

A portrait of Thabo Pitse, a Black man with a goatee, wearing a white shirt, dark suspenders, and a white fedora with a blue band. He has his hands clasped in front of his chest and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

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JUNE 2021

Unstoppable

Thabo

Bloemfontein entrepreneur Thabo Pitse reminds one of that line from Grey's Anatomy: "Have some fire. Be unstoppable. Be a force of nature". Here Thabo talks fatherhood, abundance, and wanderlust. . .

Thabo, Kroonstad-born but a Bloem boy since he came to study at the University of the Free State, does not beat about the bush about growing up in the province. "If you can make it in the Free State, you can make it anywhere. I find that Free State people are conservative, private, traditional, but when it comes to business, you need to be radical, progressive and a little bit of a weirdo. This was my experience, a fish out of water, and I think this is what made me rise above my circumstances." For Thabo, his circumstances included growing up in "a one-room shack with three family members". As a teenager, he was a self-proclaimed nerd. "All I thought about was books, passing, winning, success. However, I can't take all the credit for my drive to succeed. My mother was the warden of our household and I'm glad she was because God knows I could have been an unruly teenager."

A teenager is what Thabo will have to deal with soon, but he is clearly unfazed by it. For Thabo his sons, Omphile (12) and Owen (6), have helped him fulfill his "God-given responsibility of taking care of other people". He lists his greatest joys as arriving home after work, kicking off his shoes, and grabbing a console to play X-box with his boys, or getting a head massage from his wife, Kealeboga, which sends him "straight to dreamland".

Something else that sparks joy for Thabo is his work as a business coach for ActionCOACH. Retelling his journey to become a business coach, one realises that it was a life-changing experience. "I was in the US doing my exams in Vegas to become an accredited ActionCOACH when Covid-19 broke out. Not only did I have to try to get a flight back home, I had to be quarantined, and all my plans of launching my practice were paused. Somehow, in all the chaos that Covid-19 brought, I managed to become the top-ranking coach in Africa within two months of practicing.

So, for the adventure and challenge that it has brought to my life and career, I can honestly say that becoming an ActionCOACH has been a career highlight."

Thabo is also outspoken about the gift of abundance. "I believe in abundance. If God had given you abundance, then have it and spread it, which is what I believe I'm doing with my own life."

Sitting opposite Thabo, one wonders how the teenage "nerd" matured into this suave, self-confident entrepreneur. "Basically, I've always loved people and I love seeing other people win. I'm a high performer, I expect the same from others, and when I don't see people perform at the standard I've set for myself, I become frustrated. Developing patience has been my challenge. So, working with people is making me a better human being, and for that I'm grateful."

But, surely all work and no play is a recipe for a boring life? This bon vivant quickly replies that he loves the good life and travelling. "For a boy who grew up dreaming of all these exotic places I saw on TV, travelling allowed me to see my dreams unfold before my eyes. From feeling the Miami beach sand between my toes, seeing Celine Dion live on stage in Vegas, listening to live bands outside restaurants in Thailand, and taking my kids to Disneyland ... travelling feels like a constant dream come true. Running between airports, chasing flights, boarding planes at 2am... travelling has opened my mind to different cultures and people, and I believe, has made me smarter."

So what is exciting Thabo right now? "My new BMW 7 series! I hit a pothole the other day. When I stopped to get it checked out, I saw the new one I've always wanted. I left mine right there and rode away in my dream car. Talk about impulsive buying! But I was going to buy it anyway," he says, smiling his trademark broad smile, which (if you look hard enough) still hides the slightest tinge of that studious, nerdy teen.