

Karishma Ramdev - Chatsworth, KZN

Name:

Karishma Ramdev

Region:

My hometown is Chatsworth, KZN, although I currently live in Johannesburg.

Age and birthday, day, month and year:

25 (Born February 27, 1995)

Occupation:

I'm a qualified medical doctor working at the Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital. I graduated with my MBChB from the University of Pretoria in 2019.



Previous beauty competitions/pageants won:

Miss Tuks Varsity Cup 2015.

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

I remember as a little girl walking into a grocery store with my mom and looking at the latest You magazine which featured a strong, fierce, beautiful woman and telling my mother that I wanted to be just like her. That woman was Joanne Strauss. For as long as I can remember I have always looked up to the previous Miss South Africa title holders and have taken so much inspiration and motivation from the powerful woman they are. I have lived my life awe-inspired by the difference they've made and it stirred a deep desire in my heart to be more than just a professional. I want to change lives. Being a doctor allows me to do that in little bits everyday but seeing the huge impact the Miss South Africa platform has made on this country makes me want to be part of it all. If I was given the opportunity to be Miss South Africa, I would love to go to every corner of the country learning more about our people and helping them expand their knowledge on hygiene, safe practices and empowering them with information to further protect themselves.

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

Working on the frontlines has been quite stressful as we are one of the main COVID hospitals dealing with the virus. Our working hours have increased drastically due to a new COVID roster being implemented. Everything has been trial and error and we are now trying to figure out our "new normal" as no one expected a pandemic of this magnitude to occur. I'm blessed to have had my family as my support structure during this time, always encouraging and motivating me.

What has this time taught you?

Through all the craziness, there is hope for us. In a time of uncertainty, people are able to come together and put the health of everyone above their own needs. That is truly impressive and inspiring.

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

People have had a lot more time to self-reflect and grow as individuals. We are also a very progressive nation, standing up and fighting for what we believe in. All these little wins are contributing to the overall change we need to see in our society.

What do you love about South Africa?

We are one of the most diverse nations in the world yet we are all connected through the spirit of ubuntu. Our people are so friendly and welcoming. We get to boast about the most beautiful seas and wildlife and we've got the perfect balance of city life and scenery.

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

The fact that there is still lingering racism in this country. The goal is not to be able to see everyone's colours as one and tolerate each other. It's to be able to see our differences and be accepting and loving of one another.

Who is a previous Miss South Africa who has inspired you?

Kerishnie Naiker has been a pivotal Miss South Africa for me as she grew up in my home town and achieved the same dream that I have. I see myself echoed in her from the time I was a child until now, and her reign and campaign with regards to TB was incredible.

Who are your role models?

My mother will forever be my biggest inspiration. Growing up, she left work to look after us and make sure that we received the best education that was possible for her and my dad to provide. She was present throughout it all and never complained about putting her life on hold. When times got tough and I needed financial aid to continue university, she went back to work after over a decade to try and help with my fees. The selfless and loving actions that she has shown me throughout my years has inspired me to be the same. I want to give back; I want to spread love and I want to use whatever tools and resources I have to uplift others.

Tell us a bit more about your family:

My father and mother were teenage first loves and have been married for 30 years. I have an older and a younger brother. My older brother is 29 years old and was born with a genetic condition called trisomy 18q+ and has taught while growing up, how to accept people's differences and love them through it. He is the light of my family's life. My younger brother is 22 years old and is studying veterinary science at the University of Pretoria.

What do you do in your spare time?

Prior to my internship, I loved reading! But now I get home so exhausted I love just relaxing on my couch and watching Netflix. I enjoy keeping healthy with some at-home fitness during this lockdown. My biggest hobby of all is horse-riding! I have always felt like I'm flying through the air!

Do you think beauty pageants are still relevant today?

Beauty pageants are more relevant now than ever. We are changing the perception of beauty and a woman's role in society. Pageants are no longer about the outer beauty but focus on how a woman can use her strength and knowledge to uplift and empower her community and be a representative for all those who are similar and different to her.

Name two of your female role models?

Michelle Obama has become one of my absolute role models. She said something so profound in her Becoming documentary which went along the lines of, "We can't afford to wait for the world to be equal to start feeling seen. You've got to find the tools within yourself to feel visible and be heard and use your voice." Another role model of mine is Winnie Mandela, a woman who did not give up in the face of adversity; who fought for what she believed in and was a female leader in her own right.

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

Don't feel like the country has given up on you. Let what is happening in this country to women be the fuel that starts the fire within your heart to make a change. One person alone cannot change the trajectory and views of women in society, but together we can make a difference. We can fight for the right to be seen as equals and our voices will be heard loud and clear.

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

It would probably be Queen Elizabeth II so that I could ask her advice on how to keep my crown as shiny as hers!

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

I grew up as a total tomboy. I loved making mud cakes, playing in the sand and most of my friends were boys. I was quite a weird young girl who would catch grasshoppers and frogs and play with them. All these years later, I am still totally weird. I have these strange dances I do when I go off on a tangent.

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

To live in the moment and enjoy each day for what it was! Appreciate the small things and whilst having a plan for your life is important, don't freak out when things don't go exactly the way you intended. I remember always wanting to grow up and be an adult, but now looking back I feel like my childhood was so fleeting and yet it was some of the most beautiful years of my life.

Describe yourself in three words:

Compassionate, goal-driven, empathetic.

What are you reading?

Daring Greatly – Brene Brown

What music are you listening to?

Currently my favourite song is Once by Roo Panes but I have favourites from many genres.

Your favourite TV shows?

Outlander, I love Scottish history, Friends and Money Heist – but it has to be watched in Spanish with English subtitles.

Your favourite meal?

Trotters curry – I think majority of people will cringe at this but I'm obsessed and the mere thought of it is making me hungry!

Who's your local and international celeb crush?

Local is Damian de Allende and international is Gigi Hadid

What's your guilty pleasure?

Chocolate! I want nothing more than to be Willy Wonka and live in his chocolate factory.

Anything else you would like to add?

I'm a total dog-lover and have two German shepherds and a golden retriever! They're my babies.

Social media tags:

- Facebook: Karishma Ramdev
- Instagram: @karishma_ramdev
- Twitter: @KarishmaRamdev_