



21 July 2020

**LEGACY: LIVING MY PURPOSE TODAY!**

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My Dearest Friends  
Kumbirai & Tafadzwa Nzenza

I write this letter to you in the context of a being a black migrant to another black migrant. All of us are attempting to live an abundant and purposeful life in our beloved country Australia. The intention of my letter is to implore you to start thinking of how your legacy will carry on once you both die.

I grew up in a low middle-class family in Zimbabwe. We were not wealthy and there were limited opportunities for me and for millions of other Zimbabweans to live a fulfilling life. So, when I discovered that I was successful in creating an opportunity to come to Australia, I was ecstatic. I remember my heart exploding with joy with the miracle of the opportunity of a better life. Since Zimbabwe criminalises homosexuality, coming to Australia was also the first time I had the freedom to explore who I could be.

Like millions of migrants before me, the opportunity of coming Australia was not just a personal victory, it was a victory for my family and for my community. The stakes were high. This opportunity not only would make a difference to my life, but to the life of my parents who lost everything in the Zimbabwean crisis as well as the opportunity to create funds for my sister to be the first female in the Gomo family to go to university. Failure was not an option.

For a very long time and infrequently so these days, I felt the weight of making the most of my life for all the other millions of Zimbabweans who did not have an opportunity. I sometimes feel guilty that I was one of the lucky ones. I used to put a lot of pressure myself to make the most of my life. The first 15 years being in Australia, I had spells of loneliness, physical illnesses and mental health issues due to the pressure to succeed because I felt whole communities depended on my success.

Now, as you and I continue to grow our roots in Australia and have some semblance of stability, it is our time to think strategically about the difference your legacy will make to your children, their children and the communities around the world.

The best way, I know how to start this conversation is to share with you the legacy I am creating and how I intend for it to continue once I am dead.

In service to you,

Rugare-Rwashe Gomo



**DEFINING MY LEGACY**

*“Nobody can teach me who I am. You can describe parts of me, but who I am - and what I need - is something I have to find out myself.” Chinua Achebe*

**Legacy** is something that happens based on events of the past. To determine my legacy, I look at my *present* to determine if my actions reflect a life I am proud of. For me, a life I am proud of is one in which I contributed to making the world a better place.

Our world is messed up, to put it politely. And there are endless areas to make a difference. The areas I have committed to making a difference to specifically are black excellence, equality of the sexes, LGBTQI+ rights and leadership. For me, using my life to making a difference in these areas is my legacy.

**1. Black Excellence: using my life to improve the representation and visibility of black leaders and entrepreneurs worldwide.**

In 2020, in our multicultural city Melbourne, Australia, I am still often the only black face in the room, on a board, on a panel. How can that still be in 2020? In my adventures of life, I meet many talented black people, smarter and brighter than I am. In addition, I have to fight nail and tooth for the opportunities I have. It has been lonely and exhausting to live life fighting for the opportunities which naturally flow to many of our Caucasian colleagues without merit. I am happy to continue to fight for the sake of your children Noah and Micah. I hope they will live in a Australia where they don't have to fight ten times as hard because they are black.

**2. Equality of the Sexes: my efforts to elevate women to be equal to men which includes fighting gender stereotypes and seeking to establish educational and professional opportunities for women that are equal to those for men.**

My grandmother was denied an education because she is a woman. My mother's professional options were limited because she is a woman. My beautiful 25-year-old sister who has 3 degrees still has to work 10 times harder for employment opportunities because she is a woman. I have been nurtured by women. Many women from different walks of life and from around the world have empowered me to be the man I am today. The proverb that states 'behind every successful man there stands a woman' rings true in my reality. These women have never been behind me. They have been in front of me leading the way. Yet billions of women are still suppressed, unacknowledged and dehumanised. Not on my watch!

**3. LGBTQI+ Equality: LGBTQI+ people are entitled to the enjoyment of all human rights. Yet, due to strongly held cultural and social norms surrounding gender expression and sexuality, LGBTQI people are often excluded.**

I grew up in an environment, where there was no freedom to even allow myself to think if I was gay. To be precise, in Zimbabwe, I go to jail for being a gay man and in four countries in Africa I get killed for who I am. I have tears in my eyes as I write this part. I have carried so much pain for decades for fear of being me. The fear I would bring shame to my family because I am gay,



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the fear that I would be abandoned and kicked out of home because I am gay, the fear that I would never get a job because I am gay, the fear of being beaten up because I am gay. I have spent decades internalising this pain to the extent that my two therapists (whom I adore) have independently told me I have the same symptoms as survivors of sexual trauma. No child who identifies as part of the LGBTQI+ community should ever go through what I went through. Yet even in Australia today they still do.

#### 4. **Leadership: is creating futures that were never going to happen.**

I am responsible for the fulfillment of my purpose, and I do so imperfectly. I learnt a valuable lesson this year when George Floyd was ruthlessly murdered. I waited for my white associates to be vocal in using their white privilege to stand for Black Lives Matter. Very few people visibly reached out to me. I was disappointed at first as I expected more from them. But I came to realise that I to was not vocal and active about it and I was waiting for something to happen to me and for me. That is not leadership. I was trusting my experience of being a black man to a predominantly anglo-saxon community that had no experience of being black. I have corrected my inaction and given up my judgement of my white colleagues. Since then, I am creating a **Social Justice Council** in my company so that when events like these happen again, I and my associates of diverse backgrounds can provide leadership with velocity and with decisive action.

#### **HOW DO I LIVE MY LEGACY IN THE PRESENT?**

*“I am a nobody, yet I can live my legacy”, Rugare-Rwashe Gomo*

Yes, it is wanky to quote oneself. But I am making a point. I am from a small town in Zimbabwe called Mutare which most of the world has never heard of. My net worth is about AU\$6,000. And I am not Instagram famous. I am a nobody.

Living a legacy is not exclusively the domain of the rich and famous. It is for all of us as part of the human race no matter our circumstances to live a legacy. I am building my own table. As QueenB, Beyoncé recently said: *“I Had to Chop Down that Wood and Build My Own Table”*. My table includes stay home mums who work in my company; my table includes migrants who have set up companies here in Australia and are overlooked because of the colour of their skin or because they speak broken English; my table includes the invisible and voiceless talented girls in Zimbabwe who are seen as a burden to their family because they are a girl; my table includes the boys who are part of the LGBTQI+ community in Africa who are terrified of telling their family because their fear for their wellbeing. I love my table. It is diverse and enriching. Those who sit at my table give me my life. Being a nobody hasn't stopped me from living my legacy, it shouldn't stop you either.



**HOW AM I ENSURING MY LEGACY CONTINUES AFTER I DIE?**

***“We’ve got a responsibility to live up to the legacy of those who came before us by doing all that we can to help those who come after us” First Lady Michelle Obama***

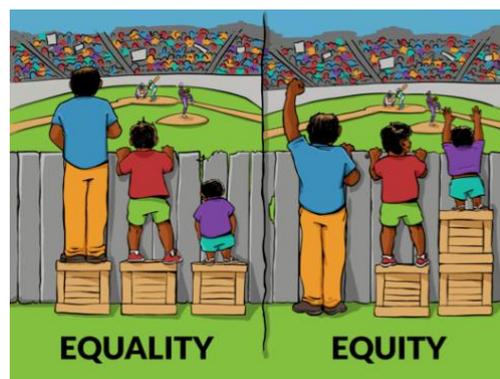
*The context of my relationship with my partner*

I am privileged to be in a loving and committed relationship. I never thought that this was possible for me. My partner is one of most beautiful souls on earth and I have been on a journey to learn to love him the way he deserves to be loved. Loving him has been one of the most challenging things of my life as I have to deal with everything that doesn’t work about me every day. It is by his grace that I have the privilege and the space to learn to love him.

My partner is a white Australian man. Relationships are already complicated when you come from the same cultural background. Even more so when you come from different race and historical backgrounds. There are things that constantly surprise both of us. One of the things I do that surprises him is my natural inclination to be ‘a doomsday prepper’. Having grown up in Zimbabwe, you save money for a rainy day because that rainy day is coming and comes often and unexpectedly. My partner does not have this mentality.

Since my partner and I come from distinct cultural and historical backgrounds, we had to create an approach to creating our legacy, in particular, our *Will*. We approached creating our *Will* through the principle of **equity versus equality**.

*The principle of equity versus equality*



The Illustration<sup>1</sup> above shows the difference between equality and equity. Here are:

*‘three individuals of different heights who are attempting to peer over a fence. In order to treat them equally, they would all be given the same size box to stand on to improve their lines of sight. However, doing so wouldn't necessarily help the shortest person see as well as*

<sup>1</sup> <https://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/>, 21 July 2020



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*the tallest person. In order to give equitable treatment, each person would need to be given a box to stand on that would enable a clear view over the fence.’<sup>2</sup>*

My partner and I addressed our *Will* from the **principle of equity rather than equality**. We applied the principle of equity as we discussed the following topics with our Wills & Estate lawyer:

1. The needs of our family who are located in Australia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and USA
2. Distribution of assets and to whom and why
3. Insurances: life insurance, permanent and disability Insurance etc
4. Personal and financial powers of attorneys should one or both of us become incapacitated
5. Control and decision making of my company
6. Whether our superannuation entitlements will form part of the estate or will be dealt with outside the estate
7. Should we have children, who their guardians will be should my partner and I die and how they will be financially taken care of

By applying the principle of **equity** to the distribution of our wealth, our *Will* will provide for the following:

**1. Black Excellence:**

- a. 85% of our wealth will directly make a difference to black people
- b. 85% of our wealth will directly make a difference on the African continent

**2. Equality of the sexes:**

- a. 95% of our wealth will directly make a difference to women
- b. 85% of our wealth will directly make a difference to women in Africa

**3. Mental Health & Well Being:**

- a. 10% of our wealth will directly make a difference to those with mental health issues for women or the LGBTQI+ community
- b. 5% of our wealth will directly make a difference to those with mental health issues on the African continent

Should we have significant life events like children or increased wealth we intend to amend our will to broaden the legacy we wish to leave.

If there are fundamental issues in your relationship, the creation of your *Will* will highlight them. For me, the co-creation of our *Will* afforded my partner and I the opportunity to reconfirm our connection and recognise the depth of our shared values irrespective of our different life histories and life circumstances.

To conclude, living a legacy is not something that is fixed in stone. It is something that can transform at any moment due to opportunities, exposure to new ideas and discovering new things that are important to you. I hope my letter to you today, will inspire action to start living your legacy today!

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<sup>2</sup> <https://publichealthonline.gwu.edu/blog/equity-vs-equality/>, 21 July 2020