

## Aphelele Mbiyo - Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape

**Name:**

Aphelele Mbiyo

**Region:**

My home town is the Eastern Cape! I was born in Mthata and raised in Miramar, Port Elizabeth. I currently live in Lonehill.

**Age and birthday, day, month and year:**

24 (Born January 28,1996)

**Occupation:**

Marketing Associate for a food franchise group. I hold a BA in Integrated Marketing Communications.



**Why do you want to be Miss South Africa and what do you think you will be able to bring to the role?**

I want to equip young girls on their journey to becoming their best selves. We often see a post reflection of women who have come into their own, which is inspiring but not enough about the process of Unbecoming to Become. I want to set up an academy called GIRL GET UP which focuses on building girls in leadership from their mindset, that ultimately influences their actions and changes the trajectory of their lives. The vision would be to impact how they engage with the world from a place of inherent worthiness, own their voices and their place in the world with specific key areas of focus. The areas of focus would include overcoming mental health, conscious relationship with self, self-betrayal or abandonment in decision making and life skills. This academy could also be a step towards creating a campaign that finds practical ways to combat the tragic gender-based violence in this country.

**How have you handled the lockdown due to the Covid 19?**

The lockdown has had its ups and downs; weeks of great solitude and other weeks of missing family and friends. I have enjoyed the clarity and the quietness it has presented for me as someone who lives alone. It has also shown me how largely affected people are from job losses, as daily I see more people seeking some sort of employment.

**What has this time taught you?**

It has taught me to do my part in helping others where I can and that I am blessed to be a blessing. It has taught me to listen to my life and decide from pure love (decisions without fear leading the way.)

**2020 has been a tough year globally. Do you see any positives in what has happened in the past months and weeks?**

Yes. It has proven how we are all - in essence - the same. The invisible virus has no discrimination on who gets infected and affected, no matter the social, economic status of any individual. It has proven the importance of a work/life balance. The organisational structure of businesses in South Africa has proved to be more welcoming with remote working which promotes that essential

work/life balance. There has also been a shift in corporate space to measure productivity differently.

### **What do you love about South Africa?**

I love the diversity of our people, the communities, the beautiful landscapes, how intentional we are about inclusivity, how we pursue reconciliation and thrive despite the odds.

### **What is one thing you would like to change about South Africa?**

One thing I would change is the pace and urgency in dealing with gender-based violence in South Africa. Society should not accept the behaviour of abuse on women as normal. I would also encourage men to have a real definition of what it means to a man in South Africa and hold them more accountable.

### **Who is a previous Miss South Africa who has inspired you and why?**

Zozibini Tunzi who exemplifies authenticity and the power that lies in that. Also, Sasha-Lee Olivier who proved the standards of beauty are diverse and that those differences should be celebrated.

### **Tell us a bit more about your family**

My parents live in Port Elizabeth. My father works for the Department of Justice as a regional magistrate in the Eastern Cape. My mother is retired, waiting to be a granny. My oldest sister is a teacher in the UAE, while my middle sister is married, lives in Cape Town and works as a strategic planner in a media agency.

### **What do you do in your spare time?**

I love to host dinners parties as I enjoy bringing people together over good food. When I am laying low, I put on a great series and I listen to stories about how people have overcome; talks to refuel me for the week and keep me full inside. I also enjoy finding hidden gems from nature, restaurants and markets.

### **Name your female role models:**

The strong women in my family who all have a story of how they overcame something. The common denominator of that narrative is found in their stories.

### **Do you think beauty pageants are still relevant today?**

They are a platform that put women in a position to lead and make practical change that have an impact on society. We have seen evidence of this from the calibre of women who have been title holders and have made a great success of affecting change, opening up business for greater employment opportunities for others, or redefined the narrative of what it means to be beautiful. These are all important narratives, especially to young girls to be able to see themselves and the possibilities of what they too can be.

### **Name two of your female role models?**

My late gran Nobubele who lived a full life - from a successful career to exploring all her God-given gifts. After retiring she'd paint beautiful paintings, she sewed and she made the best jams. She had such great wisdom. The second person is Thato Kgatlhanye, who is an entrepreneur and world changer, who sees purpose in waste, her first business being repurposed school bags for underprivileged children. She is also determined to live out her fullest expression of self, in her platform LIFEWITHTHATO for Africans building expansive lives and legacies.

**What is your message to young girls and young women in South Africa?**

The person you imagine your best self to be in your own mind, you will not find in another woman, but it is a vision that you are to realise and manifest. Focus on her and that output required to be her day by day.

**If you won the Miss South Africa crown and was able to meet one person, who would it be?**

Sarah Jakes Roberts I have followed her evolution over the years, and her story of overcoming inspires me to show up as my best self.

**What is the one thing people would be surprised to know about you?**

I played the trombone when I was at school.

**What is the No 1 piece of advice that you would give to your younger self?**

Stop waiting to be seen; stop waiting to be heard; stop waiting for favourable circumstances; stop waiting to be validated by someone else. Validate yourself first, bet on yourself, get out of your own way and just be you.

**Describe yourself in three words:**

Calm. Positive. Ambitious.

**What are you reading?**

Daring Greatly by Brene Brown

**What music are you listening to?**

Maverick City - Volume 3

**What are your favourite TV shows?**

The Fixer, Insecure, Queen Sono, anything on Black Love.

**What is your favourite meal?**

Sushi.

**Who's your local and international celeb crush?**

Local: Crushing on Bonang's brand success as Forbes most influential women in Africa.

International: Issa-Rae production company – crushing on the relatable, conscious story telling found in her shows.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Pastries and cream donuts.

**Social media tags:**

- Facebook: Aphelele Mbiyo
- Instagram: @Aphelelem
- Twitter: @ApheleleMbiyo