



WOMEN ROLE MODELS

On August 9, South Africans come together to celebrate National Women's Day. The day is a commemoration of the 1956 women's march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria against the pass laws of the time. For those of us who now enjoy gender equality as enshrined in the constitution, these South African women championed the cause, along with many others who have shown exemplary strength and determination.

The Business Dictionary defines a role model as:

An individual who is looked up to and revered by someone else. A role model is someone who other individuals aspire to be like, either in the present or in the future.

Role models come from all walks of life. For many young people, it's the stars they see on movies or TV, sports heroes, musicians, entrepreneurs or politicians. However, fame and fortune alone doesn't define a role model. Anyone who has the ability to inspire us to do better, think bigger and reach our goals is a role model. A role model may be a family member, previous school teacher or senior work colleague.

Role models embody the qualities that we aspire to have within ourselves. They have a passion for what they do and embody the values, morals and principals that we aspire to have. Role models have confidence in their abilities; demonstrate humility, and show respect for all people. They have resilience and many have overcome great obstacles on their path to success. Most role models are optimists – they have a positive outlook towards life.



Alison Both

Q&A

With Alison Both. Survivor, motivational speaker, role model

Few women can relate to the trauma and life-changing ordeal that Alison Botha lived through in December 1994. She was abducted and taken to a remote beach outside Port Elizabeth where two men violently raped and assaulted her. After

being stabbed numerous times in the abdomen, her attackers slit her throat and fled. Alison managed to drag herself towards a nearby road. A passer-by saw her and stopped. Defying the odds, Alison survived the brutal attack and has gone on to share her story with thousands of people across the globe.

A new edition of her book *I Have Life: Alison's Journey* (as told to Marianne Thamm) was published by Penguin Random House in 2016. Over 90,000 copies of the book have been sold since it was first published in 1998.

Q What are important qualities that make someone a good role?

A Alison: Any quality that is admirable makes a person a role model. For example if a sports person is very good at what they do, or if someone has achieved success they may be seen as a role model. I personally find inspiration in from people who exhibit qualities that are achievable by others such as hard work and dedication, inner strength, humility and wisdom.

Q How different is the path of one role model to another?

A Alison: The path to being a role model will be different for most people, but ultimately it is the choices one makes as to how you live your life that will have others look up to you as an example of what they would like to be. It might be through overcoming difficult circumstances, like me, or it might be by choosing to reach high goals like some stars. It might also simply be someone you know who has a strong character and values.

Q What elements do you think that women identify with in your story?

A Alison: I like to think that other women can identify with me because I was (and am) just an ordinary woman. I could have been anyone, and other women can put themselves into my story quite easily. I wasn't doing anything out of the ordinary when I was abducted and assaulted, and I didn't have any special talent or benefit that helped me to survive and recover. It was simply a combination of choices that I made. I hope other women see this and know that they have that potential too.

“As an African woman, I've learnt the importance of self-definition and living purposefully. It's vital that every girl determines, as early as possible, who she is and what her contribution to humanity will be.”

Former Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela

“Women of South Africa are some of the most powerful people on earth. Change what you believe is possible for yourself.” **Oprah Winfrey**

Q What is your message of inspiration to South African women?

A Alison: We all have incredible power within us – the power to choose how we act, feel and process what is happening around us. No matter what happens, no matter what someone else does – try to concentrate on what you can control instead of what is out of your control.

Q Who is your role model?

A Alison: Nelson Mandela will always be my ultimate role model. He made brave and powerful choices within a situation outside of his control. His choice to forgive was one of the most powerful things imaginable in uniting a divided country. On a personal level, my mother has always been my role model for the strong woman that she is. She was a single mother who taught me to value and believe in myself. As I have gotten older, I find myself in awe of her self-control, loyalty and wisdom. She is always my sounding board when I have a decision to make, not that I always take her advice, she will be quick to tell you.



Football defender Janine van Wyk made her debut for the national women's soccer team Banyana Banyana in 2005. With an exemplary record on the field, van Wyk is the most capped soccer player in the country. She played for South Africa in both the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games. Under her leadership the team secured a fourth place finish in the 2016 CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations in Cameroon. A

long-time personal goal for van Wyk was to play in a league in the United Kingdom or United States. In various interviews, van Wyk indicated that she had all but given up on this dream. She finally reached her goal this year when she signed up to play for Houston Dash, a team in the US National Women's Soccer League (NWSL). Van Wyk made her debut in the NWSL against the Chicago Red Stars in April, a game her side won 2-0.



“Different people are definitely motivated by different things and individuals are motivated by a wide range of things, both in different areas in their lives and within a single task - we often do something for more than one reason.” **Cathy O'Dowd, mountaineer, motivational speaker, author**
Cathy was the first woman in the world to climb Mount

Everest from both the south and north sides. Following the expedition the South African government passed a Resolution congratulating Cathy and her fellow team members, and saying that: *“Cathy O'Dowd joins illustrious women in South Africa who are demonstrating that women have come into their own and are contributing to the many glories achieved by our nation.”*