

ROLLING INSPIRATION

ISSUE 4 2022

The leading magazine

impairments

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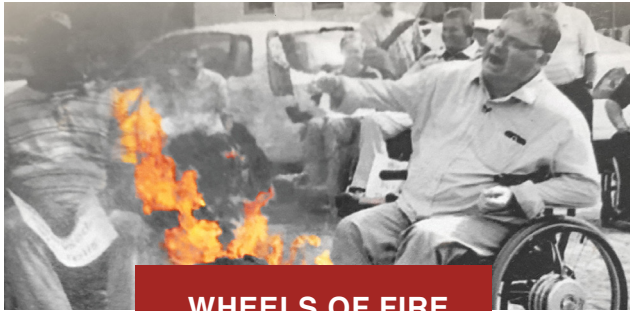
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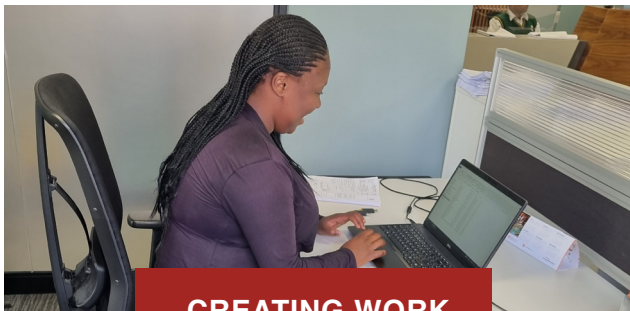
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If you feel that you are getting lost in caregiving, it is more than okay to say "no".



AMPUTEE CORNER



The poor animal was limping around on the stump of his left hind leg.

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A return and much change

As Ari Seirlis is welcomed back as contributor of Upfront, he reflects on the changes taking place in QASA that will see the organisation grow for the better

It's a great privilege for me to be invited to write again for Upfront. In September 2019, I retired as the CEO of QASA and recently relocated to Sedgelyield in the Western Cape, a quiet village with a friendly community, with a new purpose.

I presently serve as a co-opted member of the QASA board and have so enjoyed watching the debate and strategic discussions around change, the repurposing and pivoting of some QASA projects, and most importantly, looking at a more effective way of managing the organisation in order to have a more meaningful impact.

All organisations need to change all of the time. Slow change, well-planned change; change that is consultative and represents the voice of the sector you serve. I have no doubt that QASA will go through this process. It has already started and it looks exciting. The process will allow decentralisation of many of the QASA projects it seems.

Over the many years that I served as CEO, I saw the pros and cons of the QASA structure as it is at the moment. Now I see the management board taking note that things could be done differently and be more effective.

Money in the bank and solid assets does not mean sustainability of any non-profit organisation and certainly QASA has a very strong and well-defined Theory of Change. QASA also operates in the social enterprise space, which allows for unrestricted funding to be raised and deployed to



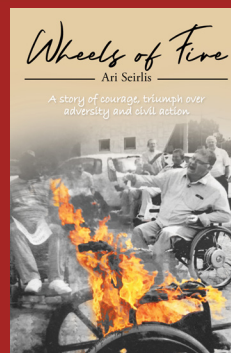
employ good people, pay operational expenses and invest in future maintenance, staff and management development.

Sustainability can be declared when the beneficiaries of the projects and services are satisfied with the direction of the organisation and the deployment of the resources. I think QASA will achieve that very soon, once there is buy-in from the regional associations, good leadership at the helm, and staff willing to take the leap of faith and put in the hard yards.

Watch this space, *Rolling Inspiration* will also be under scrutiny and see some changes coming for the good in order to expand and diversify readership and improve quality. Good luck QASA, good thinking at the helm has started this process.

ABOUT AUTHOR

Ari Seirlis is the former CEO of the QuadPara Association of South Africa and, presently, a member of the Presidential Working Group on Disability. He is a wheelchair user and disability activist. Ari has recently published his biography, which can be found at www.wheelsoffire.co.za.



MUST READ

Ari Seirlis has published his autobiography. We interview him about it on page 15.



QASA NEWS

Celebrating with Sabat Batteries

It was with great anticipation that QASA attended the 2022 Sabat Power Wheelchair Race. The event was halted during lockdown. In July, it returned and QASA members were eager to get back onto the race track.

Sabat Batteries, the host for the event, has been a valuable partner for the organisation for over 30 years. They assist with providing QASA members with batteries for their power wheelchairs. This has empowered our members to be more mobile and independent.

QASA would like to extend its deepest thanks to Sabat Batteries for their support, but also for hosting this wonderful event that saw 16 power wheelchair users battle it out to be crowned the winner.

Congratulations to Sonika de Wit who nabbed the title. We look forward to many more years celebrating and supporting power wheelchair users with the assistance of Sabat Batteries.

Read more about the race and catch the video highlights in the next issue of *Rolling Inspiration*. [R](#)

News from our AGM

QASA hosted its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday, 17 September 2022. During the event, attendees were updated on the activities of the organisation and its financial standing.

The various regional associations affiliated with QASA were also given the opportunity to report back on its activity for the past year. The AGM also presented the opportunity for a new board to be elected who will see the organisation through 2023.

Check out the next issue of *Rolling Inspiration* for all the news from the AGM and interviews with the new board members. [R](#)

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COVER STORY



Photo: Women with disabilities gather at the Artscape Theatre in August for the Broken Crayons Still Colour Beautifully Symposium.

We matter

The inaugural Broken Crayons Still Colour Beautifully Symposium offered attendees motivation, information and community with organiser, Notukela Makohliso, sharing an important message: Women with disabilities matter

The room is abuzz with chatter. Women with disabilities from all walks of life are gathered in the Artscape Theatre Centre in Cape Town awaiting the start of the inaugural Broken Crayons Still Colour Beautifully (BCSCB) Symposium. The event, held in August to commemorate women's month, aimed to celebrate women with disabilities, motivate them to pursue their goals and inform them of the opportunities available to aid their pursuit.

"I believe that information is a powerful tool in the right hands," says Notukela Makohliso, organiser of the Symposium. "My hope is that these ladies will take the information and inspiration to fuel their dreams and goals; to keep pushing until they achieve them. They can achieve great things."

Notukela herself is a woman with a disability who understands the challenges the community faces. In 2017, she was in a motor vehicle accident that resulted in her becoming a hemiplegic, paralysed on the one side of her body. As a result, Notukela uses a wheelchair with no function in her right arm and a speech impediment. She was unable to continue lecturing and her business closed down while she was still in rehabilitation. Adjusting to her new life was a challenge.

"To say it was difficult is an understatement really," she reflects. "I am still searching for the words to articulate this period of my life. I did not feel at home in my own body. I grieved the loss of my mobility, my job, my business, my car. The loss of any normalcy. It has been a couple of years now, and I am still processing the trauma, grieving, and healing."

"Apart from losing my mobility, all sources of earning a living, and losing my life as

I knew it, the most challenging part has to be trying to rebuild my life in a world that does not support me. Not being able to land a job, despite my qualifications and experience. I am no longer employable," she continues.

"Not being able to access buildings because I'm in a wheelchair. How society looks down on me, because they are standing and I am sitting in a wheelchair. It is a completely different world with a plethora of physical, psychological and economic challenges compounded by society's ignorance and lack of transformation and awareness," Notukela adds. Fortunately, hope remains.

"I am now at the stage of discovery. I am no longer focusing on my limitations. I am constantly trying new things and discovering different ways to do them. Hence, I resonate better with being called differently-abled, because I am well able. My body deserves respect for its abilities not limitations. Everyone has limitations," she says.



ABOVE: (From the left) Organiser of the Broken Crayons Still Colour Beautifully (BCSCB) Symposium, Notukela Makohliso, and Miss Wheelchair South Africa, Tamelyn Bock, join Artscape Theatre Centre CEO, Marlene Le Roux, on stage as she gives a passionate speech.

COVER STORY

As Notukela entered a more peaceful, curious period of her recovery, she decided to establish the **Notukela Foundation Institute (NFI)** in 2019.

“I’m a gushing mother of two kings, and I always teach them to do to others as they would like to be done to them. The NFI does everything I wish I could have had available to me after I came out of the hospital,” Notukela says. “We offer trauma counselling, skills development training, mentorship, coaching, as well as storytelling across different platforms. I established the NFI to inspire, empower, and motivate women, youth and people who are differently-abled. The institution advocates and promotes the advancement of human rights and social justice.”

In 2022, her curiosity led Notukela to organising the BCSCB Symposium. Aside from the knowledge-sharing opportunity the event provided, Notukela felt it important to break women with disabilities from the isolation they often face.

“People in the community of differently-abled persons largely exist in silos. We go through trauma in isolation, suffer in isolation and even our stories stay in the shadows and are largely untold. Humans are created for relationships and community. This event is designed to bring people together, to engage, to share information, to inspire, and to celebrate our stories of resilience and tenacity,” she explains.

The need for community building was evident by the excitement in the room. The women were soon good friends chatting away with the stranger by their side. They had a shared goal and mission – to let their voices be heard, to be seen, and play an important role in society.

As Notukela points out: “Firstly, everyone deserves to feel that they are seen, that they are heard, and that they matter. Not just differently-able-bodied, but everyone. Secondly, in a world that sees difference as weakness; we need to teach differently-abled persons that they are enough.”



ABOVE: Notukela Makohliso is the organiser of the Broken Crayons Still Colour Beautifully Symposium.

BOTTOM: Notukela gives a passionate speech at the Symposium about her own journey.

The event accomplished just that. Some of the presentations were more practically focused. Employees from the Department of Employment and Labour attended to share information on services available, provided free of charge, which included a rundown of what is needed to get a business registered.

Edwina Ghall, disability service manager at the University of Cape Town, spoke about the practical services available, but also gave a passionate speech on her own experience as a person with a disability and the challenges she faced as her disability was diagnosed late in life. Despite the challenges, she achieved tremendous success and found joyful employment – a message shared by others.

“Sometimes, there is nothing wrong with going a step back. Sometimes you take a step back to go forward,” said Karen Smit during her presentation at the BCSCB Symposium. She shared how she had set out to be a social worker in life, but was retrenched. She tried starting her own recruitment agency, but this too failed as businesses saw the employment of her clients as a “favour”.

Finally, she took a job in a Vodacom call centre. As fate would have it, she was only there for eight months before moving on to better things within the business. Today, she heads up the specific needs or accessibility department at the commercial business unit within Vodacom South Africa. Karen said: “When one door closes, another opens. But, you need to take action.”

She also cautioned: “Women with disabilities need to work twice as hard.” Albeit realistic in the challenges that women with disabilities might face, the speakers were extremely motivational, urging the women to see their worth.

Notukela said at the event: “If they will not give me a seat at the table, I’ll create my own table.” Miss Wheelchair South Africa, Tamelyn Bock, urged the crowd: “We will bring the change.”

In a passionate speech, Marlene Le Roux, CEO of the Artscape Theatre Centre, said: “Jobs creates dignity. And dignity gives us that we do matter in life.”

The Symposium left one hopeful, inspired and motivated. Notukela hopes to see the event return in 2023. She says: “We are planning to make this an annual event. My vision is to make it a national event, and expand to other cities.”

As for her personal journey, Notukela has some exciting ventures awaiting her. She shares: “We are about to launch our mobile app, which offers online trauma counselling and online training. [After completing the training], we will help place graduates for jobs or link them to business support entities, get them to work or to do business.



TOP: Karen Smit shares her employment journey at the Symposium.

BOTTOM: Several of the women who attended the event enjoy a mid-morning coffee.

“I’m very excited, because this project will connect us with people everywhere, even in the outskirts or rural areas. It’s action and impact will be beyond my limitations; taking advantage of technology to benefit this community,” she adds.

Finally, Notukela shares some wisdom for anyone facing a challenging time, especially while recovering from an injury: “Your injury is not the end of life. You can rebuild your life, and find purpose again. Persevere because greatness awaits on the other side of the storm. ‘Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day’ (2 Corinthians 4:16).

“This passage reminds me that there is power in the crucibles that we face. Take heart, persevere. There is power in the pause to not only rehabilitate the physical body, but also your inner self,” Notukela concludes. **R**



IDA'S CORNER



GEORGE LOUW

Caregiving: Is it OK to say NO?

The strain of caregiving can greatly impact on the health of a caregiver. Boundaries and a community approach is essential

Persons with disabilities, whatever the nature of the disability, are usually the focus of concern, empathy and sympathy: “*Ag shame*, how terrible. I feel so sorry for you.” But caregivers (and here I am focussing on non-professional caregivers such as family or friends) often are burdened with a sense of obligation.

For the caregivers, obligation is born out of love, a sense of responsibility or many other reasons. Obligation can also come from outside the individual. The expectations and demands of others; siblings, friends and others who say things like “You are the best person for the job because...” followed by a multitude of reasons. Some are realistic, but

there are also those reasons that serve only to absolve the other persons from taking up the responsibilities themselves...

For the person with the disability, it is what it is. They have to live with it. But for the voluntary caregiver it is a choice: “It needn’t be what it is, but I chose it to be”. And this is the crux of caregiver stress. It is optional, it is a choice. I choose to care, out of love, out of compassion, out of a sense of responsibility or even out of a sense of obligation.

Now, here I am a year or two later, exhausted and demoralised and, frankly, just plain *gatvol*. Not so much for the person for whom I care, but because of the situation I find myself in;

isolated, frustrated, with no time of my own, burnt out and struggling with bad dreams and flashbacks of past events that were horrible to experience. My temper is frayed and my tears are just below the surface. I live on “cruise control” doing what needs to be done. But, for myself, I am slipping...

There are many research programmes and articles that examine and describe the effects of overburdened caregiving on caregivers, published under labels such as: “Caregiver stress”; “Caregiver Fatigue”; “Caregiver Burnout”, and more. Even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been ascribed as a consequence of caregiving. Most of these articles define what their labels mean and describe the fallouts of their defined condition. But, when it comes to solutions, one word encapsulates all proposed solutions: The tiny little word “No”.

It is okay for caregivers to say “No”. No to the person for whom you are caring. No to all those who cheer you on so that they do not have to become involved themselves. And an especially loud and assertive NO to yourself.

But what does “No” mean?

“No” is not giving up and walking away. “No” is not throwing your love and compassion into the trash can. “No” is not cruel and heartless.

“No” preserves the caregiver’s health and sanity. “No” paves the way for long-term caregiving. “No” is the caregiver’s toolkit for survival.

We don’t have to feel guilty about saying “no”. If you feel that you are getting lost in caregiving; if you feel that you can no longer provide caregiving in this way; if you feel that the current demands of caregiving cannot be sustained for much longer, it is more than okay to say “no”.

In fact, you must say no. No means taking stock of your current situation. No means, “What can I change in order to cope?”. No means, “Where can I get help?”. “No” is the beginning of formulating a strategy for sustainable caring without losing yourself.



ABOVE: Saying “no” includes setting healthy boundaries and prioritising “me-time”.

“No” allows you to continue to love and care without being weighed down by the burden.

So, now that we have taken the plunge to say “no”, what now?

First and foremost, don’t wait until you are ready to crash before saying “no”. The earlier in the caregiving relationship you step back, take stock and plan a routine for caring, the better for you and the person for whom you are caring.

Now ask yourself two questions:

- What are the needs of the person I am caring for?
- What are my own needs?

Write down the two lists of needs. Next it is time for a chat with the care recipient. Keep the conversation calm and supportive. The disability in question is a given. It is not something for which to feel sorry or to feel guilty about. It is something that needs to be managed in a manner that satisfies the needs of both parties as far as possible. As the caregiver, show your love and allow time for both of you to share your concerns. Add any new concerns to your list.

Now it is time to agree on structure and boundaries. As caregiver you are in charge of setting up structures and boundaries because you are the active person. But remember that your care recipient is the

affected person, so to prevent resentment there needs to be good communication and mutual agreement on the proposed structure and boundaries.

Structure: What is the daily routine and the weekly routine? Remember to include breaks and “me-time”.

Boundaries: Set both physical and emotional boundaries. This is not a world where the care recipient can just load everything onto the caregiver who is required to have boundless energy and limitless love; just absorbs everything in their stride. It is a relationship of give and take.

The caregiver’s physical limitations must be taken into account and emotions must be talked through by both parties. In this way, understanding, fortitude and resilience is developed and the relationship becomes more solidified.

When boundaries are challenged with unreasonable demands or emotional outbursts, an assertive “no” comes into play, but with empathy and understanding. Be careful that the care recipient’s emotions do not infect you to respond in kind.

If you as caregiver maintain control, this will help to sustain your physical health and your emotional state of mind. But if you need a good cry or a loud scream to vent your frustration, do not hold back. Cry and scream to your heart’s content, but do so in private.

There is an old saying: “It takes a village to raise a child”. We can also say, “it takes a village to care for a person with a disability”. So, say “no” to going it alone. Say “no” to social isolation.

Don’t let siblings and mutual friends tell you that you are the best person for the job and then step back from their responsibilities. Say to them, “Thank you for the compliment, but if I am to remain the best person for the job, I am going to need your help”. This is where you do not accept no for an answer.

Also make a point of facilitating social contact. Invite friends and family over. If the care recipient’s mobility allows for it, go out for lunch, coffee or other social events. Social isolation can be devastating – to both of you.


By setting structure and boundaries and by the constructive use of “no” caregiving can become an experience of privilege, an expression of love that builds the caregiver’s sense of self-worth as well as the recipient’s experience that life is there for living and enjoying, despite the limitations of disability.



Don’t let siblings and mutual friends tell you that you are the best person for the job and then step back.

“No” need not be a negative. It can also be a reality check and a means of survival.

A personal note: My wife, her sister and I shared the heart-breaking privilege of, over a period of five years, guiding both my parents-in-law through dementia aggravated by psychotic episodes, until their eventual passing in 2019 and 2021 respectively.

We suffered many of the stresses, anxieties and heartaches of caregiving, but we came through because we shared the burden between ourselves and, when it became necessary, also with a frail care facility. There were many instances when we said no and there were instances where the frail care staff said no to us. 

ABOUT AUTHOR

Ida’s Corner is a regular column by George Louw, who qualified as a medical doctor, but, due to a progressing spastic paralysis, chose a career in health administration. The column is named after Ida Hlongwa, who worked as caregiver for Ari Seirlis for 20 years. Her charm, smile, commitment, quality care and sacrifice set the bar incredibly high for the caregiving fraternity. email: yorslo@icloud.com



Rehabilitating a Rhino

Part one of the series takes a look at one rhino in need of a prosthetic knee and the prosthetist ready to help

Three weeks ago we attended a product launch. A new prosthetic knee was showcased. One of the attending prosthetists complained to my colleagues that there are limited prosthetic components available for patient weighing more than 150 kg. Joggie smiled and said: “Listen *boet*, you don’t have a problem. My heaviest patient weighs as much as your car”! Of course, Joggie was referring to our rhino patient that tips the scale at 1 500 kg (or 1,5 tonnes).

To make a long story short, a rhino farm and sanctuary was looking for donations to maintain their rhino’s current prosthesis. Due to wear and tear, the prosthesis could not be used anymore. The poor animal was limping around on the stump of his left hind leg. The stump was badly bruised, painful, and full of hard calluses. You will not believe the following, but it was actually evident that this rhino, named “Achillies”, was suffering. He presented very much as a “depressed” animal.

Tanya, our social media guru, alerted us to this Facebook post. There and then our practice decided as one that we will turn this situation around, come hell or high water. Our first port of call was to break the patient’s fall by maintaining the current prosthesis so that Achilles could get back on his feet. This was easy to do. Thereafter, we would proceed with the meticulous process of manufacturing a new prosthesis to the following specifications and objectives:

- The new prosthesis must be at least half the weight of the old one;
- The prosthesis must be easy to don and doff (to fit);
- Affordable to maintain;
- All casting, measuring, and fitting must




TOP: Achillies has been battling as his old prosthesis deteriorates. He even showed signs of depression.

ABOVE: Heinrich Grimsehl fits the rhino for his new prosthetic leg.

be done **without** darting or tranquilising the animal;

- All manufacturing to be done in the Arc Studio lab at the Netcare Rehabilitation Hospital.

So, how do you think our patient’s treatment protocol is unfolding? Do you think that we will be successful? Keep reading *Rolling Inspiration*. A lot of fascinating and interesting rhino info will follow in the coming months! 

ABOUT AUTHOR

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TRAVEL



MANDY LATIMORE

Is this toilet really accessible?

Are we deceived by the accessible toilet sign in our travels? Mandy Latimore takes a closer look at what truly makes a bathroom accessible.

During your travels, whether it is locally or internationally, we all need to make use of a toilet at some point. Part of my daily planning, if I am out and about, is to plan where there are accessible toilets so that I can keep going without having to return home to use the loo. Having planned this, how often does one arrive at a venue that advertises accessible toilets only to have non-compliance with standards we deserve?

SIGNAGE

Often there are overhead signs, but when you get to the toilet block, one can't see whether there is a unisex cubicle or an accessible cubicle within the gents or ladies bathroom. There should be a clear international sign for disability on the door of the unisex toilet or on the door for the gents to ladies. When inside either the ladies or gents, there

should be another sign on the actual cubicle door. Accessible toilet cubicle dimensions should be a minimum 1 800 mm by 1 800 mm, with international best practices at 2 200 mm by 2 400 mm. If a shower is added then they need to be enlarged.

DOORS

The building codes state that designated unisex accessible cubicles should have an outward opening door with specific handles and locking mechanisms. Nine times out of ten, the automatic closer is set so strongly and the door is so heavy that you can hardly open it. Once in the cubicle, you are left (often with your eyeballs popping) desperately waiting for the door to close, while others are staring at you, wondering why you are waiting. Too often, the door opens inwards and then it's a risk to enter.

LAYOUTS

The standard basic layout is to place the toilet with its centreline 450 mm from the side wall so that, should there be angled grab rails on the wall, you are able to make the best use of these. There should also be 600 mm to the open side of the toilet so that a wheelchair can approach the pan. There cannot be a fixed rail on the open side as this restricts approach. The toilet should be wall-mounted and the pan height should be at a height of 480 mm with the seat making it 500 mm from the finished floor surface.

This is done so that transfers from a standard adult manual wheelchair will be as level as possible. As a wheelchair user, it is not easy to hoist the dead-weight of butt and legs up 10 centimetres onto your chair using grab rails that are not at the correct heights! Again, if there are grab rails installed, they need to be placed at the correct positions and heights relatively to the pan height so that they are able to give maximum assistance.

For hotel rooms and other hospitality wet rooms, the toilet can be placed away from a side wall, but then hinged arm supports need to be installed on both sides of the toilet so that access is not restricted to get to the toilet. The rails can be lowered and raised to suit the individual.

The reason a small basin is placed in the basic layout 250 mm from the front of the pan on the side wall is so that the person using the toilet can sanitise or wash their hands before and after adjusting clothing. There should also be a mixer situated on the side of the basin closest to the pan.

There should be a vanity shelf, but this can be a small shelf placed alongside the wall-mounted basin. Pedestal-mounted basins don't allow easy access with wheelchairs as your feet bump into the pedestal before you can get your body close enough. The large vanities with fascia boards in front of them and basins mounted on top of the vanity become extremely difficult to access.

Try rinsing your mouth while brushing your teeth sitting side on to a basin that has its height at 820 mm from the floor! You have to become an expert at spitting long distance. Tap and mixer combinations for basins should also be



MAIN PHOTO AND TOP LEFT: Grab rails play an important part in making a bathroom accessible.


BOTTOM LEFT: A kitchen spout is at times better than a bathroom spout.

RIGHT: Wall-mounted basins provide better access for wheelchair users.

considered. A kitchen spout sometimes is a better option than a bathroom one. It is slightly longer and brings the water closer to the front of the basin for easy access. Mixers with some sort of handle that has an opening assists those with dexterity issues to hook a finger into the opening to control the lever.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

It is a basic human right to be able to make use of a toilet; therefore, accessible bathrooms are required in all built facilities that offer services to the public – whether it's a shopping centre, hotel, restaurant, places of education or places of interest. Facilities for persons with disabilities need to be in place and easy to access with good signage.

So, don't just settle for a half adapted afterthought or places that don't have any facilities at all. They are getting away with non-compliance and the longer we just accept this without informing the owners or managers, we will never get the facilities changed or retrofitted. It's your right to be able to make use of accessible facilities that are compliant as well as safe. Happy Travels. 

ABOUT AUTHOR

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Wheels of Fire

— Ari Seirlis —

*A story of courage, triumph over
adversity and civil action*



Wheels of Fire: Autobiography of Ari Seirlis

A story of courage, triumph over adversity and civil action, *Wheels of Fire* journeys through the life and adventures of Ari Seirlis

Well-known disability activist and former QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA) CEO, Ari Seirlis has documented his life in *Wheels of Fire*. The autobiography takes the reader through all the various chapters of Ari's journey. From his youth spent in Ladysmith, his schooling and army days to his spinal injury in 1985 that propelled him towards his career with QASA.

Ari shares many of his personal revelations in the book including how he came to terms with the lifelong inevitability of using a wheelchair during the long period of clinical rehabilitation after his injury – the darkest time of his life. Readers can look forward to reading about his successes with creating innovative and sustainable funding opportunities for non-profit organisations; and his encounters with some incredible figures including Christopher Reeve and Nelson Mandela.

"With honesty, humour, and self-reflection, he takes readers through the wonderful highs and desperate lows of his life in this moving and inspiring story. A must read to inspire you to think beyond the box and cope with adversity," the book jacket reads. We sat down with Ari to learn more about his motivation to write an autobiography and what he learned from the experience.

Rolling Inspiration: What inspired you to write an autobiography?

Ari Seirlis: In my 60th year, I was approached by a few people who know me well and encouraged me to write my book. I wasn't intending on writing a book. But, then changed my mind and thought it would be a 60th gift to myself to pen down some of my memories.

RI: What was the experience like of writing about your life?

AS: I slowly discovered my past and my

memory kicked in. The experience was quite cathartic and I really enjoyed it. There were some days when I couldn't write a word and other days when I wrote for hours and hours.

RI: Have you learned anything about yourself during the experience?

AS: I learned so much about myself. Mostly how privileged I was and what a generous upbringing I had from parents who wanted only the best for me. I missed some opportunities and have some regrets. These I acknowledge openly.


RI: What do you hope others will learn or gain from reading the autobiography?

AS: The value of resilience; and it's okay to get something wrong. The book also gives a good account of how social enterprise and sweating your assets can build your non-profit organisation's sustainability. Furthermore, maybe there is a message of what goes around, comes around.

RI: You've achieved so much and worn many hats. What do you hope for the next chapter?

AS: I would like to make a small impact in the Sedgefield community, but most importantly, enjoy the rest of my life stress free, and in good health.

The autobiography is R250 with delivery at R50. If you would like to purchase a copy, you can download the order form by clicking

[here](#) or scanning the QR Code with your smartphone. Readers who would like to get a taste of what to expect in the autobiography can read more about Ari's career with QASA [here](#); or read about the impact fly fishing had on his life [here](#). 

ORDER THE BOOK

Scan the QR Code with your smartphone to download the order form for *Wheels of Fire*.





PLAYER'S FUND



QUINTIN VAN JAARVELD

It's never too late to accomplish your goal

Delvian Samuels is the ultimate testament that it's never too late to accomplish your goal as a determined Delvian obtained his matric certificate 14 years after he suffered a life-changing injury as a promising rugby player

In 1999, 17-year-old Delvian Samuels was playing hooker for the Ravensmead Park Old Apostolic Church against their neighbours from the East on Youth Day when the scrum, and his world, came crashing down.

"I felt a shock through my body and then nothing," he recalls. He'd broken his neck (C6/C7 vertebrae) and was left a quadriplegic. He underwent surgery at Conradie Hospital, where he had to find the courage to face his new reality, starting with six months of rehabilitation.

The love and support of his loved ones – particularly that of his parents – powered

him to handle the heart-breaking situation as best he could. Challenges in such cruel circumstances, however, are plentiful and unavoidable. When he was at his lowest, a conversation with a social worker changed it all.

"There came a day or two, about three months into rehab, where I didn't want to see or speak to anybody. A social worker sat with me and asked me where I was mentally. I opened up to her and she explained things and the road ahead," Delvian reveals.

"She told me not to give up and that even though I could no longer do the things I used to, if I put in 110 percent, I'll still be able to

do so much; that I can live a full life and that nothing will be able to hinder me. I instantly not only regained my strength and motivation, but also got the boost I needed to truly start over,” he adds.

That Delvian can't remember the social worker's name adds to the almost angelic-like figure she is in his life story. He returned to Florida High School with the rest of the Grade 12 class of 2000, but despite his best efforts, a litany of challenges – with a lack of transport being near the top of the list – led to him not matriculating. He remained undeterred.

While he never gave up this dream, it had to be put on the back burner for the time being. Delvian redirected his energy. When entering the workplace proved problematic, he created his own.



I instantly not only regained my strength and motivation, but also got the boost I needed to truly start over.

“I did a number of small jobs to earn an income. I offered printing services to the community by printing CVs and photos among other things. I also ran a tuck shop from home, selling sweets out of my bedroom window,” he says.

To attempt such endeavours requires a strong inner will, but for Delvian, it was a given. He notes: “With a disability, you need to try to be as independent as possible, in whichever way you can. Everybody wants and needs to earn an income for themselves, so I was willing to do whatever I could.”

After a challenging decade of toiling, Delvian got the opportunity to go back to the past. “My cousin came to me and said his wife was going to do night classes at Uitsig High School to finish her matric and asked me if


I wanted to do it as well and I said absolutely! He transported us and I was able to complete matric. After 13 years, it felt really good to get that matric certificate! My parents were really happy and, for me, it felt a bit like saying thank you to them for being there for me since day one,” Delvian reflects.

Also there from the beginning was the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund. “[Then-member of the Players' Fund Board of Trustees] Mike Meintjes and his wife were among the first people to visit me in hospital. The flat we lived in at the time wasn't wheelchair friendly, so the Players' Fund actually purchased a house for us with ramps to make things accessible for me,” he says.

“I also had the opportunity to do data-based work for Old Mutual through the Players' Fund. They've always been just a phone call away and I'm incredibly grateful to them!”

Delvian entered the next chapter of his remarkable journey by entering a learnership programme with the Sanlam Trust Beneficiary Fund and Umbrella Trust in 2014, an opportunity he's turned into a successful career as Senior Trust Administrator in the company's Bellville head office.

“It's very nice working at Sanlam. I'm fortunate enough to have colleagues who look past my disability and treat me really well,” says the now 40-year-old.

He adds a powerful parting message, which fittingly encapsulated his character, saying: “A disability doesn't mean you have to give up on life. You can still have a happy life and achieve big things if you put your mind to it. Yes, there will be challenges, but you'll be able to overcome them with the right attitude.” 

DONATE TO THE PLAYER'S FUND

If you would like to support the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Fund, visit their website at www.playersfund.org.za and select any number of the giving options available, which include EFT, payfast, Snapscan and Zapper.



Disability Employment Equity Revisited

The employment in 2022 looks poor according to the latest Employment Equity Report



Disability Employment Equity statistics have not improved according to the latest Commission on Employment Equity Report for 2022. The current percentage is 1,2 percent, which is slight reduction from the 1,3 percent achieved last year. This does not bode well for the employment of persons with disabilities. Inflation is creeping up at an alarming rate with the cost of living ever increasing. Interest rates have steadily increased over the past months. This has increased the value of bond payments, which significantly reduced disposable income. Loadshedding has impacted the economy which, in turn, affects expenses and incomes. Unemployment levels remain high, which limits job opportunities.

With all this negativity, how can persons with disabilities ensure their financial wellbeing through employment? Skills development remains a good way to enter the world of work. Working towards a NQF level 4 (or matric equivalent) is good goal to set. Persons with disabilities should be encouraged to remain on a lifelong journey of learning to improve their options for gaining or advancing in their employment. They can enter universities, TVET colleges and private training institutions. There are various disability-specific funding options available through SETA grants, bursaries and NSFAS, to mention a few.

Learnerships presents the opportunity to gain a qualification, work experience and earn a stipend over a 12-month period. There are industry-relevant learnerships that will give persons with a disability a passport into their industry of their choice. Learnerships can be

used as a progression tool where a candidate moves through the various NQF levels and improves their employability.

Persons with disabilities will need help traversing the challenges that employment will present. They should be discouraged from the dependence on disability social grants and rather see these as augmenting their earning potential. They should understand their ability and what they can offer. Society needs to play its part to assist persons with disabilities to realise their potential. It needs to network with relevant platforms to present them with the best opportunities to achieve their financial independence.

Government legislation presents numerous mechanisms that promote these opportunities. Business understands the advantages of employing people with disabilities, particular in terms of their Employment Equity compliance. We need to motivate persons with disabilities to ultimately take responsibility of their financial wellbeing. They need to be steadfast in their employment aspirations, even with the employment landscape seemingly bleak. With perseverance and persistence, they can achieve the rewards of employment and live a fulfilled life. **R**

ABOUT AUTHOR

Rustim Ariefdien is a disability expert extraordinaire who assists businesses to “let the Ability of disAbility enAble their profitAbility” through BBBEE, skills development, employment equity and socio-economic development. His purpose is the economic empowerment of persons with disability in Africa. As a person with a disability himself, he has extensive experience in the development and empowerment of persons with disability.



WORK READINESS PROGRAMME

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN UNEMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

ARE YOU A WHEELCHAIR USER SEEKING EMPLOYMENT?

The QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA) facilitates a Work Readiness Programme nationwide that provides two months of soft skills training.

The QASA Work Readiness Programme bridges the gap between unemployment and employment which is a great stepping stone to gain independence.

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WORK READINESS PROGRAMME

Creating work opportunities

The QASA Work Readiness Programme continues to empower people with disabilities through training and work opportunities

Born from a desire to address the high unemployment rate among people with disabilities, the Work Readiness Programme aims to equip QASA members with the necessary skills to succeed in the workplace. These include soft skills such as team building and stress management, as well as technical skills such as using Microsoft Office.

The programme has seen many candidates successfully placed in formal work opportunities. Most recently, Nandipha Sodlula received the opportunity to work at

Alexforbes South Africa, a financial service group, after completing the programme. She has been with them since July and shares her experience: “It has been wonderful. My supervisor helped me a lot. She showed me how to do things and supported me through the pressure.”

While her current role at the company is mainly administrative, there is promise of Nandipha growing into a new position. She is eager to learn and hopes to grow in the company – something that has been noticed by her supervisor.

“I’ve seen a lot of progress with Nandipha,” says Thuli Ngalo, operations consultant at Alexforbes South Africa and Nandipha’s supervisor. “She asks a lot of questions. There is a willingness to learn. She has been encouraged to raise her hand to learn something else when the opportunity presents itself. There will be more opportunities to learn more.” Thuli adds that the company would like to see Nandipha stay on.

Second only to the physical barriers that hinder the access to formal work environments, negative perceptions and attitudes prove to be a challenge for people with disabilities in the workplace. Since working with Nandipha, Thuli has learned a lot around how to engage with people with disabilities.

“To employ a person with a disabilities requires empathy and asking the right questions to better understand the individual,” Thuli says. “It also requires accommodating them. I’ve learned to give Nandipha space rather than stepping in to assist as she is very capable and can deliver. Her disability is not a hinderance.”



To employ a person with a disability requires empathy and asking the right questions.

Traditionally, the Work Readiness Programme partners with businesses that can offer some formal work experience to successful candidates. Some of these placements lead to permanent employment. However, the relationship with Alexforbes South Africa was approached slightly differently.

Alexforbes South Africa expressed a need for outsourcing some administrative work to QASA. The company has cyclical work needs. Permanent employment takes too long so contract work is an easier and quicker approach. The candidate is employed



LEFT: (From the left) Thuli Ngalo, operations consultant and supervisor at Alexforbes South Africa, with Nandipha Sodlula.


RIGHT: Nandipha has a condition that limits her ability to stand for long periods; thus, she stands for only half of the day. Thereafter, she continues working while seated.

and paid by QASA. In turn, QASA invoices Alexforbes South Africa for the work done.

Board member Ari Seirlis says: “If we get it right, we can sell this onto other companies. But, for now, we hope Alexforbes snatches up Nandipha.”

QASA will look into offering similar outsourced work for other companies to boost employment opportunities for its successful candidates.

As for Nandipha, she encourages others to follow her example. She reflects on her journey through the programme: “I learned a lot. I finished the programme knowing what my weaknesses are; the struggles I would face in the workplace.”

She advises others to also participate as “the programme creates work opportunities”. 



Holding it together

High functioning depression can be difficult to identify as the individual “holds it together”

High-functioning depression is nearly unnoticeable, which can hide a serious and, potentially life-threatening, deterioration in mental health. A person with the condition may continue working and “holding it together” for years.

“Generally, people associate depression with characteristic symptoms such as an overwhelming sense of hopelessness and inability to cope at work and in other areas of their lives,” says Phumzile Mthembu, a clinical psychologist practising at Netcare Akeso Richards Bay. However, individuals with high-functioning depression learn to shoulder the mental health burden.

It is diagnosed where a person experiences mild, yet persistent depressive symptoms for at least two years. Mthembu explains: “People with high-functioning depression often think that they have everything under control because they have developed a higher ability to cope. Their outward appearance suggests that all is well, and others around them may not even notice that the individual is suffering. This mental health burden is therefore very hard to identify.”

The symptoms vary from person, but there are some signs to look for:

- Feeling like you’re ‘wasting your time’ when doing your work, or engaging in personal activities such as hobbies or going to gym.
- Feeling misunderstood.
- Indulging in unhealthy coping strategies such as substance use or overeating.
- Engaging in excessive pastimes to escape reality, which may include excessive

- gaming, watching TV, or using social media.
- Being overly critical of yourself and others.
- You always convince yourself that you are “okay”, even when you feel overwhelmed.
- You hardly engage in social activities or taking part in hobbies or outings, but only focus on tasks you feel obligated to do.
- Experiencing feelings associated with psychological distress when thinking about work, which might appear as burnout.
- Excessive guilt and worry about the past and present.
- Chronic fatigue, excessive tiredness.
- Feeling like you can’t face the world or cannot get out of bed.
- Depressed mood for most of the day over a period of at least two years.

The individual might also struggle with a poor appetite, difficulty sleeping, poor self-esteem, poor concentration or difficulty making decisions or feelings of hopelessness. Family, colleagues and friends might describe the person as a workaholic.

“It is important to be aware that a person with high-functioning depression may begin to show subtle signs of suicidal ideation, such as talking of their own death or suicide, or getting their affairs in order. Signs such as these should never be ignored, and they should be encouraged to seek professional help as soon as possible,” Mthembu advises.

In the event of a psychological crisis, the South African Anxiety and Depression Group (SADAG) also provides mental health support and can be reached on 0800 567 567. [R](#)



Shedding light on ear candling

Candles can be useful for more than just battling loadshedding

This has nothing to do with loadshedding, but with ear wax shedding. It is believed Auricular Thermal Therapy, a.k.a Ear Candling, is an ancient and natural therapy practised by the ancient Greeks, North American Hopi Indians and even traditionally practised by Shaman healers. Ancient cave paintings indicate the importance of ear candling during initiation rituals and healing ceremonies.

Today, it is performed by massage or beauty therapists. It is an incredibly relaxing and beneficial treatment for everybody. The candles are hollow tubes and made of cotton fabric and imbued with natural ingredients such as beeswax, honey extracts and herbs or essential oils. Candles are approximately 20 cm long. The benefits include:

- Loosening excess earwax;
- Offers relief of sinus congestion, allergy symptoms and tinnitus;
- Hearing problems;
- Improves blood and lymphatic flow to the head and neck;
- Stress release;
- Clearing the senses;
- Re-balances the energy flow to the body.

The treatment is done lying on one's side, with pillows under the head and between the knees for support. A disposable filter will be placed on the one end of the candle to ensure no debris from the candle enters the ear canal. The candle is then lit and very gently placed in the ear. The candle remains supported by the therapist for the duration of the treatment.

The flame will then result in a gentle vacuum which loosens and sometimes draws excess wax and impurities from the ear. The easiest way to understand the science behind it is comparing it to a chimney. The movement and compression between the ear canal and the candle chamber generate air flow, the burning action infuses herbs or essential oils into a vapour. This acts as a massaging function.

The sensation and sounds form part of the overall relaxation. Gentle popping and crackling can generally be heard, this is due to the rising air pushing through the auditory canal, which helps regulate ear pressure. Sensations are all of warmth, soothing and calmness as the candle burns for approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

This treatment is combined with a gentle lymphatic drainage and pressure point massage of the face and neck and outer ear, which will aid in draining sinuses and dislodging any blockages from the ear. Frequency of treatment will differ for each person. For general maintenance, once every four months is a good guide. Since the treatment is using fire, it is more advisable to go to a professional than attempting this on your own at home. A good tip for home is to put two to three drops of olive oil into the ear to loosen wax that has built up, excess wax will then naturally work its way out. **R**

ABOUT AUTHOR

Joy Duffield has been a C4-C5 quadriplegic since 2005. She is the owner of Beauty Academy International, an international training Institute for the beauty industry and a distributor of hair and beauty products in South Africa.

Building a life of purpose

Better understanding who you are and why you do the things you do can help you build a life of purpose. This is where life coaching and Len Davey comes in

We often hear phrases like “do what you love” or “find your purpose”, but this can be a challenge for many, especially for those with disabilities who might need to adjust their goals after an injury or illness, or have access to fewer resources to guide them. Where do you even start? Life coaching can offer some guidance. We speak with Len Davey to learn how it impacted his life and how he is now changing the lives of others.

JOURNEY TO LIFE COACHING

A series of coincidences lead to Len pursuing life coaching. It started with a spinal cord injury in 1977 and a lack of resources to guide him through this difficult time.

“Very early on in my ‘new normal’ as a paraplegic, there was nothing like QASA, life coaching, or any other organisation that offered assistance after a tragic incident; especially where I grew up in Vereeniging. You had to adapt or die,” Len recalls. He chose to fight and started doing his own reading to help him through this time.

“Early on in my quest to come to grips with reality, I came across a book by Norman Vincent Peale called *The Power of Positive Thinking*. This made a massive impact on my life,” Len says. Prior to his accident, Len was very active, playing numerous sports, including participating in competitive swimming, and even playing drums in a rock band named Brute Strength. After reading Peale’s book, Len found the courage to once again be active.



“I bought a 1000 cc Gold Wing Motorcycle, built a sidecar for my chair, hand controlled the gears with solenoids and toured Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) with a friend during the war. Not long after, I met my wife, and personal angel, Colleen. We moved to Durban with our two boys, I applied for three jobs. I got all three, chose one and the rest is history as they say in the classics,” Len notes. In 1982, Len married the love of his life, which he describes as “one magical moment”. He event started drumming again.

“I couldn’t play my kick-drum anymore, so I switched to percussion, until one day we turned the kit around. I played the full kit and Colleen played the kick-drum. We started playing in the worship group and later joined a band called Dogs in the Yard. We played at company functions, weddings and private gigs. It was such fun.”

GAINING NEW INSIGHTS

Aside from the personal achievements, Len was able to achieve quite a lot in his professional career. He held several titles with different companies, including sales director, and even started his own business in 1992. The company, Contra Cables, specialised in electronic cables and computer networking equipment. He found his passion for coaching at his last job.

“In my last company, Mindgrill Solutions, I had a staff of 15 people and quite enjoyed helping them with their personal issues. Somehow, helping other always leaves one feeling better. I attended and hosted many motivational

lectures and courses for myself and my staff. I really enjoyed it. I often thought that I'd love to do something like this for a living, once I understood how life worked," Len says.

During his time with Mindgrill Solutions, Len learned of life coaching from a salesman. When he retired for medical reasons, Len started delving deeper into the world of life coaching.

"I decided to study this amazing profession. I started looking for the best vehicle to reach my destination and found this amazing company called New Insights. What a journey we went on! A two-year course comprising of both theory and practical components with my own personal coach. It changed my life," Len explains.

"It was during the 72 hours of free practical coaching (a prerequisite to qualify), and seeing the impact it had on the volunteers, that I realised that my path to understanding who I am, and why I did and do the things I do, could have made such a difference in my life had I known and practised the concepts of life coaching as taught by New Insights," he continues.

FINDING PURPOSE

What started out as a mild interest grew into a passion, and then a purpose. Len explains: "One of the sessions that we cover is on purpose (our purpose for being here). It was during this exercise that I discovered that this is not just a passion, but, in fact, my purpose to share this knowledge in order to help other people build a life of purpose."

He does caution others that a life coach can only do so much to help: "It is, however, a journey of self-discovery. You get out what you put in. No one can do this for you, but a good life coach with a good programme can help you achieve the life of your choosing. You are not a victim but a victor."

Len has taken all of his experience and knowledge to establish his own life coaching business, The World Within. The name was inspired by a passage written by James Allen in *As a Man Thinketh*:

Man is made or unmade by himself; in the armoury of thought he forges the weapons by

which he destroys himself; he also fashions the tools with which he build for himself heavenly mansions of joy, strength and peace.

WORLD WITHIN


Life coaching with Len is offered in 13 sessions on a bi-weekly basis via virtual sessions on Skype, Zoom or Whatsapp that are mainly voice-only. Each session is designed to build on the one before with opportunity for the client to digest the material and do some homework in between. The sessions are roughly 60 minutes at R500 per session, and the voice-only function allows for more comfort and less distractions.

"This leaves the client to concentrate on the lesson in the comfort and safety of their own home or office, without the concerns and distractions of appearances," Len explains. The first session on goal setting is free of charge! This, Len hopes, will be a great way for people to test drive the value that life coaching has to offer.

"The best investment one will ever make is in oneself. This is not some hocus-pocus, self-help scheme designed to relieve one of one's hard-earned cash. So, before you invest, test drive the process for yourself first hand, to be certain this is for you and that I am the right coach for you," he explains.

The other sessions include the following:

- Resources and milestones (chopping up goals into bite-size chunks in order to achieve them);
- Beliefs;
- Motivation;
- Values;
- Rules;
- The six human needs;
- Communication and projection;
- Responsibility;
- Questions;
- Long-term goals;
- Purpose; and
- Celebration time.

More information about each session can be found on The World Within website. Len leaves us with a quote by Laurie Buchanan: "Whatever you are not changing, you are choosing". Visit The World Within website here: www.theworldwithin.co.za 



DANIE BREEDT • SEXUALITY

Navigating crises after SCI

It can be challenging to navigate the crises of intimacy after a SCI, but this is where sexual rehabilitation can assist

For a new spinal cord injured patient, life is all about surviving the current crisis. As the initial trauma and storm of medical complications subside, the focus moves to living with the injury. This is what physical rehab and sexual rehab is all about – making the most of what you have left. After discharge, life can feel like moving from one crisis to the next as you incorporate your injury into life. The same process is common with sex and intimate relationships.

The crisis of “will I ever be able to have sex again” often occurs quite early after being diagnosed with a spinal cord injury. There are two difficulties in this crisis. The first is that there is often no support available to guide patients during this stage through emotional support and relevant information in rehab. The second difficulty is that patients are often unaware of the availability of such services. In either case it often happens that people don’t receive the assistance that they need and are left to figure it out for themselves.

A very common second crisis is the lack of intimacy and struggling to build new romantic relationships. Being isolated is dangerous to emotional well-being and has the tendency to snow-ball. When you are isolated for long periods of time, it is easy to stop pursuing relationships and become even more isolated. This cycle often leads to people with disabilities not experiencing

intimacy and satisfying sexual needs. Everybody goes through crises in their lives, and we all need some form of support in these times. Spinal cord injuries bring unique challenges and crises but also requires support like every other type of crisis. Finding support in the form of education and emotional support for sexual difficulties could mean the difference between having a sexually satisfying relationship and having some of our most important intimacy needs going unfulfilled.

Seeking professional assistance for sexuality related crises should be on the top of the list for ourselves as well as the ones we care for. Doing some of your own research about where you can access such services or asking your primary care physician for a referral are great places to start. It can also be helpful to join groups of people with similar difficulties as helpful resources are often shared among members. You’ll likely find that crises that feels unique to you are often quite common. **R**

ABOUT AUTHOR

Dr Danie Breedt is a passionate scholar-practitioner in the field of psychology. He divides his time between training, research and clinical practice. Danie works from an integrative interactional approach in psychotherapy, dealing with a wide range of emotional difficulties and sexual rehabilitation for patients with disabilities. He is the co-owner of Charis Psychological Services, a psychology practice that specialises in physical rehabilitation across South Africa.



LEON FLEISER • SPORT

Photo credit: [International Paralympic Committee](#).

Sporting world returns to normal

As lockdown restrictions end, the athletes can once again compete nationally and internationally with fans returning to stadiums to cheer them on

So, we are finally allowed back to stadiums to watch our sports stars perform! Even better, our sports stars are allowed to finally travel and compete! This is brilliant and, as you know, our paralympic athletes were the most affected by this horrible pandemic. Hopefully, their lives are getting back to some sort of normality.

The return to action included Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. The biggest multi-coded games to include para sport. The para sport that qualified for these games were:

- Para athletics (4 males and 5 females);
- Para swimming (1 male and 2 females);
- Para triathlon (2 males and 1 female);
- Para lawn bowls (3 males and 3 female);
- Wheelchair basketball 3X3 (male and female teams).


Once again our para athletes performed exceptionally. Ndodomzi Ntutu defended his 100 m T12 title from 2018 by winning comfortably again. The legend Charl du Toit, in his final race before retirement, won a silver medal competing in the T38 class 100 m final.

The para lawn bowls pair of Desiree Levin and Victoria van der Merwe won Bronze, and Christian Sadie (who also carried the flag at the opening ceremony with Netball Captain Bongsi Msonji) won Bronze in the S7 50m Freestyle. Yours truly was the Deputy Chef de Mission

and once again was truly humbled to be part of Team South Africa.

Let's talk about Charl du Toit. He has now officially retired. He leaves a legacy that is hard to forget. He is a multi-medallist and world record breaker in many Paralympic Games and World Championships. However, the legacy he leaves off the field is even greater.

A natural leader, always smiling (his nickname is smiling lightning) and forever humble. Athletes like these are hard to replace and I'm sure all will join me in wishing Charl well in his future endeavours. Thank you Charl for your contribution to para sport!

We now start the road to Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. I have my first visit in October 2022 to this iconic city. The last time I was there, it was not a very accessible city. Let's hope these games will change that as a legacy. Bon voyage... 

ABOUT AUTHOR

Leon Fleiser has been involved with sport in the disability sector since 1992 when he started playing wheelchair basketball. He captained the national team to the Sydney Paralympic Games and the 2002 World Championships. He started working for Disability Sport South Africa in 2001 as a Coordinator for High Performance. It merged into SASCOC in 2005 and he is now the Manager for Team Preparation and Academy Systems. He has delivered Team South Africa to numerous Olympic, Paralympic, Commonwealth and African Games.

Sending SA beauty to Worlds

Miss Wheelchair South Africa, Tamelyn Bock, is raising money to fund her trip to Mexico in October to represent her country at the 2022 Miss Wheelchair World competition. Tamelyn was crowned the first-ever Miss Wheelchair South Africa at the inaugural event held in Cape Town in December 2021.

“My title is the voice of change, to bring change, to see change for persons with disabilities; to take their rightful spot in society and in the workspace. And to be equally acknowledged, loved and respected,” she says about her reign.

The competition has opened many doors for Tamelyn. After battling for years to find employment, even with a degree, she now boasts a media internship. She has also raises awareness about universal access in public spaces, promotes inclusivity and gives motivational talks at schools.

Participating in the Miss Wheelchair World competition, which takes place on 29 October 2022, will give her the opportunity to represent her country, but also raise awareness of the challenges facing people with disabilities in South Africa.



ABOVE: Miss Wheelchair South Africa, Tamelyn Bock is raising funds to compete at the Miss Wheelchair World competition in October.


She is currently running a BackaBuddy campaign to raise funding. All donations will go towards the travel costs for her and her assistant to travel from Springbok, Northern Cape, to an international airport, and from there to Mexico.

If you would like to support Tamelyn, you can read more about her journey and donate by visiting the [BackaBuddy campaign](#). 

Outeniqua Wheelchair Challenge returns

Wheelchair users can look forward to once again participating in the Outeniqua Chair Challenge (OCC) held in George on 15 October 2022. The OCC is exclusively for people with disabilities in South Africa with participants racing in wheelchairs, adapted bicycles, hand cycles, basketball chairs and ordinary wheelchairs. The race also caters for various fitness levels with a 10-km, 21-km

or 42-km division. For anyone interested in participating in the event only for fun, there is a 5-km fun run.

Each division has its own entry fee. The 5-km event costs only R50 to enter, while entry fees for the 10-km race is R60. If you are interested in participating, you can find the entry form on the [OCC website](#) or download it [here](#). 



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