is wearing a light green, long-sleeved top and large hoop earrings. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is dark and out of focus.

THE YOUNG CAPABLE

Ms. Tshegofatso Mhiko

ARTISTE ENTREPRENEUR LEADERSHIP ENTHUSIAST

Ms Tshegofatso Mhiko is a 20-year-old young lady who finds self-completion in artistic fantasy. She was born in West Rand, Gauteng, and grew up in Rustenburg. She schooled at Swartuggens Intermediate School, West Gold primary, in Randfontein, and later she went to Simons Town School, in Cape Town for her elementary school-

years. She went to Hoerskool Jan De Klerk, which is situated in Gauteng, for her high school years.

At present, she is doing her final year in a Public Relations and Communications Diploma at the University of Johannesburg. Necessarily important to mention, Miss Mhiko is a UJenius- that is

the top academic achiever at the University. She excelled in MATH and SCIENCES in high school. Tshego was among the top 5 achievers. Unfortunately, she had to take a different career path under circumstances.

The year 2020 saw the emergence of a thrilling, long-life journey for Miss Mhiko. Being a first year student not only came with the excitement of venturing into a whole new world of academics, but it opened doors of entrepreneurship for her as well. She volunteered at a SPRA, (Student Public Relations Association) event at the University of Johannesburg in the first week of school and that was when her career as an entrepreneur kick-started; she was later appointed as the Deputy Chairperson of the association. In 2021, Miss Mhiko climbed the ladder and became the Chairperson and President of the aforementioned association and she finished her term recently in the month on June 2022.

On volunteering, she met her business partner, Mr Mbalana Luyanda, and having gone to a Nemisa Hackathon together, they birthed a website-developing company, LTI TECH GROUP. Miss Mhiko is a co-founder and a former Chief Marketing Officer of the prestigious company. In the same year, they held a market day at her residence and "*being a foodie*", Miss Mhiko took it upon herself to sell food. Unfortunate to say, she made a loss from what she thought she would benefit.

"I was just so excited, thinking about the future and how Tshego's café was going to be born. When I made a loss however, I was heartbroken, especially because I had not anticipated it"

It seems indeed that bitter pills may just have blessed effects after all. Miss Mhiko's unfavourable circumstance taught her a valuable lesson that, marketing a business is just as important as establishing it. She learnt that marketing and Public Relations are the heart of every organization; they are the mirror of, and determine the success towards the organization. A business idea can be the greatest there is, but inadequate marketing and PR ultimately lead to its demise.

Miss Mhiko has proven to have creativity in her nature and the whole of her being, ranging from business to art! She has a bath-solution brand, TRANQUILLITY, specializing in organic bath salts.

Her explorative nature led to her experimenting with various bath salts, considering her love for long baths and the therapy she gets from them, also, because they have proven to unlock her writing brain.

She decided then, that she would develop her own bath salts that contain the essential oils she needs for her therapeutic experiences. She is hoping to launch this soon! Miss Mhiko left us with a cliff-hanger on her recent project, ENSEMBLE, which is still a work in progress, so we can only hope to know more about it in due time.

She has been invited by PRISA- the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa, as one of the top PR students in the country. The majority of her time however, is spent working on Digital Media; she is currently doing PR and Social Media Management for Geek Culture- a Tech community, and she is also a writer for the company.

"I don't want to say a lot about it and risk jinxing it, but I've been working on it since 2021 and I can say, it's been exciting plus it's a Tech platform!", teased Miss Mhiko.



On the second week of August 2022, Geek Culture held a Hackathon and the social media was at a massive 10.6 Million organic reach.

Looking back over the years, Miss Mhiko had a challenge of neglecting her mental well-being. She put all her focus on being busy and in the long run, that became detrimental to her mental health. She underwent a phase where she felt disconnected from her true self and made decisions that were not friendly and beneficial to her. She learnt from that period that patience is a virtue and that life is not really a race and for the most part, it is not group work. She became comfortable enough with working at a pace that let her get the rest she needs and to make her mental stability a priority.

Seeing other people's lives flourishing and being on the right track might make one feel stuck, it's a normal occurrence, however it is good to take a break and self- introspect, gauge the situation on a deeper level to determine whether or not the path they are on is the one you also wish to be on, or if you are reflecting from a place of pressure.

Miss Mhiko spent the whole of 2021 giving herself a break and the time to develop at a normal pace and taking care of her mental health and it was worth the while. Her experience as a chairperson of SPRA taught her the significance of privacy-to keep some things to oneself.

She and her team were working on a project and they approached one partner, who did not seem to approve of their plan and months down the line, the very same partner had used the plan to construct something similar to what they had initially planned to do to their oblivion, once bitten, twice shy?!

She urges fellow young persons to put themselves out there and to ask questions, to seek help where necessary because this is one trait she lacks. She tends to do things on her own, and this often leaves her misinformed. She is currently working on asking more questions, letting her curiosity guide her into knowing more and she has hope that her future self will adopt this and make it a norm. She notions that even if one is surely good at something, they should still have a teachable spirit in that field because there is always someone who knows more than you. She also believes that it is okay to fail and not to take failure personally because failure is a great teacher and when you go back to the thing you failed at, you would not be starting from scratch but from experience, so you are bound to excel then.

Being the first born of three children in her home gives her the drive she needs to put in the work and strive for success. Her two younger siblings are her motivation.

Her ultimate goal is to make their lives easier and to give them everything they might desire in life.

It gets hard and the pressure tends to get worse and her little sisters have-

"You will probably fail many times than you can comprehend, but it is advisable to realize that failure is not a reflection of your intellect or capabilities. It is nothing short of a redirection! "

proven to be her remedy- just a call with them and she gets mentally stimulated. Moreover, she believes that as the first born, she is the motivation her younger siblings need- they look up to her and they would most likely follow in her footsteps. That is not to say that parents should compare their children but, to an extent, young children tend to pick up on the habits and behavioral patterns of their older siblings and she is trying to set a good enough example for them.

One thing she has noticed is that they have started to read novels just as much as she does. They motivate her to be the best version of herself because she knows that this will rub onto them in the long run! One person outside her home whom she looks up to is Dr Stella Moloto Vuma.

Dr Moloto taught her, through her doings, that leadership is not about being powerful and dominant but about empowering the people you are leading because their success is your success. And this is one area in which Miss Mhiko had been misguided prior.

In her leisure time, Miss Mhiko likes to explore her artistic nature- she reads novels, writes poetry and short stories, she draws, and paints. Pencils and papers are her companions. She is also a make-up artist and a nail-technician. She also finds pleasure in the film industry- if she is not creating art, she is enjoying art. She is art!

Growing up, she had to overcome a lot of bullying as a result of her speech impediment- stuttering. This led to her having a lot of self-esteem and the fear of public speaking, which caused her difficulty to love herself. Whenever she would try to speak, people would laugh at her, or even grow impatient and not wait for her to finish speaking and speak over her, or even for her. It impacted her negatively that she became silent for quite a number of years and that was when her love for writing and literature as a whole emerged, because she found it easier to write than to have to speak and be mocked for it. In the long run, she had to find ways to deal with her stuttering, which includes using feeler-words such as "*uh, uhm,* " repeatedly to prevent herself from her stutter. With the passing of time, she discovered that when she uses the English language to-

Speak, she does not stutter as much, and as such, she uses it more than she does any other languages. And when she was not writing, she would talk to the mirror.

Her confidence started developing as she grew up and that was when she entered an art competition for the first time, RACA. In her first year, she entered her drawing, and the following year, she did poetry and music; later she evolved to rap music. She faced her fears of public speaking and went for a rapping competition and poetry rendition and although it was with much difficulty, she went gold for her rapping and diamond for her poems. Her third year in RACA gave her the platform to practice more poetry and monologue. It was by engaging in these competitions that her self-love grew more every day and boosted her confidence. That was when she eventually decided to study Public Relations.

Entrepreneurship has no age-limit or restriction, you are never too young. So do not limit yourself- you might just surprise yourself. Be yourself, be crazy, be the different versions of yourself that you want to be. You do not owe anyone consistency. And remember that you do not owe anybody anything in life and reversely, the world does not owe you anything. Sometimes the people from whom you might expect assistance or mentoring might not be in the position to give that to you.

That might scar you emotionally, especially if you give it your all and you feel like you are more than deserving, but remember, life will not always be fair to you. So, take the lessons and heed them, bearing in mind that no type of impediment or challenge can stand in the way of your capabilities.

