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## Entrepreneurship Entrepreneurs Can Visualise AND Actualise Opportunities:

Entrepreneurship is quite a journey – one I'd venture to say is not meant for the faint-hearted, but for the courageous, the curious and the exploratory. Because it is a journey driven by the desire to achieve more, to contribute to greater human empowerment and economic well-being, it invariably leads to a path of self-discovery and self-actualisation.

Unfortunately not many people get to experience this journey in its truest form. Some people embark on it with only one intention: to make money. Because of this, they miss out on the opportunity to get to know and to understand their character better in terms of their wiring and personal tolerance levels. Albeit true that one of the major objectives of embarking on the entrepreneurship journey is to achieve financial freedom, it is also an opportunity to build, to test and to actualise your potential.

Talking to a friend about my personal journey as an entrepreneur, I realised how my character has changed for the better, how it has been strengthened and how my general view of life has been influenced by the many invaluable experiences – some harsh and some pleasant – I have had to undergo as an entrepreneur. I will not trade this for anything, and if I were to do it all over again, I most certainly would!

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One thing clear and sure about an entrepreneur is that you tend to see things differently from many people, you are blessed with the ability to visualise not only 'what is' but also 'what could be' and drive yourself to actualise opportunities. An entrepreneur literally takes risk on the opportunity potential because of their strong belief that vision alone will be reduced to a pipe dream if it is not acted upon and actualised. As an entrepreneur your world is alive with endless possibilities and white spaces, all you need to do is actualise them. Notwithstanding the challenges of this chosen path, it is a path that I hope many young South Africans may experience – especially given our rate of unemployment.

I will concede that entrepreneurship is not always a smooth ride. In fact this journey can prove to be very challenging and sometimes lonely, often requiring you to be self-reliant and self-motivating. There are days when you will wake up feeling like you are on top of your game; you know what you are doing and where you are headed. Then there will be days when you wake up not knowing what hit you, where it hit you or why it hit you. You will encounter such days throughout your journey as an entrepreneur. Days when nothing seems to work, days when you do not want to wake up and when the option of being employed seem so attractive. It is in those days that you need to draw strength and inspirations from your personal vision, the desire to actualise it and to stand up and be counted. Those days call for an attitude check, attitude adjustment, self-leadership and the never-say-die spirit. Many successful entrepreneurs will tell you how they struggled to make fortunes and then lost them and then made them again. How, at some point in their journey, they thought things would

never work out, but they persisted, they stayed the course and many today have achieved such financial freedom it inspires the rest of us.

When you get to talk to the retired entrepreneurs and listen to their stories, you will be surprised at how the public is mostly exposed to their success and not their battles, not the sacrifices they have had to make and how sometimes they had to survive on their belief in the strength of their vision and in themselves in order to witness yet another day. They will tell you that trying times, at a personal level or otherwise, are times when an entrepreneur will choose to chase his vision – much against severe criticism from family, friends and colleagues – again and again, because they cannot

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help but answer the call to dig deeper from their creative and innovation bowels in order to thrive. A practical example; when everybody is concerned about the recession, an entrepreneur is delighted by the countless opportunities presented by the recession. Entrepreneurs are not under delusions of grandeur, they know that all will come in good time if they work hard and focus on their vision.

I guess I just love being an entrepreneur – what an opportunity life has given me! □