

Melissa Nayimuli – Butterworth, Eastern Cape

Name:

Melissa Nayimuli

Region:

I was born in Butterworth in the Eastern Cape but I currently live in Sunninghill.

Age:

24 (Born January 2, 1996)



Occupation:

I have a BA in Motion Picture Medium from AFDA Johannesburg, and I majored in television writing. I currently work as an account manager for a marketing agency.

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

I was born into a multicultural home with a Xhosa mother and a Ugandan father. As exciting as this was, on one hand, I got to experience the full acceptance and love from being treated like a South African, and on occasion, with just the mere mention of my surname, I felt what it was like to be treated like a foreigner. I am entering Miss South Africa with the hopes of bringing unity within the African continent. I would like to start conversations that are aimed at repairing the damage caused by xenophobia, not only in South Africa but all over the African continent. This is not only a South Africa problem, it is not only an Africa problem, it is a global issue. We need to be kinder, more accepting and more respectful of each other's differences. South African women are proving on a daily basis that they are not only powerful leaders who can effect change, but they can do that with grace, compassion, and humility, which I believe are imperative attributes for such a sensitive topic.

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

This time forced me to do a lot of self-introspection. I managed to "get to know" myself again, who I am, and what I value.

What has this time taught you?

I got to learn the importance of nurturing healthy relationships with self, family and friends.

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

It has been inspiring to see people from all over the world come together, to fight against injustices.

What do you love about South Africa?

Our sense of humour

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

The high rate of gender-based violence

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

Zozibini Tunzi has encouraged me to use my voice and not be afraid to speak about controversial societal issues South Africa is facing.

Who are your role models/who has inspired you?

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who is not afraid to speak the truth, no matter the cost and Ava DuVerney, whose commitment to writing stories that challenge the way one sees the world and thinks, is inspiring.

Tell us a bit more about your family

My father is a retired lecturer and my mother works as a nurse in the Eastern Cape. I am the middle child of five siblings, with two brothers and two sisters. My older sister (29) has just started her internship as a doctor in the Eastern Cape after studying medicine in Cuba.

My eldest brother (26) was studying aviation but had to put that on hold because of finances and is now completing his studies in software engineering. My youngest sister (16) is in high school and my youngest brother (13) is in Grade 7.

What do you do in your spare time?

I really enjoy being at home, cleaning and listening to music.

Do you think beauty pageants are still relevant today?

Pageants have become more than about beauty; they are a powerful platform where women are allowed to share their opinions and effect change in society. Anyone who dismisses their relevance dismisses the voice of women in society.

Name two of your female role models and why?

My mother and my older sister. They did not teach me perseverance, they showed it to me.

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

The world is loud, make sure to remain in control of your own thoughts, opinions and decisions.

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

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. She is a phenomenal woman with a powerful mind and heart.

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

I'm a goofball.

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

Who you are is enough, do not try to be anyone else.

Describe yourself in three words:

Decisive, creative, compassionate.

What are you reading?

Born a Crime by Trevor Noah.

What music are you listening to?

Soul music.

What are your favourite TV shows?

The Big Bang Theory, Gold Diggers, Prison Break.

What is your favourite meal?

Ribs and Chicken Licken wings.

Who's your local and international celeb crush?

Local is Thapelo Mokoena and international is Maherashala Ali

What's your guilty pleasure?

Binge watching 90 Day Fiancé.

Your social media tags:

- Facebook: Melissa Nayimuli
- Instagram: @meLeesa