



MYD

MASTER YOUR DESTINY

- SHOW -

KIRSTY BELIEVES THERE IS A GOLDEN THREAD THAT RUNS THROUGH EVERYTHING IN LIFE – AND THAT THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE LEARNED FROM EVEN THE DIFFICULTIES. Looking at this vivacious TV and radio personality, it's difficult to imagine she knows anything about difficult times. But Kirsty has a world of experience behind her that informs the person she has become.

KIRSTY WATERMEYER, FORE-RUNNER OF INSPIRING NAMIBIAN STORIES

Sister Namibia: Kirsty, how did you end up in media?

Kirsty: By a twist of fate. I studied business and marketing, and I started my career in the business world, I even worked for a while in the IT field. Then something happened that got me into media. Looking back I realise there was something more life had in store for me. At the time it was one of those challenges where I was down on the floor the whole time asking "Why?" When it happened, I couldn't understand. What happened was that I joined a company, it had seemed like such an interesting career move, and I had no sooner joined and locks were put on the doors and their computers were being repossessed. The company was bankrupt and there I was. All of the staff stayed to try and save the company but after three months of not getting a salary I was desperate. I didn't have a little nest egg. I started looking for another job and I literally applied everywhere. I even applied to Air Namibia for a call centre job. And they turned me away. Everyone turned me away.

SN: Soul searching times...

Kirsty: Absolutely. I got desperate, I got to the point where was willing to take any job. I was doing all sorts of things to earn a living, house sitting and even looking after people's pets. It was scary. The bank was phoning; I couldn't pay rent; it was really a scary time. I felt I had hit rock bottom. When you're that low other people and especially institutions like a bank seem to have so much power because everything seems so big in comparison to how small you feel.

SN: And you're so powerless.

Kirsty: Exactly. But their beauty is that

there was a plan in all of this. In the midst of this time, one of my friends asked me to attend an event with her where guests were being asked about their taste in music and for everyone that attended, N\$50 would be donated to the Sunshine House. I didn't want to go out that evening but my friend insisted. I remember relenting and saying, "Well, okay, if it's for the children." They were interviewing people on the carpet as you arrived and I was stopped and asked a few questions. I didn't think anything of it but a few days later I got a phone call from NBC asking me to come in for an audition. They wanted to audition me for a live TV show, and my first words were, "Is it a paying job?" You must understand I was so desperate.

SN: So there's something to be said for desperate times?

Kirsty: Absolutely. I honestly don't think I would've even auditioned if not for the fact that I was so desperate. I am actually quite shy by nature. I love people and I have a very strong desire to contribute to the world in a positive manner. But I do that in my little space. I didn't think that I would be doing it on a bigger platform. So I went in for the audition and it was on a Thursday. And they walked me off the set, down the hall, made me sign a piece of paper and said your first live show is on Tuesday. No training, no nothing. And I did my first live show on Tupopyeni the next Tuesday. And I loved it. Being in front of the camera came so naturally, it made me feel happy, I never would have guessed it but my thoughts were "this is so much fun." That was the first step into the world of media. It wasn't long after that that I was offered a job writing and reading the news at a radio station

and then as a DJ at the same station. I still felt though that something else was calling me.

SN: So by now you were personally sorted out, but you wanted to add more value?

Kirsty: Yes, I had an idea that wouldn't go away. I felt so strongly that we needed a space to talk, not only problems, but also solutions. I feel that as human beings we so desperately need that space for our human stuff. A space I feel we don't often allow for, yet is so empowering. I had in the past done some training and development work. I used to train staff of companies on the elements of the brand of those companies. While I was doing this, I noticed how much easier it is to share branding information once we'd cleared up the human stuff. So on day one of training we'd talk about how everyone was doing, where personal blocks or challenges are and how we could overcome these. After we'd gone through this together, a little change of perception, it was so much easier to move on to the branding parts and people were much more willing to absorb after our day of group discussions and purging problems together.

SN: You mean people are firstly interested in themselves as human beings before they care about things like the company and its brand?

Kirsty: Yes. And this helped me realise that this was something we needed; to pause in that space. I have always believed that "When I'm okay, everything around me is okay. When I'm falling apart, everything around me falls apart." This experience affirmed that for me. So armed with my idea, I went and pitched

it to a few different spaces and media houses, and I was laughed out of the room. I was told there is no place for something like that.

SN: What exactly was your idea?

Kirsty: I felt we needed a space where we could connect based on our humanness, where as human beings we could empower each other through our wisdoms and our stories. Because we do empower one another when we share our stories, I have seen this first-hand and experienced this in my own life too.

SN: And?

Kirsty: Initially people thought it was way too positive. That belief that, 'good news doesn't sell'. I was told that in media "People want entertainment. People want to hear about the American movie stars." So I decided I'm taking my idea and I'm going to quit my job and I'm going to find a place that can see the value in this.

SN: That was gutsy.

Kirsty: Maybe, and maybe crazy. It wasn't the first time I was called crazy though. Fortunately, I was guided to finding like-minded people that make up the womanpower partnership that own 99FM.

SN: At last.

Kirsty: It had just broken my heart that we were not celebrating one another and what we've been through as Namibians. Because I believe that that is how we learn. The stories that we remember are the ones that share what it was truly like, and how people actually felt. That is the difference between stories and a clinical history book. Sharing in this way allows us to learn from our history in a way that prevents us repeating mistakes of the past, because we truly understand, we relate. Being given the opportunity to try this out, meant the world to me and I did my first Master Your Destiny (MYD) show in April, and it's been incredible.

SN: In retrospect it probably seemed meant to be. But at the time you had to fight for it.

Kirsty: Oh yes. In the beginning, there were people who came to me and said, "What you're doing is so

cute, but it won't last long because there aren't enough inspirational stories in Namibia to keep this going for very long." I am about to close off my third season, third year of the show and will be launching season four in the new year. The MYD Platform comprises a weekly human interest-based talk show, an environmental show and three articles I write every week. I'm full when it comes to content every week, and I haven't even covered a fraction of the people I want to speak to. There are still so many incredible stories to be told. Plus, this year we were nominated by the New York Festival for the World's Best Radio Talk Shows. The Show was shortlisted as one of the top five talk shows in the world – in the world.

SN: And it's probably because it's positive; it's inspiring.

Kirsty: Possibly because it's inspiring, possibly because it's our stories and our wisdoms. I work in themes, exploring ideas. This year I looked at things like connection, what ubuntu means and what it means to be woke. I believe that every person that is successful has a whole community behind them. When speaking to someone in studio, besides their story, I'd also want to know their take on these concepts and how we can apply them in our lives. How we could make them part of our ethos?

SN: Can you give me an example?

Kirsty: There are so many, but for example, this year I had a woman who lives with multiple sclerosis come and share what her life was like in the series 'Spend a Moment in My Reality'. I had minister Tom Alweendo – not only share about NDP5 but also what his take is on being woke – and how through all sectors of society we can use this knowledge to empower our communities. The stories are where we learn. For example, I had a gentleman in studio who was wrongly accused of a crime, who spent 18 years in prison for something he didn't do. He was someone who taught us the true value of forgiveness. He is an amazing man, John Sam and while he was in prison he learnt the skill



of panel beating. After he served his time Jay-Jay's Panel Beaters hired him where every month he wins the employee of the month award. His story was a reminder of how blame is a modern day version of enslavement.

Every week I am inspired by the stories of the artists, the caregivers, the business world, the ordinary Namibians doing extraordinary things. So many people are doing amazing things for others, silently, not for fame or recognition. Our stories are world-class; they are something that we should be so proud of.

SN: Absolutely. So how does one get hold of these stories if one missed a radio show?

Kirsty: Every show is put online where you can listen to it as a podcast. In addition, this year we brought out the first edition of the MYD Journal, which is a collection of the in-studio shows and articles I've written. This is now an annual publication of purely inspirational Namibian and African stories. Between the radio shows, the online presence and the annual book, we have a collection of Namibian successes and powerful stories of humanity. Another exciting development is that this year, the MYD Show has gone to television as well. Now you'll also find the Show on One Africa TV, which is on Channel 284 on DStv. Plus many more exciting things



are in the pipeline.

SN: This is stunning. And you never studied journalism, right?

Kirsty: No. It's really just passion that drives me. I have also been someone that has been hurt, damaged. I've had abusive relationships, and I have been through some dark times. So much of that had to do with my own feeling of unworthiness. It was when I realised that I was worthy, and I started to build myself up that everything changed around me. I know this to be true for all people and this is what I share.

SN: And how did you realise that? Did something happen?

Kirsty: Many things have happened, but I believe that you are guided through your life experiences and the people in your life. You know how people say that they want a sign. I don't believe that the sign comes as a billboard. It comes all over the place. All you have to do is just follow, just walk through the open doors. I believe you are always being guided, you're being protected, and that you are supported – even when you feel alone. A major turning point for me was that I had a big car accident when I was twenty years old. Despite the magnitude of the accident, I was saved somehow, I was protected. My very small car was smashed into by an extended length sand truck. There

were 10cm left of the driver's seat. I was thrown with the impact onto the floor of the passenger seat into the only place of the entire car that wasn't crushed. It took them hours to cut me out of the car with the Jaws of Life.

SN: Were you conscious?

Kirsty: I was unconscious. There was one moment when I came back. I felt as though it was time for me to say goodbye. It was like I opened my eyes and it was so noisy and horrible, and I just wanted to go back – back to the other side. I don't often tell people about this. People usually think I'm crazy. Yes, I've had one of those experiences. And I came back with this new perspective; it didn't start immediately. It took a while. But I knew there was something more I needed to do with my life.

Even in all of these stories on MYD, there are people who have been through some really horrific life experiences who have come out on the other side, able to help other people. And I think that's the beauty of life. Even in our challenges, we are being moulded for something else. Our strengths are there for a reason and there is going to be a connection, a golden thread. I remember thinking at

school that I had no talents. Because everyone else seemed to have talents but I was just kind of mediocre, but I've always been able to talk a lot. It's funny because this year I got my first trophy ever, with my name on it.

SN: For talking!

Kirsty: I suppose yes, for talking. More than that though, for the space where others could share, and together we could learn and grow. Where we are reminded of how incredible we are as human beings, how incredible we can be. Where we remember that we are all loveable and valuable.

The Master Your Destiny Show airs every Wednesday on 99FM at 6pm, and on One Africa television, which is Channel 284 DSTv:

- Tuesday at 8 pm
- Thursday at 6:30 am
- Sunday at 7:30 pm

All shows are available as podcasts on the 99FM website (www.99fm.com.na) and on 99fm on itunes.

Join Kirsty's conversation on the MYD by sending an email to kirsty@99fm.com.na

