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Joyce Mbaya: The Kenyan apprentice

Published on 12/10/2010

Joyce Mbaya, 27, was a contestant on Apprentice Africa 2008 and is now an entrepreneur and a life coach. She tells NELLY OBADHA about the crucial decision she had to make to get where she is today.

What did you study in college?

I did my bachelors degree in Computer Science and Mathematics at the University of Central Missouri in the US. Computer science was my dream career and although I am still passionate about it, it only forms one of the many aspects of my life.



I have also had the chance to go for the Apprentice Africa (a business reality show) in 2008 where I got an eye opening experience that has changed my life completely. Since the show, I have shifted to being an entrepreneur.

How did you get into the Apprentice Africa?

I was encouraged to apply by my colleagues at work who were confident I would qualify. The applications had to be completed online and they were very detailed. They included information on work experience, personal preferences and behaviour. Out of thousands of applicants, I was short listed for interviews conducted at the Panafric Hotel. The interviews took two days. On the first day we were about 100 applicants and we were short listed to 20. On the second day, they selected the final three contestants. It was a very intensive process and we needed to be strategic, smart but still entertaining.

How was your experience at the programme?

Joyce Mbaya, 27, was a contestant on Apprentice Africa 2008 and is now an entrepreneur and a life coach.

It was life changing. It brought out some of my strengths and weaknesses. It felt like attending an intensive and practical business school. The recent three-month success programme "Awaken Your Potential" that Gibebe (my life and business coaching company) launched is inspired by my Apprentice experience.

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What are some of the lessons you learnt from the whole experience there?

It's hard to summarise what I learned, but one of the strongest lessons I left with was in leadership and integrity. I have strong ethics and I was not willing to cheat to get ahead. Many people did not understand this, but I realised my character is strong and I'm passionate about leadership that is ethical and inspiring. Through some of the tasks, I also learnt lessons about entrepreneurship, branding and project management.

How did Apprentice Africa affect your life?

I would say that it definitely took my career to the next level. I got good job offers afterwards. It also made me see that I'm meant to accomplish great things. My decision to leave the corporate world to go into business and pursue my true passion as a business and life coach as well as empowering others, was influenced by my discovery on the show that I'm good at business and I can be successful as an entrepreneur.

After Apprentice Africa 2008, I got my awakening and knew I would be doing business. I started up the

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The skirmishes in the aftermath of 2007 election were crystal clear that moneyed people played the biggest part in the violence that massacred innocent people in the Country. No stone should be left unturned. In this matter, the perpetrators, be they from which party, participated and Kenyans are cr ...

Joseph Nelson Mwanjilwa, Sudan

Your Comments

company Gibebe as a way of inspiring, enlightening and empowering people to know their potential and become high achievers in society. Gibebe began last year with informal coaching of friends and people I worked with. Many of my friends used to come to me for advice on general life issues, their career and lots of other concerns.

Gibebe took off with career coaching, which involved training people on how to handle and maintain their individual careers. It also offers life-coaching tips on how to manage your life and bring out your full potential.

Have you achieved your goals with Gibebe?

Yes. I get to give speeches on empowerment by co-operate companies all over Kenya. Many people also approach me on one-on-one sessions on careers and for some, how to ensure they succeed in their businesses.

My greatest achievement so far is the knowledge that I have been able to impact on people to know and understand their potential in life, careers, business and other aspects of life and help them improve every aspect of it.

What are the challenges you have faced in your line of work?

The first and most common challenge when starting a business is getting start-up capital. It wasn't easy getting money to start up my business from the ground. The struggle has paid off and now my business, Gibebe, can stand on its own.

At first when I began doing life coaching, many people, especially the older generation, were very skeptical about getting advice from a young person.

Life coaching is a new thing in the market, therefore, not many people give it any thought. A few people are starting to embrace it.

What do you love most about what you do?

I love working with people so much. I'm an interactive person so I don't find it hard to get to know people and make new friends and the fact that I can help those who need my help gives me a greater satisfaction than money.

Apart from Gibebe, workshops and all other things you do, how do you get to enjoy yourself, have some me time?

I love going for holidays and retreats just to get some quiet place and time to meditate. This is how I get some time out. I also love dancing and I even teach some dance classes.

I also like spending time with my boyfriend. When I'm with him I get to be myself, not the business co-operate woman everyone sees around.

Any last words?

Know your purpose and live it. Don't stop until you get to know it well.

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