

# *The Soft Life*

**3 SIMPLE SECRETS  
COMRADES DON'T  
WANT YOU TO KNOW**



**BONSAI SHONGWE**



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## 3 SIMPLE SECRETS COMRADES DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW

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# The Question That Changed Everything

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*“How do you feel about your country?”*

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The question hit me harder than I expected.

All I wanted was a normal life—work that meant something, dignity without begging, and a future that didn’t feel like a constant fight.

A life where effort led somewhere—where building something honest didn’t feel like swimming upstream.

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*“I can’t even answer you honestly. Saying it out loud can cost me.”*

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The words slipped out before I could stop them.

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*“What do you mean?”*

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I spoke in circles, with long answers.

Then I noticed—my voice had started to shake. I was dodging the question like someone caught out—talking a lot, saying nothing.

That slight tremble in my voice grabbed my attention.

The passion I had been carrying for years refused to stay quiet. I could feel the pressure, like a pot rattling under the lid. It was going to come out—whether I liked it or not.

### **The Trap Forming in Real Time**

A radio presenter asked me this during an interview on SAFM.  
It was live radio.

On paper, I had freedom of speech.

In real life, I was careful.

### **The Unwritten Rule**

First, I was consulting for an events company.

They survived on sponsorships—mostly from government.

I knew one wrong comment could end a relationship.

Everyone knew the unwritten rule. If people thought you were speaking publicly against the government, someone would mention it to the people who sign off.

After that, government work would dry up for a long time.

That's how it spreads, so I stayed vague.

I would have put the company's future at risk.

Second, the company was owned by a black guy who grew up in a township, just like I did.

I didn't want him—or any other listener—to get me wrong.

I was trying hard to avoid being called a “clever black.”

One answer, and you're labelled a sellout.

The presenter realised I wasn't going to answer, and he moved on.

I felt relieved.

The usual clichés got us through the rest of the interview.

But afterwards, I felt uneasy.

I had held back my thoughts just to fit in. I didn't like who I had become.

I was trying to earn approval from people who didn't care.

## Seven Years of Silence

If I had said what was on my mind, I would have told them I was watching South Africa decline.

I noticed it more after I started my business in 2001. My record company, Bonsai Entertainment, did well, but I felt a slow, constant squeeze.

Every few months the government introduced something new, and it worked against people like me who were trying to build something real.

I remember feeling like a lone voice.

*Why did no one else see the problem?*

I checked the ease of doing business rankings, and we fell hard.

The rules got heavier, the paperwork got longer, and small guys drowned first.

Our economy has been held back, and we've been getting poorer for more than a decade.

Doing things the right way starts losing to "connections," delays, and backroom shortcuts.

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*"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan... The king establishes the land by justice, but he who receives bribes overthrows it."—Solomon*

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What affected me most was what I saw while driving, everywhere—even in the wealthier northern suburbs of Johannesburg. I watched those areas slowly decline.

Then I began seeing more and more people who were struggling—standing at almost every road crossing and filling every open space.

It was painful to see, knowing I couldn't help everyone.

I realised I had to harden my heart to get through daily life, while still keeping quiet.

Until I asked myself...

***“Do I still want to stay here?”***

Then lockdown hit.  
Now it wasn't theory—it was my income.

**When “Just Go Online” Became a Lie**

In March 2020, South Africa went into a hard lockdown.  
For almost three months, in-person business stopped cold.  
We were all stuck indoors.

I decided to use the time to build an online setup for a digital course I had created. But I kept running into roadblocks. It felt like there was a new obstacle at every turn.

I could see which rules were causing each problem. None of it surprised me. I had seen it coming years before. Every time the government justified a new rule, I could already guess how it would hurt businesses like mine. Then they would announce it and pass it.

Still, I made a plan around each blockage, even though it cut into my profits. The hardest part was accepting that I would make fewer sales because I couldn't fulfil all my customers' orders.

**Three Weeks vs Three Minutes**

The biggest issue was receiving payments through PayPal. Other payment systems expanded to many countries, but they skipped South Africa. Even when the site isn't the problem, the local rules around moving money can still turn a simple payment into a three-week mission.

I spoke to many others trying to do online business and realised there was no solution. So I accepted the limitation, continued anyway, and made what sales I could.

Converting the money into Rands felt like an episode of *Survivor S.A.* I spent three weeks trying to move the cash from PayPal into my bank account. There were rules at every corner, forms at every desk, and queues at every office. I spent hours on the phone and hours standing in line. No matter what I tried, everything led to a dead end.

After three weeks of struggling, I met a friend from Australia for lunch. I told him. He asked me to send the money to his PayPal account. He moved it into his bank instantly, and three minutes later he withdrew the cash from an ATM.

He did in three minutes what I couldn't do in three weeks—no paperwork marathon.

The rules felt like they were whispering in my ear. Not in words—in obstacles:

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*“We don't see you. We don't prioritise you.  
And things are not set up to help you get  
ahead.”*

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Delays. Forms. Lost time.  
And that's when I said it out loud:  
*“That's it. I'm leaving.”*

## The Most Permanent Decision I'd Ever Considered

I decided I wanted to move to another country near the top of the ease of doing business rankings.

The same effort buys a normal life there—fewer queues, fewer *“come back tomorrow”* moments, more jobs. A life where effort pays.

Wherever it was, I knew I would face only a fraction of the blockages I dealt with in South Africa—maybe ten percent of them.

I also remembered working with a German company in 2010. I kept shaking my head at how much easier everything was as we carried out the project.

And I wasn't the only person thinking of leaving. In 2019, BusinessTech reported that emigration firms were struggling to keep up with all the enquiries—especially from people looking for skilled visa options.

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*“In South Africa, while many thought emigration was only a trend amongst white professionals, in recent years, it is known that the number of black professionals leaving South Africa has exceeded white emigrants.”—Trevor Thomas, Induku Immigration Consultants*

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I spoke to contacts overseas and looked at options online.

Then I realised I was feeling the different stages of grief. It made sense—I was planning to leave the country of my birth and cut ties with my people, maybe forever.

But I wasn't afraid. I told myself I'd be okay anywhere.

So I started planning a big move. I was excited, but I also felt the loss of leaving behind everything familiar. I was letting go of the dream of 1994. To walk away felt like abandoning the dream Mandela planted in my generation.

This felt permanent.

## **My Gift Was the Clue**

I was sitting alone on the balcony, enjoying the winter sun with a cup of coffee.

I thought about the people I'd helped over the years—at church, in companies, and in business.

That's when it hit me.

I thought of some famous musical superstars.

When I met them, they were unknown and living average lives. Today, their names are in the history books.

They don't talk much about the hit songs I produced, even though they launched their music careers. They rarely mention the marketing team I led or the business I ran.

What they do talk about is how I pulled out what was already in them. They often mention my success seminars, which gave them permission to be themselves.

We have even marvelled at a system I created to capture an artist's vision properly. Their influence today looks exactly like what we wrote down in the early 2000s.

I also get emotional when I receive messages like this one. One message still sits with me:

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*I first saw you in 2018 when you spoke at a school in Bloemfontein...I have a condition of stuttering, and it was severe during my primary and high school years.*

*Before I met you, I was confused. I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. My stuttering made my life a living hell. But everything changed when I heard you speak. I found myself in your speaking.*

*After you spoke, I knew I must speak too. I knew I wanted to be like you. You became my role model. Today, I am a speaker as well. I teach people how to turn their conditions into gifts.*

*You changed my life, and I wish I had gold to thank you. I was 23 when I wrote my matric. I used to fail so badly because bullying had affected me academically.*

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Stories like this move me even more than positive reviews from corporate clients.

## The First Step

So I decided to stay.  
I began to wonder whether South Africa could still make history. A different destiny was possible—one different from the path many African countries took after independence.

I chose to believe that we could have a prosperous future.

This filled me with a new sense of purpose. I couldn't just complain—I had to build a way to help people think again.

Suddenly everything I had gone through made sense.

My whole life had been preparation for this moment.

And the first step is this moment: this book in your hands.

## Three Things You Can't Unsee

What if the biggest trap in South Africa isn't a person—it's a way of seeing the world?

What if prosperity isn't a mystery—it's a game with rules?

And what if government's real purpose is simpler than we've been told?

Once you see all three, you can't unsee them.





# 1

## The Permission to Prosper

A young man fell in love and wanted to marry.  
He couldn't wait.

*"Young man. First: do you love my daughter?"*

*"Yebo, Baba. I absolutely love her."*

*"Good. Second: can you provide?"*

*"Yebo, Baba."*

*"Don't answer so fast, son."*

*There are eighteen of us: your future mother-in-law and me, five sons, three other daughters, and seven grandchildren.*

*So I'll ask you again... do you make enough for eighteen?"*

[Silence.]

The young man felt it in his chest.

It wasn't just a question. It was a lifelong debt.

Sometimes "respect" comes with a hidden invoice.

That's a heavy burden that steals the future.

This is the permission to put that weight down—so you can imagine tomorrow. You can't do that while carrying a burden that was never meant to be yours.

Respect is not the same thing as inheriting someone else's costs forever.

We owe our elders respect.

We cannot forget that they gave their blood, sweat, and tears to win this freedom. We should honour the struggle that overcame apartheid and brought liberation in 1994.

But the old way of thinking cannot carry everything forward.

Every country reaches a point where what worked before stops working.

Every generation has to build something new. The future comes—whether we like it or not.

What comes next is moving from winning freedom to building a good life. This vision can help you think freely—so you can build a better life for the next generation.

## Life That Works

Can you imagine a South Africa where getting a salary increase feels normal?

Not a once-off blessing.

Just normal—because new businesses keep opening, customers keep coming, and opportunities keep multiplying.

Can you imagine a South Africa where *black tax* has disappeared?

Not because people became selfish, but because your parents, siblings, cousins, and friends all have work. They have dignity. They have food in the fridge, medical aid, and a plan for the future—room to dream.

So helping family becomes a choice again, not a pressure.

That's what a life that works does—it lets love stay love, not pressure.

Can you imagine going out for dinner on a Friday night?

Great South African food. Good music. Good vibes and laughter.

And watching a well-dressed woman leave the restaurant close to midnight, talking excitedly on her phone, walking home—without fear. Not looking over her shoulder. Not clutching her bag. Because crime is something her kids will one day Google.

Can you imagine driving through Johannesburg at night and seeing glass buildings lighting up the skyline?

Not broken streetlights. Not potholes. But clean roads, working traffic lights, and a 10-lane freeway flowing smoothly because people are actually going places.

Can you imagine driving on the freeway and *not* seeing shacks anywhere? Not because people were “removed,” but because everyone has proper housing.

Your kids will one day ask,

*“Did people really live like that?”*

And they'll only see it in history class. Where “service delivery protest” is a phrase young people have to ask AI about.

Can you imagine opening your car door and seeing a sticker that says:

*Made in South Africa*

And it actually means something. Not just pride—but quality. Reliability. Sold around the world.

Can you imagine wearing clean, well-fitted clothes, confident—not because you're pretending, but because life is working?

Your health is covered.

Your kids' education is sorted.

Can you imagine knowing, deep in your bones, that you belong among the strongest countries in Africa—a country that compares comfortably with Norway, Sweden, or Japan?

In daily life.

Because travelling to Dubai feels no different from travelling to Cape Town, or Singapore.

It's just another city.

You're not escaping. You're visiting.

A country that is admired across Africa.

Not pitied.

But respected.

A South Africa where young people don't dream of tenders—they dream of customers. Where starting a business is easier than registering a SIM card.

Can you imagine a South Africa where you don't have to “know a guy” to get a job? Where your hard work speaks louder than your membership card?

That's not a movie. That's what happens when a country moves from survival to *the Soft Life*.

Other countries have done it—in one generation. Not because they were better people—but because they changed what they rewarded.

Prosperity starts when people question which burdens they're still carrying.

Some burdens were never meant for the next generation.

That doesn't mean dropping people—it means dropping expectations that block the future.

Honour is not the same thing as inheriting permanent debt.

This is not about denying the past. It's about making sure the future can stand on its own.

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*“Behold, the former things have come to pass,  
And new things I declare; Before they spring  
forth I tell you of them.”—Isaiah*

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Before we step into this new future, we see one burden that clings to many of us.

Not a policy.

Not a law.

A wound.

It decides what feels safe to say. You feel it when you check who's listening before you speak.

Many people learned to survive under this label—not because they were weak, but because the cost of questioning was high. You may have heard this phrase jokingly—or painfully.

Every country has its own version of this label—same job, different words. It shows up wherever fear is used to keep people quiet—not just here.

It is...

### The Wound Called “Clever Black”

Most people don't use this phrase to hurt anyone. They use it because it's been passed down, unquestioned. “Clever Black” is a phrase used to stop people from thinking further. Most of the time, people use it without realising what it does.

It's how any group trying to avoid questions shut others up without ever having to argue.

It is shocking that someone can use the word “clever” as an insult.

Dr Matthews Phosa, an ANC veteran, once spoke about this mentality:

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*“When we speak out against corruption, misuse of power, absent service delivery... and insensitivity to the plight of the poor, some so-called leaders are quick to call us clever... blacks... After 28 years in power, all criticism is rejected, while empty cadre-speak repeats itself on public and private platforms.”—City Press, August 2022*

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This term raises the cost of asking questions. Often this happens without anyone realising they're doing it. Not because people are cruel—but because silence has been rewarded for a long time.

“Clever Black” is not an insult—it is a warning sign that discourages anyone who steps toward *the Soft Life*.

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*“Thabo Mbeki was fired for speaking English at a taxi rank.”—Loyiso Gola, Comedian*

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## A Voice in the Desert

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*“I usually avoid political jokes... I've seen too many of them get elected!”*

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I'm not a politician. I'm a South African man of Swati descent. I have a way of breaking down complicated things in plain language.

My aim is simple: to help ordinary South Africans see what's possible. You can think of me as a friend—sharing what I noticed, not pushing. And if this book inspires you to imagine a prosperous South Africa, it's done its job.

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*“My people; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old”—Asaph*

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Before we talk about leaders, policies, or systems, there's one quiet assumption many of us carry—without ever choosing it—that needs to be seen first.

*The Soft Life* begins the moment you see what you weren't supposed to notice.





# 2

## “He’s Just a Puppet”

I was holding a chicken drumstick when the news caught my attention. The announcer said the DA had chosen Mmusi Maimane as its leader.

The party had always been white-led. Now a 34-year-old black man was leading it. It was an impressive achievement—no matter which political party you liked.

My friend was with me.

*“Wow! This young guy is now the leader of the DA. Yho, he’s done well!”*

*“Aah! They are clever abelungu. They are just using him as a puppet.”*

*“Is it?”*

*“Aah, obvious... how else can a black guy lead the DA?”*

I paused. I forgot what I was about to say.

It felt strange.

*"Could it not be because he's a good politician? Or maybe he was in the right place at the right time. Isn't that how politics works?"*

He rolled his eyes and changed the subject.

He brushed Maimane off as obvious. And that word—obvious—followed me everywhere.

I didn't care if they were right. I just wanted a straight answer. I wasn't even a fan.

But something about the accusation bothered me.

No proof. No questions. A label.

The question stayed with me for over a year.

### Who's Allowed to Lead?

Later, I found myself having the same conversation with the same friend. So I asked:

*"Tell me... is there any other politician who is a puppet? Or do you think all politicians are puppets? For example, is Jacob Zuma an ANC puppet?"*

*"Why would you even ask that? JZ is a brilliant politician!"*

*"I agree. I also think JZ is a brilliant politician. Probably the best I've seen in South Africa. I'm just wondering—who else is like Maimane? Is he the only puppet? Or does he have no say at all?"*

[Blank stare. Silence.]

*"I'm asking because it seems like this: if a black leader leads black voters, we assume he's in charge. But if a black leader leads some white voters, we assume he's a puppet."*

He looked at me with gentle pity, like when you look at someone who doesn't understand what's obvious.

*"So you think Maimane can rise in the DA... just because they voted for him?"*

[Shrug. Silence.]

*"Wena uthanda kabi uku protecta abelungu. (You like protecting white people.)"*

I knew that tone.

So that was the end of that conversation.

## That's Proof

Four years later, we had the discussion again.

Maimane had just resigned from the DA after a party report.

My friend was thrilled.

*"You see! What did I tell you? They got rid of him. I told you they were using him!"*

*"Yes, I saw the report. And I saw that he resigned."*

*"You see! What did I tell you?"*

I paused.

*"Have you forgotten Jacob Zuma was also pushed out? He disagreed with the ANC—and they forced him out."*

The moment I said it, I regretted it.

He shook his head like I was being childish.

*"No, no," he said. "You must understand—white people don't just hand over power."*

*"So you're saying they can never vote for a black leader?"* I asked.

*"They can vote,"* he said quickly. *"But... not real power."*

*"So the vote is fake?"*

*"Not fake,"* he said. *"It's... strategy."*

*"Okay. Then when the ANC pushes Zuma out, is that also strategy?"*

He hesitated.

*"No, that's politics."*

*"And when the DA pushes Maimane out?"*

*"That's proof."*

*"Okay,"* I said. *"Then why did the other white guy resign with him?"*

He blinked.

*"That was... different. It's proof because... because... eish."*

Then, chasing his own logic, he said it—like it was the missing piece:

*"Even when he's the boss, he's still not—because... he's still that."*

[Silence.]

It was the kind of silence that answers you.

He opened his mouth, then closed it. He checked his phone—too quickly—then locked it again. He nodded, like he'd solved it. But his face didn't agree.

*"Anyway,"* he said. And the word didn't help.

I heard it everywhere—from people like me.  
I wondered: *could it stop anyone from making progress?*  
*Could it block a life that works?*  
What makes a label feel true... before anyone even asks for proof?





# 3

## The Language We Thought Was Ours

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*“In the beginning was the Word...”—John*

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**A** teacher gave a class of Grade 7s homework:  
*Write a Short Paragraph About Political Parties in South Africa.*  
One boy, Themba Khumalo, copied and pasted straight from  
the SABC website—without reading it.  
The teacher saw it. He said nothing.

He waited until the middle of the lesson, then called on Themba.

*"Read yours to the class."*

So, for the first time, Themba read his own homework—including the line:

*"All of which will be covered at 8am on Morning Live with Sakina Kammendo."*

The class exploded in laughter.

Everyone could hear it wasn't his.

But he still read it anyway.

That's the trap.

Copy long enough, and eventually you forget it isn't yours. I realised I'd been hearing grown men talk the same way.

### **Borrowed Ideas, Borrowed Lives**

**T**he same thing kept coming up everywhere—even in other countries.

That doesn't make anyone foolish or fake—it just means the ideas arrived here long before most of us had a choice.

Your skin is yours. Your dignity is yours.

A slogan doesn't get to name you.

Many of us inherited it without ever being told where it came from. If you've never questioned it before, that's normal.

Once you can name a way of thinking, it stops deciding things for you.

When it stops deciding things for you, it stops running your life.

The problem is—we've been calling a copy-paste "us."

If a borrowed idea is driving your choices, you won't build the life you want. You'll build something else—without ever choosing it.

That's the difference between dreaming about a better life—and actually seeing it take shape around you. Like all expenses get paid and you still have money left. Like your child choosing a career, not just the nearest job.

And once you notice it, you can't unnotice it.

## Where This Language Came From

That copy-paste has a name: Karl Marx.

He was German. He wrote a lot. And his ideas travelled—farther than he ever planned.

He even wrote with another German, Friedrich Engels. Together they produced a short pamphlet called “*The Communist Manifesto*.” And in some circles, it gets repeated the way people repeat scripture: believe it, memorise it, preach it.

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*“I believed and therefore I spoke. We also believe, and therefore speak.”—Paul*

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It might feel familiar to you. Because you’ve heard pieces of it your whole life—just with local slang on top.

That’s when it first hit me.

Once you see it, you’ll start hearing it everywhere—and suddenly you can see things for yourself, not through the slogans.

## The Two-Sides Trap

Marx believed something simple and dramatic:  
“*The history of all society is the history of class struggles.*”

(Or as we might hear it in South Africa: “*umzabalazo.*”)

In his mind, life was one big fight between groups he called “*classes.*”

He said the world is basically divided into two sides:

“*The Haves vs the Have-Nots.*” In his words, the *Bourgeoisie vs Proletariat*.

That’s French, but his followers helped translate it for politics. Over time the groups became:

- *Capitalists vs Working Class*
- *Black vs. White*
- *Oppressors vs. Oppressed*

Different words, same idea: the world is a battlefield.

Marx taught that the “*oppressed majority*” is always being “*exploited*” by the “*oppressive minority.*”

This oppression is not about a specific action or event.

It's not something someone does to you.

According to Marx, oppression becomes your identity. It becomes “who you are,” not just what happened to you. It's who you are in society. In other words, the story tells you this is your place in life.

He believed you could identify the “*oppressor*” by checking who owns private property — what he called “*the means of production.*” In simple terms: who owns the business, the land, and the factory.

In his mind, this struggle would eventually explode into a *revolution*. The oppressed would rise up, overthrow the whole system, and take power — *amandla* — for themselves.

### Awake. Unite. Take.

Marx even explained the steps needed to make this revolution happen.

- **Step 1: Wake the oppressed up.**

He said people are blind to their oppression because they live in “*false consciousness.*” They are asleep.

So you must “*awaken*” them—today we hear words like *woke*. You do this by telling them they are a victim of the “system.”

Once someone wakes up, they gain “*class consciousness.*” And if the group is racial instead of economic, this becomes “*black consciousness.*”

- **Step 2: Unite the awakened.**

Once enough people are conscious, and angry enough, they must *unite* in *class solidarity*. A “*front,*” “*movement,*” basically a group of “*comrades.*”

- **Step 3: Revolution**

Once the awakened are united, the next step is *mass action*.

Marx believed the pressure would eventually boil over into a *revolution*—a moment where the “oppressed” confront the “oppressor,” take control of the system, and seize power.

The goal is no longer awareness. It is control. And once power is taken, the revolution must never be allowed to end—because if it ends, the reason for power disappears.

Later, some Marxists decided they didn't need a loud revolution. They preferred a slow, "democratic" one. But the final goal remained the same: create Marx's version of heaven — a perfect society ruled by "*the People*" or "*the Masses*." In this world:

- No one owns private property
- Everything is shared

In other words, the land and property belong *equally* to everyone.

Marx said that, at this stage, "*the expropriators are expropriated.*"

The people who once owned things now have them taken away.

And according to the theory, "*social justice*" is finally achieved. No more *inequality*. No more *class struggle*.

And in this perfect-world story... everyone lives happily ever after.

### Why It Sounds Like Home

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*"However far a stream flows, it doesn't forget its origin."*—African Proverb

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If you listen carefully to our leaders, you will notice something interesting. Their choice of words shows how they see the world. And once you understand Marx's message, the words start to sound very familiar.

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*“Comrades, I am called upon to lead this **multi-class** organization... This is the nature of the ANC–SA **Communist Party–COSATU Alliance**... Our most sincere gratitude is extended to our comrades and friends in fraternal parties... FRELIMO...MPLA...ZANU-PF... the Communist Party of Cuba... **Amandla!**”—Jacob Zuma, ANC National Conference, 2007*

*“Mr President, you lack courage and you have sold out the **revolution**... You defend the privileges of the **white minority**... You continue with the **exploitation and exclusion** of the **oppressed black majority**.”—Julius Malema, Maiden Speech in Parliament, 2014*

*“We must listen to comrade Govan Mbeki... ‘Go to **the masses** of **the oppressed and exploited**... prepare the way for a **takeover of power**.’... To take over power, the oppressed must build organisational machinery... **Comrades**, our **real strength** is with the masses.”—Sdumo Dlamini, COSATU National Congress, 2018*

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That’s when I realised how easily slogans can pull people in—especially when nobody ever explains prosperity. But once you notice what’s going on, slogans lose their grip.

When you hear these speeches, you may feel like this is a “black” politician or “African” way of talking. But it’s not.

This idea didn’t start here—it travelled.

Saying that isn't an insult. It just separates us from borrowed ideas. It also separates skin from slogans.

It doesn't matter if the speaker has a deep African accent or a powerful black voice. These ideas come from a German man—who was influenced by French thinkers.

## The Cost of Speaking

This is where many people go quiet—not because they agree, but because the social punishment is real. And yet, if a black person refuses to follow this way of seeing the world, they are called a “Clever Black.” That label usually shows up the moment someone asks a question out loud.

Names are meant to shut the conversation down.

Isn't it strange?

The people who accuse others of being sellouts are often the ones living comfortably—sometimes with more money than the very people they attack. And somehow the insult always goes to any black person who doesn't fully buy into an imported way of thinking.

Many black people feel pressured by this. If you've ever felt unsure but kept quiet, you're not alone. You don't have to announce your questions—you can start by admitting them to yourself.

Some even feel guilty for rejecting it—as if disagreeing with Marx means rejecting their “blackness.”

## Good for the Fight, Bad for the Future

I am not pointing out that Marx was not black in order to attack his ideas. If anything, I am grateful for how his way of thinking was used in our history.

I would not be writing this book so freely today if it were not for the liberation struggle. During apartheid, a book like this could not exist.

The freedom I enjoy—the freedom all black South Africans enjoy—came partly because Marxist ideas *woke people up*. They made the *black majority aware* of the *injustice* we were facing. They stirred *anger*. They *united* the *oppressed*. And they helped *mobilise* the *masses* into a *revolution*.

That is how the apartheid system was *overthrown*. In that sense, Marxism worked. It shaped the minds of many struggle leaders.

Many were tortured.  
Many were imprisoned.  
Many were killed.  
My late father was one of them.  
That freedom was not free.  
They paid that price so that all South Africans—including me—could be free.  
The old apartheid laws had to fall.  
The *unjust exclusion* from the economy had to end.

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***“Black Consciousness... is the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together around the cause of their oppression... and to operate as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude.”—Steve Bantu Biko, I Write What I Like (1978)***

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If Biko had not written these words, who knows if we would have reached democracy in 1994.

Marxism was a vital tool for our freedom.

A tool—not an identity.

People with brown skin existed long before Karl Marx was even born.

The tool was useful for a specific time and a specific purpose.

And that purpose has now been fulfilled.

This is the turning point.

We won freedom. But have we learned how to build?

Building is quieter than fighting. It's a life that works. It looks like your cousin getting work without begging anyone, and your mother not panicking about month-end. Dignity that doesn't depend on who you shout at. That's the life many people want, even if they've never seen it clearly. Room to dream.

That kind of life needs different tools.

It needs a country where people who build and create win, not just people who fight.

## The Knife After the Steak

So yes, Marxism played its part.  
It helped us fight a real enemy.

But after the victory, we kept using the same tool—even when the job had changed.

That is where things start going wrong.

I compare Marxism to a steak knife—a great tool, but only for certain jobs.

Imagine a big steak on a plate and hungry children around the table. Of course, you grab a sharp steak knife and cut the meat into small pieces so they can chew.

That is the right use of the knife. But once the steak is cut, you must put the knife down. You cannot use the same knife to feed the children. If you try, you will cut them.

You'll cause harm, even though you meant well.

Your attachment to the knife betrays your intentions.

It undoes the good you were trying to do.

In the same way, Marxism becomes harmful when it is used outside of Real Oppression.

## The Line We Must See

**Real Oppression** is not simply when you feel oppressed. Under apartheid, we felt oppressed—and we were right. Apartheid laws crushed our God-given human rights. That was Real Oppression. The steak knife was necessary.

*When a rule, law, or regulation unjustly tramples on your God-given human rights.*

Under apartheid, this definition fits perfectly.

But today, not everything we don't like is oppression.

Some things offend us.

Some things frustrate us.

Some things limit us. But that does not mean another “class” is oppressing us. Often, it is simply the unfairness of life—or a challenge to overcome.

We live in a harsh world.

People are imperfect and sometimes selfish. But when we start calling every hardship “oppression,” we fall into exactly what Marx taught—a cycle meant to trigger a revolution, not to help a country grow:

- create a struggle
- divide society
- identify an oppressor
- fight a revolution
- take power

And that is where everything goes wrong.

### When the Song Starts Paying

Once Real Oppression ends, the same talk starts doing something else. And not for the better.

It's about what happens when struggle language becomes a career.

Marxism – Real Oppression  $\approx$  Betrayal + Corruption

Not always. Just often enough that you start noticing it. Over time, it became hard to ignore. It also made sense of a question I kept hearing: why, when corruption is exposed, nothing ever seems to happen. Visible to everyone, yet strangely untouchable.

When the real struggle is over, the same talk becomes a cover for corruption.

If you use the steak knife after the steak is already cut, the children get hurt. If you use Marxism after Real Oppression is gone, the country gets hurt.

## The Knife Starts Cutting Us

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*“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.”—Solomon*

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After 1994, Marxism became the steak knife our government refused to put down. They kept using it long after the job had changed. They meant to feed the children of South Africa. But once Real Oppression was gone, that knife started cutting us instead.

So the same song continued:

*“We are fighting inequality... We are fighting exclusion...”*

But the more they sang, the worse those problems became. And something else kept rising:

Betrayal.

Corruption.

Because when people hold onto Marx’s way of seeing the world after Real Oppression is gone, something predictable happens—the same thing happens, over and over:

The loudest fighters for “the poor” often end up betraying the very people they claim to defend. This isn’t about bad people—it’s about what this language does when it runs the whole show.

It is an old mind-twister—so old we can trace it back to the year AD 30:

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*“Then Mary took very costly oil and anointed Jesus’ feet... But Judas Iscariot, who would betray Him, said, ‘Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor?’ He said this not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief... He used to help himself to the money box.”—John*

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## The Poor Talk That Hides a Thief

Judas sounded like a champion of the poor. He used the right language. The “equality” language. But his motives were hidden.

A perfect picture of what happens when a person uses “oppression talk” without actual oppression.

His betrayal was predictable. Because when the formula is in place... the outcome seems guaranteed.

And that is exactly what we saw in South Africa after apartheid ended.

The way of thinking designed for a liberation struggle was kept alive even when the struggle was over. And just like Judas, the betrayal came from inside—not from the “oppressor,” but from those who claimed to fight for “the people.”

## When the Pattern Comes Home

Since 1994, the ruling party has spoken the loudest about inequality and caring for “the people.” But according to the formula, that should make us watchful—not because the people in the party are bad, but because the way of thinking leads to the same results again and again.

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*“The central challenge... is moral decay caused by the struggle for access to resources... a cancer in our midst.”—Kgalema Motlanthe, ANC National General Council, 2005*

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Nearly twenty years later, the same problem had not improved:

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*“Corruption has not declined but worsened... looting of public resources, patronage, vote-buying... corruption of ‘industrial proportions’.”—Chief Justice Raymond Zondo, State Capture Report, 2022*

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This is not the fault of one president.

Not the fault of one race.

It is the formula doing what it always does. This pattern shows up wherever the same ideas are used—no matter the country or the people. There is only one way to break it:

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*You don't build a home with a weapon—  
even if that weapon once saved your life.*

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### Mandela's Escape Clause

Many people forget that even Nelson Mandela—who was influenced by Marxism in his early political years—later warned that we should not become bound to any one ideology.

In the Rivonia Trial speech, Mandela said:

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*"I should be absolutely impartial and objective... I must leave myself free to borrow the best from the West and from the East."—Nelson Mandela, 20 April 1964*

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He admired the British Parliament.

He respected the American separation of powers.

He believed in learning from what works.

Mandela wanted freedom—not a forever contract to a single way of thinking.

## Put the Knife Down

After almost 30 years of the same promises, the results speak for themselves.

We don't need more slogans.

We need what Mandela encouraged:

- Impartiality.
- Objectivity.
- What works.

It's time to put the steak knife away.

This system was built for revolution—not for building prosperity.

It was useful during the struggle.

If you can name the tool, you can stop being used by it. But feeding the next generation needs a different tool.

A tool that helps ordinary people build *the Soft Life*.

And that tool is *The Money Game*—the next chapter.





# 4

## The Rules Nobody Teaches

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*“The people will curse him who withholds grain, But blessing will be on the head of him who sells it.”—Solomon*

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**G**reedy Godfrey decides to start selling a new sweet called “Sweet Prosperity.” He sets up his business at the township taxi rank on a Monday morning.

He buys each sweet from a factory in town for R1.  
So he sells them at R5.

Every sweet he sells for R5 leaves him with R4.

Many customers complain about the price.

So he only manages to sell 100 sweets.

By late afternoon, his tin is still heavy. People walk past, see the sign, and click their tongues. He goes home with R500 in his pocket—and a bad taste in his mouth.

R1 in. R5 out. But the problem isn't the maths. It's the feet walking past.

**Tuesday:**

He stares at his cardboard sign.

R5.

His hand hesitates.

Then he scratches it out:

R4.

At first, nothing happens. Then one person stops. Then another. By lunch, the tin starts to sing.

By the time he packs up, he's sold 200.

R800 cash.

In his head, he peels off the factory's cut.

What's left feels... real.

He goes home tired—but lighter. Not because the sweets are lighter. Because his chest is.

**Wednesday:**

He drops it again:

R3.

He expects more complaints. Instead, he hears something else:

*"Eish, okay. Give me four."*

That's when he realises it's not about being nice. It's about being chosen.

He sells 400 sweets. He goes home with R1,200 in his pocket—and R800 left after the factory takes its share.

**Thursday:**

He drops it to R2.

And something strange happens:

No lectures. No head-shaking. No *"you people are greedy."*

Just coins. Just hands. Just *"next."*

He sells 800 sweets—same R800 left after the factory.

He counts the money twice. He can't believe what he's seeing.

**Friday:**

He keeps it at R2.

Same spot. Same rhythm.

By now, people come looking for him. He starts to feel... safe.

He sells 800 again—same R800 left after the factory.

R3,400 left after the factory for the week.

For the first time in a long time, life feels... simple.

Life starts working.

**The Copycat Test**

Godfrey spends the weekend with his friend, Envious Earnest. Godfrey is splashing out his R3,400 profit like a brand-new tycoon.

Come Monday morning, Godfrey returns to the taxi rank, ready to run the same week again.

But there's a shock waiting for him.

Standing not far from his spot...

is Envious Earnest—selling *Sweet Prosperity* at the same taxi rank.

Same sweet. Same sign. Even the same smile—like it's always been his.

Over the weekend, Earnest went digging for information. And Godfrey's little brother, Bigmouth Ben, spilled every detail of the business to him. Earnest copied everything—the product, the location, the idea.

Godfrey's stomach drops.

He doesn't even greet Earnest.

They simply start selling, side-by-side, ignoring each other.

**Monday:**

Both sell 500 sweets each at R2 a sweet.

They each go home with R1,000 in cash—R500 profit.

Godfrey storms home angry with Bigmouth Ben for talking too much.

He'd just watched his profit crash from R800 a day to R500.

**Tuesday to Friday:**

Earnest glances across at Godfrey's table, then scratches his sign. R1.50.

Not loud. Not rude. Just lower.

Many walk past Godfrey... and buy from Earnest instead.

It isn't a riot. It's quiet.

That's when he learns the rule nobody teaches: the customer doesn't argue. The customer just leaves.

Godfrey feels it immediately.

The same faces. The same feet turning away.

The next day, Godfrey watches it happen again. And something in him breaks.

He reaches up... and lowers his price—R1.25.

One lowers.

The other follows.

By Friday, both tables show the same number: R1.10.

Godfrey counts his money.

It's honest. It's clean. But it's not last week.

No splash. No easy confidence.

He hasn't lost.

But he can feel the squeeze.

If he wants more—something has to change.

### When the Table Multiplies

**G**odfrey decides to expand. He hires his little brother, Ben, and sets him up to run the same business at another taxi rank.

On Monday, Ben sells 4,000 sweets at R1.10 each. Meanwhile, Godfrey sells 2,500 at his usual spot.

Together they sell 6,500 sweets. After the factory takes its cut, only R650 is left.

Godfrey pays Ben R65 for the day.

Ben doesn't even hide his grin. That afternoon, Ben goes home with bread and airtime. Not theories. Bread.

So Godfrey's own profit becomes R585.

#### **Tuesday:**

Envious Earnest sees what's happening... and he refuses to be left behind. He hires his younger sister, Hired Hellen, and sends her to follow Ben to the new taxi rank.

Ben and Hellen each sell 2,000 sweets. Each table makes R2,200 in cash—and only R200 left after paying the factory.

Earnest pays Hellen R80 per day.

Hellen phones her mother on the taxi ride home.

*"I got a job,"* she says. And you can hear the relief in the silence after.

Now both businesses have expanded.

## Pause and Picture a Soft Life Week

For the first time, two houses are lighter. Not because life is easy. Because money came from work—not permission. That’s how people start moving up. That’s how *the Soft Life* becomes normal.

### **Wednesday—The Betrayal:**

Godfrey arrives at work and gets a shock.

His brother Ben has switched sides.

He is now working for Earnest at a third taxi rank.

Ben explains himself casually:

*“Earnest offered me R100 per day. And since I know the business now, I can also train Hellen for him.”*

Godfrey and Ben sit down and talk.

They reach a new deal.

### **Thursday—A Better Offer:**

Ben returns to selling for Godfrey.

This time, Godfrey pays him R120 per day—and gives him the responsibility of training new recruits.

But Godfrey still feels uneasy. If Ben leaves again, Godfrey doesn’t just lose a worker. He loses sleep.

So Godfrey makes a bigger commitment:

If Ben stays loyal, he will receive 5% of the business for every year he works and for every recruit he trains.

This time, the deal sticks.

## **For a Moment, It Worked...**

This is the money game when nobody blocks it.

It wasn’t always nice. It was tense. It was messy.

Feet moved. Faces turned. Coins landed on one table instead of the other. And nothing stayed the same for long.

That’s how prosperity grows in real life—by people responding to what works for them. That’s progress you can see. That’s *the Soft Life* vision in motion.

## Ballot Box at the Taxi Rank

**T**hey voted every minute—not at a ballot box, but with their money. Every sweet they bought was a vote. Economists have a name for it. Taxi-rank people have their own: *“Too expensive, my brother.”*

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*“...And everyone who competes... exercises self-control in all things.”—Paul*

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But the competition between Godfrey and Earnest pushed the price even lower—from R2 to R1.10.

Godfrey could be as “greedy” as people say—the moment feet stopped, R5 was over.

Godfrey had to make a plan—to survive at R1.10 even though customers were happy with R2.

## The Vote That Sets Your Wage

**T**he salaries Godfrey and Earnest paid worked the same way. Ben and Hellen voted with their labour. Suddenly, their work was worth more—because someone else wanted it too.

Godfrey could not keep Ben stuck at R65.

Why?

Hellen’s R80 offer voted against it. It was no longer worth it for Godfrey to pay low wages.

Ownership worked the same way.

It ended up with the people who made the business stronger.

Ben’s experience worked for him. The more he knew, the harder he was to replace.

Godfrey’s fear of losing Ben forced him to raise his wages.

Competition demanded a better deal. That’s how people make progress.

Everything kept moving because no one was stopped from choosing.

Not the buyers. Not the sellers. Not the workers.

When no one blocks people from choosing, one table became two... and one taxi rank became two... new workers, new jobs and new owners. That’s how *the Soft Life* becomes normal.

## When the Rule Walks In

The trouble starts when someone arrives with a rule.  
Not a table. A rule.

“No,” he says. “*Not like that.*”

It’s just someone trying to help—and not seeing the damage that comes later.

## The Rule That Kills the Table

So let’s rewind the story—and tell it again. But this time, we introduce a new character—Greedy Godfrey’s uncle.

A man who means well, but believes he should decide for everyone.

Let’s call him “Uncle Sipho.”

Greedy Godfrey starts selling a new sweet, *Sweet Prosperity*, at the township taxi rank on a Monday. He buys each sweet from a factory in town for R1, and decides to sell them for R5.

Before he even makes his first sale, Uncle Sipho steps in.

“*Hai, no! You are greedy, boy! You buy these sweets for R1, and now you want to sell them for R5? You will sell them for R1.10, or else! You want to exploit the poor!*”

Greedy Godfrey’s shoulders drop.

His excitement dies.

He packs up and leaves the business before lunchtime. And the commuters who would have bought at R5 keep walking—money in their pockets, sweetless, confused.

Now let’s pause and ask a simple question:

What happened to the first 100 people who would have paid R5?

They lose out.

This is what happens when a price is forced. It’s not because the factory ran out of sweets. It’s because a rule holds the price at a level the commuters never chose.

So:

The people who would’ve paid R2–R5 get nothing.

The taxi rank loses a business before it’s even born.

## Good Heart—Bad Numbers

Uncle Siphso had good motives. He wanted to protect commuters from paying too much. In his mind, he was fighting for “the people.”

But the money game does not run on motives. It runs on maths. And when good motives meet bad maths, people get hurt.

As they say:

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*“The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”*

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In the first story, Godfrey had all the “messy motives”—greed, pride, competition. But the maths forced him to behave in a way that helped everyone:

- he dropped prices
- he expanded his business
- he hired people
- he shared ownership with Ben

The maths shaped him far more than his motives did. In the tragedy, Uncle Siphso steps in—good heart, bad numbers.

- He ignored how the numbers worked.
- He ignored what people do when the rules change.
- He ignored how prices move when left alone.

And the outcome was predictable:

- the business died
- the jobs died
- opportunity died

Godfrey and Earnest were locked out. Ben and Hellen never even got a start.

## **The Damage You Never See**

And that's not even the end of the story. One rule—just one—triggered a chain reaction no one could see coming.

The damage doesn't stop at the taxi rank.

Quietly. Far away. Where nobody connects it back to that taxi rank.

When Godfrey's sweet business dies, the sweet factory sells less. It buys less sugar. The sugar supplier cuts shifts. If the wrapper company sells less, it orders less paper.

One "helpful" rule at a taxi rank can quietly remove jobs you never see—far away, further up the line, and months later.

Months later, Godfrey hears on the radio that a factory in another town is laying off workers. He will never realise it began when his sweet business closed.

One small rule killed one small business. Then the factory felt it. Then suppliers felt it. Then jobs quietly disappeared.

When people's choices get blocked, the harm doesn't stop there—it spreads.

## **The One Question That Saves You Later**

Before we argue about it, let's ask what this rule will make people do.

Once you see how the money game works, a pattern starts to show up.

The same kinds of rules keep getting passed—again and again—in different countries, under different slogans that sound compassionate and sincere. And almost nobody asks the one question that matters most:

What does this rule reward... and what does it quietly break?



# 5

## The Rules That Sound Right

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*“There is a way that seems right to a man,  
But its end is the way of death.”—Solomon*

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**U**nCLE SiphO—the well-meaning uncle from the previous chapter—now steps onto a much bigger stage. He represents the politician who stands on a platform with a trembling voice and a raised fist. He looks straight into the camera and promises:

*“No commuter will ever pay R5 for sweets again!”*

He vows to pass a law forcing Godfrey to sell at R1.10—and the crowd erupts.

They call this kind of promise a price rule.

It sounds simple. It sounds kind. And in the moment, it feels powerful.

The crowd cheers. The politician feels brave. And nobody asks what happens next.

What follows is never what was promised. Everywhere in the world, the same promise shows up:

*"We will force prices down."*

The slogan changes. The maths doesn't. Something disappears. Something breaks.

You've seen this before—even if you never had words for it. You don't owe anyone a performance. You don't need to change parties, fight online, or argue at a braai. You just need to notice it—quietly—the next time you hear a promise that sounds kind. You don't stop caring when you ask,

*"Will this actually work?"*

And the people who were meant to be helped feel it first. Once someone believes they can set the right price for sweets, it never stops there.

The next question is always the same:

What about wages?

*"No, you greedy boy! You made R3,400 in the first week—how can you pay Bigmouth Ben only R65 a day? Pay him R100 or else!"*

That, too, is a price rule—this time on the cost of labour.

A wage rule usually comes with names like "minimum wage" or "living wage."

It sounds caring.

But just like controlling the price of sweets, it can break the money game. Because while motives may be good... the results still hurt.

## The Kindness That Cancels Jobs

**B**igmouth Ben and Hired Hellen voted with their feet—on wages—by leaving, staying, or negotiating. Quietly, between:

1. Greedy Godfrey
2. Envious Earnest
3. Bigmouth Ben
4. Hired Hellen

And right next to that, customers were voting every minute with their R2 coins.

So now imagine Uncle Siphso had passed a law:

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*“No worker shall be paid less than R100 a day!”*

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It sounds caring.

That’s why it works. And for a moment, it feels right.

A law like that usually leads to one of two things:

A shortage of jobs.

Or too many people chasing too few jobs.

South Africa has millions of people ready to work—and youth unemployment is through the roof.

Either way, the people meant to be protected end up locked out.

Because Godfrey’s options are:

1. Don’t hire at all.
2. Hire fewer workers / automate / stay small.
3. Hire someone Uncle Siphso doesn’t know and pay them R65 under the table.

Again—good motives, bad maths.

### **When the Rule Picks Winners**

**W**hen government steps into the wage deal, employers respond by replacing workers with machines:

- Fewer gardeners—more industrial trimmers.
- Fewer cashiers—more self-checkout machines.

That doesn’t make them bad people—it makes them human, responding to pressure.

But there is one democratic way to raise wages. The one you just watched in the story is this:

**More People Working → More People Gaining Experience → More Competition Among Employers → Higher Wages**

**B**en’s salary went from R65 to R100 to R120—without a single law being passed.

Competition protected him more than Uncle Siphon ever could.  
For the first time, Ben wasn't being "helped"—he was being valued.  
That's what it feels like when the ladder is working.  
That's how people start climbing up.

A rule becomes harmful when it blocks a willing worker from a willing job. It may sound compassionate. But it can cancel a first chance and break the ladder. This isn't about lowering dignity—it's about opening the door so dignity can grow.

It may feel unfair to say,  
*"Do not block a willing person from a willing job."*  
Entry is the first step on the ladder.

### When Kind Rules Hurt First

Now let's step out of the sweet story for a minute and talk about a word we use a lot: "oppression." Under apartheid, the laws crushed our God-given rights. That was Real Oppression.

If you follow the Godfrey story all the way through, something uncomfortable starts to show. It's not what most people expect.

After 1994, many economic hardships are not caused by oppression. They are caused by side effects of well-meaning rules.

Sometimes the harshest outcomes come from the kindest voices. Believing this once doesn't make you blind. It makes you human.

That is the tragedy of a wage rule:

Kindness at the microphone, unemployment at the taxi rank.

Imagine a country where most young people start somewhere—even small.

They earn their first pay. They learn. They move.

Parents stop worrying about idle days turning into dangerous nights.

That quiet movement upward is what prosperity actually looks like.

It looks boring on TV. But it feels like peace at home. It feels like month-end without panic.

Wouldn't that feel better?

### The Rule That Blocks the First Job

Questioning a rule does not mean you don't care about the poor. It means you care enough to ask whether the rule actually helps—or only sounds like it does. You're allowed to want better pay and still ask what happens to first jobs.

Most South Africans are doing the best they can with the options in front of them. When the rules block entry, effort has nowhere to go.

My first job in 2000 paid far less than today's legal minimum wage. If a minimum wage had existed in my industry back then, I would never have been hired. And if I had not been hired, I would not have learned the skills that shaped my future.

I discovered everything by doing small, simple tasks around older producers—people like the late Robby Malinga, and icons like the late Doc Shebeleza and Siphso Mbhele.

Those early, low-paid jobs didn't look important at the time—but they shaped everything that came later.

Would it be good if Mzambiya, Msawawa, the late Mshoza, and Kelly Khumalo never had those hit songs? Would it truly serve the country if I never made “Tell My Story”—the track that helped the DJ Tira & Sox album go multiple platinum?

All because the government “meant well” and wanted my first employer to pay me more?

## The Right to Start

**O**n the other hand, the harm is even worse for young people. This is why rules that block first jobs hit young people the hardest.

Many young people are not asking for protection—they are asking for a chance to start. To learn. To prove themselves. To grow.

As they grow older, they would naturally gain experience, take on more responsibility, and earn more over time.

This is exactly what happened with Bigmouth Ben. He started below R100. But because he was allowed to start, he grew in skill, ended up earning R120, and even became a shareholder.

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*“Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them...”—  
Solomon*

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Most of us agree that the future of our country rests on its youth. Young people must work—yet around 63.9% of under-24s can't find work (Stats SA), not even counting those who have given up looking.

Every young person who finds work—at any wage—is a future contributor to national prosperity. Every unemployed young person is a growing crisis. At best, they slow the country's progress. At worst, we meet them later in crime statistics.

### **When Being “Helped” Means Being Stopped**

**W**hen wage demands turn into laws that block first jobs, the result changes—not because people are bad, but because the rules now decide who is allowed to start.

When young people can start, the whole place starts moving.

Employed young people are arrows being pulled back—prepared, strengthened, and then released into a prosperous tomorrow.

When Uncle Siphos interferes with Ben's wages, he is not protecting him.

He is blocking the first job. He is snapping the arrow before it ever leaves the bow. That's the money game.

Respect is not only about shielding people from hardship. It is about letting them take part. Letting someone start—even small. Letting them try, fail, learn, and improve. Letting them earn their way forward.

What freezes people in poverty is not effort.

It is rules that tell a grown person:

*“Sit down. Wait. Someone else will decide when you are ready.”*

Most people don't see this link at first.

### **When Fighting Inequality Hurts the Poor**

**T**his isn't a party argument. It's a pattern I've watched repeat wherever first jobs disappear.

Every human being is equal in value—before God and before the law.

But the money game cannot produce the same outcomes.

That's why I keep asking:

Who gets to start?

## The Enemy Is at the Bottom

The question that matters is not how much someone earns at the top. It's whether someone at the bottom can get in, work, and move up.

The real question is not:

*"Why does she earn so much?"*

The real question is:

*"Can the poorest among us find safe, decent work—and rise?"*

That is the heart of the matter.

Poverty, not inequality, is the true crisis.

When governments chase equality without asking how people actually rise, something painful keeps happening.

Poverty doesn't disappear. It hardens.

The pain people feel is real. Poverty humiliates. Unemployment wounds dignity. But the cure they offer can still break the ladder.

Some politicians speak tenderly about the poor, but the rules they defend punish success instead of multiplying it. It sounds compassionate—but it punishes the ladder.

A leader who truly loves the poor must also love the conditions that create opportunity—letting people start, build, own something small, and grow it. Because you cannot lift the poor by destroying the ladder the poor could have climbed. Because the first person who needs that ladder is the person with nothing.

If you try to force everyone to the same result, something goes first.

Usually, it's the first job.

## When Equality Quietly Turns Cruel

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*“Whenever people are jealous or selfish, they cause trouble and do all sorts of cruel things.”—James*

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This is the quiet trap of equality politics—comparing who has more than who. It sounds kind at first, but beneath it lies bitterness—that blinds us.

When people feel stuck, anger feels honest—even when the solution hurts us. And so the comparison blinds us to how nations actually grow.

I know why it sounds right. I used to nod at it too. Then I watched what it does to first jobs.

A country stuck on equal results by force destroys prosperity. It’s like forcing everyone to start on the same rung of the ladder by cutting off the lower steps. It looks fair from above—until you realise no one new can climb.

That’s the same story—just dressed differently. This comparison gets sold as “justice”—but in real life, it often ends with the first job disappearing.

A country that rewards building lifts the poor. Because prosperity requires talent—unleashed, not punished.

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*“For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.”—Matthew*

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You already saw this in a small way in the introduction, when the rules pile up, builders start looking for exits. Productive talent doesn’t disappear. It moves. And South Africa cannot afford to lose any more of its talent.

## The Poverty We Can Live With

I am writing this book because I have a dream—a clear, simple, stubborn dream for the poorest households in South Africa. In this dream, every poor family has a small home. Nothing extravagant. Just clean, safe, and dignified.

The kitchen has a fridge with actual food in it. There is a used car outside that starts when you turn the key. Inside the house, there is a laptop for opportunity and a cellphone with airtime.

If this were our “poverty,” I could live with it.

Because from there, you can rise.

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*“He raises the poor from the dust. And lifts the beggar from the ash heap, To set them among princes, And make them inherit the throne of glory.”—Samuel*

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Being poor is not an identity—it’s a situation people move through. In a country that is truly prospering—where the money game flows freely and fairly—today’s poor person becomes part of the working class. Many eventually rise into the middle class. Some become well-off. And a few become very wealthy. That is how every successful nation works.

We will never make the country equal. And that is fine.

Nature is unequal. Talent is unequal. Effort is unequal. Results will be unequal. But we can raise the country’s overall standard of living. Dramatically. Consistently. Permanently.

And all it takes is a shift in the public mindset—a new understanding of how prosperity actually works.

That is my dream for you, the reader.

If more South Africans understood the basic rules of the money game, something interesting might happen. Prosperity would stop feeling like a miracle.

Now you’ve seen the rules of the game.

If asking whether a rule works makes someone a “sellout,” then thinking itself has become dangerous.

And no country has ever prospered by banning questions.



# 6

## The Split Second That Changed Me

“Nooooo!”

I screamed as I watched my friend fall out of the passenger door. His terrified expression is burned into my mind. He was heading for the tar... and the car just kept spinning. Instinct took over.

I slammed on the brakes—handbrake still up—hoping the car would stop. I didn’t know what I was about to hear.

## A Week Earlier

*"Eish but Bonsai, do you want to drive, or must I drive?"*

*"What have I done wrong now?"*

I asked defensively.

*"Ob no, man. This guy always drives like he's got all the time in the world. He is never in a hurry to get anywhere!"*

*"Okay, you come and drive. I want to send an email on my phone anyway."*

*"Yes, good idea!"*

The guy in the passenger seat and the one in the back agreed. In my early twenties, my friends complained about my slow driving.

I pay attention to everything: speedometer, engine sound, torque, fuel. I'm always calculating... analysing.

I'm fascinated by how things work—how they interact—how they reach their full potential. I'm a nerd, a curious mind trapped in a petrolhead's body. Even today, I still enjoy long drives and motorcycle rides to relax.

My nerdiness made me a careful driver.

On the highway, I naturally drift toward 90 km/h.

Downhill, I allow it to reach 120 km/h—just coasting.

So yes—inside, I'm an old man with a calculator.

A week before the accident, I was driving with my music-school friend when he complained again and insisted on taking the wheel.

So he drove the rest of the day around town.

## Where Foolishness Meets Physics

Well, my company used to hire cars often in those days. So the next day, I picked up a brand-new, small Ford from the rental place. I drove it normally for a few days. But then a thought crossed my mind—something that had never occurred to me before.

Back then, hired cars had no tracking. No one could see how you drove.

My company paid for the insurance anyway. And if anything went wrong, I wouldn't pay the real price.

Now... mix all of that with the foolishness of being young.

I'm not proud of this next part. But it came from that same nerdy curiosity—to understand how things work.

I wanted to try handbrake turns.

So I found a broad, empty road and started practising.

I experimented. I adjusted. I tested.

Within minutes, the nerd in me kicked in fully.

I calculated the best speed to pull the handbrake—exactly 60 km/h.

I measured the steering angle—about 120 degrees.

And because I approached it like a science project, I mastered it within an hour.

After that, I started showing off my “skill.” I could literally feel the angles of the car—predicting the drift and the final resting position. It impressed everyone. And of course, my friends were as young and foolish as I was then, so they encouraged it.

Soon I was doing it for laughs—showing off.

Oh, how they laughed and cheered.

I cringe at the memory now.

At the time, it felt harmless—even impressive—which is exactly what made it dangerous.

But back then, it made me feel invincible.

Little did I know that one day, that same stunt would nearly kill my friend.

## **The Moment Everything Could Have Ended**

So a week later, my friend and I went to a business meeting. We drove out to Witbank to meet a potential project partner. After the meeting, we stepped out of the office, got into the car, and—being the reckless young men we were—did a 180-degree handbrake turn right there on the road.

Then another.

The guy we’d just met laughed and clapped. Same age. Same foolishness. We felt like stunt drivers with an audience.

Then we headed home.

The temptation crept back in. I wanted to do one more handbrake turn. Just one.

My friend was hyped up, opening and closing the passenger door, laughing, cheering me on. But he made one big mistake—timing.

As I pulled the handbrake and turned right, the back of the car swung left with massive force. The tyres screamed on the tar.

The open passenger door flew wide, and suddenly the force of the spin yanked him straight toward it.

He couldn't keep the door shut. He couldn't even stay in the car.

He was being sucked out.

His face was nothing but terror. He was falling out—helpless against the physics I thought I controlled.

The back of the car was sliding toward him. If it reached him before the car stopped, it would crush him.

I screamed.

I slammed the brakes—hard. The car fought against the momentum. Whether it would stop in time... I really didn't know.

He hit the tar. Rolled. Scraped.

The car stopped just before smashing into him.

All the pride, all the fun, all the foolishness evaporated.

We just sat there—shaking. Shocked. Speechless.

### **When the Laws of Nature Refused to Negotiate**

**W**e drove away in complete, heavy silence. No jokes. No laughter. Just two shaken young men suddenly aware of how close we came to tragedy. That day was the last time I ever attempted a handbrake turn.

Something in me shifted.

I had seen—in a split second—the cold truth about how the world works. Physics did not care that we were young—or that we were just “having fun.” It did not bend to our intentions. The laws of nature took over.

If those laws played out fully, my friend could have died.

I look back now with embarrassment at our foolishness, but also with deep thankfulness. That moment humbled me. It taught me that some forces are bigger than my feelings, my plans, or my explanations.

And that's the point.

### **Rules Don't Care What We Meant**

**N**oticing this doesn't make you heartless—it just means you're paying attention to how the world actually works.

The money game works the same way.

In money, you don't hear the scream.

You wake up and the job is gone.

You can mean well, you can shout, you can blame, you can sing slogans—but the rules still do what they do. When rules are ignored, the poor feel it first.

A shop closes. A worker goes home at 10am. Kids feel it at supper.

Just like physics refuses to negotiate with reckless drivers, the rules of the money game don't negotiate either. They don't bend for well-meaning plans.

That's why understanding rules matters before voting, protesting, or slogans.

That's how we stop things sliding out of control—before passengers are thrown out.



# 7

## How Investors Treat South Africa Like a Rental Car

**T**his is what it looks like when a whole country gets treated like a rental car.  
I was reckless with it.

No tomorrow price for what I did today. That's exactly how people behave when they believe tomorrow doesn't belong to them.

But with my own car, everything changed.

I respected it.

I drove with the future in mind. I cared about the long-term health of the engine. I took responsibility for servicing, resale, reliability. Because I knew: if I damage it, I pay. If I treat it well, I benefit.

That's how most of us live when something truly belongs to us. We protect it—because we want a future with it.

### **When Tomorrow Isn't Yours, The Handbrake Comes Up**

**T**his short-term thinking happens when the economy feels “borrowed.”

It sounds caring toward “the poor,” but it sends one loud message: *“You have no future with this economy.”*

This is not a new problem.

When property is treated like it's not yours, it gets used up, not valued. Still, property is what makes the money game work.

Once the economy feels “borrowed,” some may get applause—but the economy starts doing handbrake turns.

And who gets thrown out of the spinning vehicle first?

The passengers—ordinary South Africans—are left stranded.

The drivers then flee across borders, taking their investment and skills with them.

Watch:

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*“Right now, we are benefiting from high global commodity prices... but investment is not responding... People need to be confident that the local business environment will be positive. Otherwise, they won't take the risk.”—Busi Mavuso, CEO: BUSA, 2022*

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*“South African companies will continue to hold on to their cash instead of investing, as long as there is heightened uncertainty.”—Lesetja Kganyago, SARB Governor, 2021*

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When leaders shout “revolution!”, imagine RPM—revolutions per minute—spiking on a car dashboard. It means this:

*“Try your handbrake turns now before it’s taken from you.”*

And remember, the passengers in that car are not politicians.

They are the unemployed.

The hopeful graduates.

The hungry households.

You and I.

The money game behaves like a car. It demands respect. Humility.

Just like physics refuses to negotiate with reckless drivers, the rules of the money game don’t negotiate either.

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*“If I was a foreign investor and asked to invest in a country where there is expropriation without compensation, I wouldn’t go there unless I needed my head read.”—Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, 2018*

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## The Threat Hiding in the Chant

The dream of “*expropriating the expropriators*” (taking property from current owners) is an old promise of payback. It is supposed to heal injustice. But investors and builders don’t hear “healing.”

*“There is no tomorrow.”*

Once that fear lands, money starts looking for exits.

This has helped lock in today’s poverty. Not because of who people are—but because money leaves when tomorrow doesn’t feel secure.

From the day this idea entered public speeches, companies began getting ready for trouble:

- cutting spending on equipment
- delaying expansion
- reducing employment
- moving investment to safer countries

All because the message was simple:

*"This property is hired. Not yours. Not for long."*

Those words land badly. Not healing the past. Threatening the future.

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*"He who digs a grave for his enemy might as well be digging one for himself."—African Proverb*

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People claim these policies will uplift "the masses." But the poor often become poorer.

Raise the concern, and you will get a history lecture. You're allowed to care about the past and still ask what a rule will do next.

If someone tries to "insult" you by giving you R1 million, you won't worry about their intentions.

You'll take the money.

Similarly, if a policy creates disaster—its emotions and intentions are irrelevant.

Results matter more than speeches. And the poor always feel results first. This is why slogans must be tested before elections—not after the damage is done.

And leaders have used this debate for nearly two decades. The risk becomes clear once the signal is heard. Yet the debate keeps getting played for applause.

### **The Poor Always Pay First—and Most**

This is the single biggest damage to the money game of South Africa. If this debate had been settled over a decade ago—with clear deadlines and settled rules—South Africa would be a completely different country today.

If we had simply said:

*"Here are the rules, and they will never change."*

The farmer would have planted the extra hectare. The factory owner would have hired the extra ten graduates. The money would have flowed.

The only thing that grew was the unemployment line.

This is why *the Soft Life* never arrives by accident.

Instead, uncertainty has punished the poor most.

The very people whose emotions are used to sell the idea.

You will see how in the next two chapters—when we follow the money, not the speeches.

That's when people can move up and plan a future.





## Makoti's Chicken Dust

**M**r Oscar Mabunda works faithfully at a factory. When he resigns, he walks away with R200,000—enough to make an old dream feel within reach.

He's always wanted a used Mercedes-Benz C-Class. And now, for the first time in his life, that dream is possible.

On his first “retirement” day, he goes to the informal market in the township. Before buying the car, he decides to treat himself to some “chicken dust”—the legendary braai chicken cooked on the dusty roadsides of the township. That smoky township spice stays with you for hours.

The lady behind the grill, known affectionately as “Makoti,” serves him with a smile. As they speak, she tells him of her dream:

She longs for a proper sign.

A solid table.

Decent chairs.

She wants her little corner to look like a real business—not just a stall.

Mabunda listens. And something in him softens.

Without hesitation, he offers her a R20,000 loan.

She can repay R400 a month over five years. R400 every month—steady.

Makoti agrees.

It isn't a bank loan. It is a township deal—simple, friendly, and based on trust.

The following week, he arrives with a beautiful new “*Makoti's Chicken Dust*” sign, plus new chairs, a new table, and takeaway plates.

She cries—grateful.

That same week, Mabunda finds his dream car for R180,000.

But life has a surprise for him.

As he sits eating at Makoti's fresh new table, nine other traders gather around him.

They have watched Makoti's transformation, and every one of them wants the same chance. They beg Mabunda to invest in their stalls too.

He feels overwhelmed... but inspired anyway.

He puts off buying his car.

Instead, he invests in the others too, giving each trader the same R20,000 loan deal.

He uses up R200,000—but he feels taller. Proud. Hopeful.

He walks away smiling.

Soon, ten stalls pay him R400 each. Ten families are breathing.

Then he has an idea.

Instead of buying the Mercedes-Benz with cash, he plans to finance it.

The instalment is R3,500 per month, insurance included.

The numbers work.

R4,000 in. R3,500 out. R500 left—enough petrol to take the kids to school in a Benz.

For the first time in decades, Mabunda wakes up excited for the future.

Life is good for Oscar Mabunda.

## The Weekend the Street Woke Up

What Mabunda doesn't expect is what he sees the following weekend.

He pulls up to *Makoti's Chicken Dust*, ready for his usual plate, and for a moment he simply sits in the car... stunned.

The whole street has transformed.

Where there used to be dusty paths and wobbly handwritten signs, there are now bright, professional boards everywhere—kota, manqina, mogodu, dombolo.

The entire stretch looks alive, welcoming, almost festive.

People wave the moment they see him step out.

Some shout “*Ntate Mabunda!*”

Others clap or smile with pride.

Word has spread: this is the man who has lifted the food market.

Soon, locals start calling it “Bunda’s Food Court.”

He loves it.

On some weekends he even brings his wife and children in his Mercedes, parking right where everyone can see him—partly proud, partly humbled. But what moves him even more is what he sees happening all around him:

More taxis stopping.

More chairs scraping on tar.

More young guys in aprons, running with orders.

More hope showing up in quiet, ordinary ways.

Even tourists begin hearing about this lively township food lane, stopping by for kota, mogodu, and Makoti’s famous chicken dust.

In just one year, an entire street has blossomed.

Just like that, the dusty street looks like a future.

One sign becomes ten. Ten becomes a street you want to walk down.

## A Street Full of Dreams... then the Nightmare

One weekend in the second year, everything changes. Mabunda arrives at Bunda's Food Court as usual... only to find one of the stalls, *Mbali's Chicken Feet*, closed.

At first he thinks nothing of it—maybe she has a family event, or needs a rest day. But then he hears the news: Mbali has been in a car accident. She hasn't made it.

A mix of sadness and guilt washes over him. He feels heartbroken for her family... but somewhere in the back of his mind, a cold, unwelcome thought whispers:

*That's one payment gone.*

Now he'll be short. Petrol is a problem.

He shakes the thought away, ashamed. His wife says she'll cover the shortfall. But the storm is only beginning.

The following week, *Jan's Kasi Sandwiches* is shuttered. Another strange story. Jan gets arrested—and by Monday, he is gone.

No payments. No goodbye.

Months later, another business collapses simply due to lack of customers. And then comes the biggest blow: Sgebengu Tsotsi of *Sgebengu Meals* vanishes—literally. One night, someone sees him loading the table and signs—everything—into a van and disappearing into the dark. No trace. No attempt to repay. Nothing.

Two others, Popeye and Maseven, keep their doors tightly shut whenever “Bro Bunda” arrives for his chicken dust. They send endless SMS promises—“*next week, Bro Bunda*”... “*just give me time*”... “*business is slow*”—but the money never comes.

By now, five of the ten businesses have stopped paying altogether. Mabunda's monthly income drops to R2,000 a month. His wife can no longer carry the shortfall. The bank is threatening to repossess his car. Insurance payments are already behind.

Half his investment is gone.

One Saturday, overwhelmed and discouraged, he drives alone to Bunda's Food Court to clear his mind. He just wants Makoti's chicken dust and a moment to think.

Maybe he can ask the remaining businesses to double their payments to R800 each. They can afford it; the place is buzzing with customers now. But even as he thinks about it, he knows it isn't their fault the others have vanished.

He rehearses the speech to himself in the car. Practising his tone. Trying not to sound desperate. Trying not to sound like he is pressuring them. Trying to save a dream that is slipping through his fingers.

***“They SOLD Our Informal Settlement!”***

Mabunda’s attention is suddenly captured by a huge crowd gathered at *Makoti’s Chicken Dust*. He turns the corner, creeping in his Mercedes. He opens his window, trying to hear what is going on.

A young man is standing on a table, shouting.

Mabunda recognises him immediately.

It’s Popeye.

Popeye—the very same business owner who has been avoiding him for months. The same Popeye who has not paid a cent.

And now... he is the hero of the crowd.

Popeye raises his fist and shouts:

*“This place has been called Mandela Informal Settlement since it started... Why are you calling it BUNDA’S? What the hell is BUNDA’S?”*

The crowd erupts with cheers.

*“This place is Mandela Food Court! These sell-outs like Makoti convinced all the vulnerable, poor small-business owners to SELL OUR SETTLEMENT! We built this place with our bare hands!”*

Mabunda feels his stomach tighten. He slows even more, confused and shaken.

He doesn’t buy their stalls. Just tables, chairs, signs.

Popeye continues, whipping the crowd into a frenzy:

*“Now it doesn’t even belong to us anymore! It belongs to greedy, Mercedes-Benz-driving exploiters!”*

The crowd screams in agreement.

Popeye points down the street.

*“Why is HE taking advantage of these struggling people? Do these people not sweat every day to feed their families?”*

People clap. Some whistle. Others chant in anger.

*“Yet he wants this place named after him! He is REAPING where he did not SOW—this is rubbish!”*

The crowd roars.

And then Popeye lowers his voice, building suspense.

*“In fact... let me EXPOSE this Bunda parasite...”*

The crowd goes deadly silent.

*"Do you know that this Bunda ROBBED every business here? Every month! Just so he can drive around in a fancy car... while OUR children starve!"*

The crowd GASPS.

The lie lands like a bomb.

Faces hardened. Eyes went flat.

Some start shaking their heads. Others cover their mouths. A few start shouting angrily.

*"Yes! This Bunda is committing DAYLIGHT ROBBERY!"*

The crowd begins to chant:

*"Down with Bunda! Down with Bunda!"*

Popeye lifts both hands like a freedom fighter addressing a liberation rally.

*"It's time we TAKE BACK OUR POWER! Up with Mandela Food Court! DOWN with Bunda!"*

The crowd chants back with absolute conviction.

And then... someone spots the silver Mercedes crawling behind the crowd.

*"THERE HE IS!"*

Some of the people turn. Not everyone—just enough to poison the crowd. They instantly transform from a chanting crowd into a furious mob.

Stones fly. Fast.

A brick hits the bonnet.

Another smashes the back window.

Mabunda ducks, panicked, and accelerates. Stones hit the doors, the windscreen, the roof—everywhere. He swerves out of the street, heart pounding, hands shaking, barely able to see through shattered glass.

He escapes with his life.

But he loses everything else.

## When the Street Stopped Seeing Him

His investment? Gone.  
His reputation? Ruined.

His car—already about to be repossessed—now has dented doors, broken windows, and no insurance to cover it.

He spends days staring out the window, terrified of the sound of any car hooting at the gate. At night, he lies awake imagining the tow truck arriving to drag away the mangled Mercedes.

His wife, once patient, now reaches the end of her strength. His children walk 10 kilometres to school, burning with embarrassment. Their friends tease them:

*“Where’s the Mercedes? Why are you walking now?”*

But what can they say?

How can they explain that their father tried to lift people up...  
...and everything they built together fell apart.

## The Afternoon He Just Sat There

Mabunda eventually hits rock bottom one quiet afternoon while he is home alone. His wife is at work. His children are at school. And he sits staring at the battered Mercedes-Benz in his yard—the same car that once made him feel like a king.

Now it mocks him.

The dents, the shattered windows, the reminders of stones thrown by the very people he was trying to help.

Now, he hears, that street is dying again. Half the stalls have closed. Some workers go home jobless. Without tourists and without unity, Bunda’s Food Court has collapsed back into obscurity.

Mabunda feels the weight of shame, grief, and fear press against his chest. That afternoon, in that silence, he feels like he has nothing left.

## Two Apologies and an Offer

Just then, his phone rings—a number he doesn’t recognise. The mature voice on the other side introduces himself as “Mr Tsotsi”—Sgebengu’s father—the one who vanished at midnight with the tables, chairs, plates, and signage.

*"I'm calling with two apologies and an offer,"* the man says.

He apologises for Sgebengu's behaviour—admitting the boy has always troubled him and is banned from the father's own investment business. Then he apologises again for what has happened to Mabunda—the humiliation, the stoning, the loss of his investment.

*"As an investor,"* he says gently, *"I know what it feels like to have your entire investment wiped out. It happened to me many times when I started. So I want to repair your damaged car...and replace everything you lost. But with one condition: promise me you will only invest where your investment will be valued, respected, and protected. I can mentor you. You can join me when I negotiate new investments."*

Mabunda breaks down. Then he says yes.

From that day, he and the older investor start building a successful partnership.

That call pulls him back.

He rebuilds. He invests again—but only where investment is respected and protected.

Investors don't start with speeches. They start with:

*"Will my money be protected here?"*

And that's when he learns the cruel part: once a street turns on investors, the next investor doesn't come back.

### **The Three Lines That Broke the Food Court**

Popeye's speech always hits the same three notes:

- *"Now it doesn't even belong to us anymore!"*
- *"It belongs to greedy, Mercedes-Benz-driving exploiters!"*
- *"Do you know that this Bunda ROBBED every business here? Every month!"*

**A**ll three sound protective.

All three kill paydays.

And it can feel right in the moment—especially with our history.

History can make suspicion feel like wisdom.

If it ever pulled you, you're not alone. I felt it too.

You're allowed to want to believe it at first and still ask:

*"What does it do to the poor families who need an income?"*

And that's the trap.

When you fear the man with the tools, you end up chasing the tools

away. And the sad part is: the street pays first. Every time.

**I**nvestors are the ones who buy the tools in the first place. No tools, no stalls. No stalls, no jobs. No jobs, no chance to make it. No *Soft Life*.

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*“...because those luxury things also take up your time. This will not make you focus on your business. I don't have any holiday home anywhere. But, I know people who are working for me. They have a house in London, but I don't.”—Aliko Dangote, Africa's Richest Investor*

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**I**nvestors delay their own comfort so their money can build something. They don't stash it under the mattress—they keep sending it back into businesses.

Funny enough, if you want to learn how to spend money fast, don't learn from investors. Sometimes, the loudest “fight for the poor” speeches come from people living like bosses—while they eat first.

Different languages. Different accents. Same script. Worldwide.

But here's the part Popeye never tells the crowd.

## What Investors Really Fear

**P**opeye's story is that investors spend their time dreaming of massive profits.

That's not how it feels from the inside.

Most of an investor's mind lives in one place:

fear of losing the money.

Every investor celebrates simply getting their money back.

Every now and then, one investment works out. It covers the losses from the others. Meanwhile, thousands of investors lose everything silently.

It sounds simple—until you're the one lying awake. It is a game of fear and risk. Your life's work can vanish in a day.

Investors have a rule they repeat like a prayer:

*Rule No. 1 is: never lose money.*

*Rule No. 2 is: never forget Rule No. 1.*

## A Story Older Than Politics

Even Jesus told a story like this:  
An investor gave money to a few workers and told them,  
*“Go make it grow.”*

When he returned, he checked who had traded faithfully. One man came back with nothing, blaming the investor:

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*“...I feared you, because you are a ruthless man.”*

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He went on to call the investor a thief.

The investor rebuked him—not for losing money, but for refusing to try. And gave his money to the one who had proved he could grow it.

That line is older than politics. Even if you're not religious, the pattern is easy to see.

The investor was accused of being ruthless and an exploiter.

The crowd hated him because he had wealth.

Yet he was the only one who kept putting money back into work.

What broke it was the fear and suspicion.

## Where Money Feels Safe

Investment always flows where it is:  
Welcomed.

Safe.

Protected.

It never goes where people see it as a tool to *“buy us”* or *“sell our country.”*

Some places shout,

*“they are selling our country!”*

They can shout it for decades. And then one day you look around... and nothing is being built.

Money doesn't ask who's your friend. Money asks where it's safe to build.

Look at the three biggest economies:

- The United States takes money from all over—Japan, China, Canada, Europe—and turns it into factories and jobs.
- China takes outside money too—Singapore, the U.S., and Western Europe.
- Germany is the same: a lot of that money comes from the U.S., followed by Switzerland, the UK, the Netherlands, and China.

So who is “selling” their country to who?

Big countries don’t panic when money crosses borders.

They ask one question:

*“Will it build here?”*

And that brings us to the example nobody expected:

China.

It went from poor to powerful—in one generation.



# 9

## The “CHINA MIRACLE”

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*“We learn from history that we don't learn from history!”—Desmond Tutu*

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**C**hina is the clearest example I know.  
Same people. Same land. Same history.  
One set of rules kept them poor.  
A different set of rules lifted them fast.

More than 800 million people moved out of extreme poverty in one lifetime. That means grandparents who expected hunger raised children who expected jobs.

China was poor for a long time.

Most were village farmers—planting to eat, not to sell.

The leader was Mao Zedong—“Chairman Mao.”

In 1949, he announced a new country: the *People's Republic of China*.

## The Promise That Felt Right

He began to tell the people:

- *“You are the oppressed.*
- *The rich landowners and the West—especially America and Britain—are the oppressors.*
- *Unite against them.*
- *A revolution must take place.*
- *After the revolution, everyone will share the land equally.*
- *A better life for all is coming.”*

**T**he people believed him. They cheered him. They trusted him. I've watched the crowds and listened to the speeches, and I'm honest enough to admit this: if I was standing there, I would probably have believed it too. Not because I'm foolish—but because I'm human.

There is something in us that finds comfort in being told who the enemy is. It takes a mess and suddenly things feel like they make sense. At least now you know who to blame—even if that feeling later costs you dearly.

## Rule One: “Take Back” Becomes a Trap

**I**n the early 1950s, Mao launched what he called the *Land Reform Movement*. He told them to “take back” the land from the landowners. And they did—with violence.

More than 5 million landowners were killed.

Another 6 million were sent to labour camps.

Imagine being taken from your family, thrown behind barbed wire, and worked until your body gives up—and nobody can help you.

Many died there too.

So when Mao said the land now belonged to “the people,” what he really meant was that the state now owned everything. Mao and the Chinese Communist Party controlled the land.

The people were pushed into farming communes to work in groups.

### **Rule Two: The Day Food Stopped Being the Job**

The Communist Party then chose a new plan. They decided that steel would make China rich. Mao promised that if everyone produced steel, he would export it. So people across the country stopped farming and started melting metal in homemade furnaces.

But it didn’t work.

The steel was unusable.

And the people became even hungrier.

### **When One Bad Plan Eats a Country**

Then came a disaster so large that the world still struggles to understand it—the *Great Chinese Famine* of the late 1950s.

This wasn’t drought. This was decisions.

- The land grabs
- The forced communes
- The steel plan
- The ongoing belief that “the revolution” must continue.

All of it ended in disaster.

While millions starved, China continued exporting food to other countries. Mao even met with leaders of wealthy nations—but refused to ask for help. He did not want “the West” to see how badly his plan had failed.

Estimates vary, but tens of millions died.

In the same range as South Africa’s population—gone.

## When the Story Had to Change

So what happens when a politician fails? And when their big promises produce nothing?

People begin to look for another leader. Even comrades inside the Chinese Communist Party started whispering:

*"Is Mao still the right man for the job?"*

Mao could feel power slipping.

Do you think he resigned?

Admitted he was wrong?

Of course not.

In 1966 he launched something new:

Its official name was *"The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution"*—the Cultural Revolution.

- Use big emotional slogans
- Find an enemy
- Blame that enemy for everything
- Fill young people with anger

This time he told the youth to hate the Chinese *"capitalists"* and the *"clever Chinese"* of their time.

Here we call that *"Clever Black."*

China had their own version: *"The Stinking Old Ninth."*

That was the label for anyone educated, skilled, or seen as traitors to the struggle.

Mao then unleashed the angry youth. They were called the *"Red Guard."* They went wild.

- They destroyed property.
- Burned books.
- Attacked teachers.
- Humiliated elders.
- Destroyed churches and temples.

## The Enemy Swap Trick

And just to be clear: I'm not judging anyone here—I'm showing you how the story works on ordinary people.

This story always needs someone to blame.

The labels change by country.

The targets often don't.

Here's the uncomfortable part. There was no outside group to blame.

Everyone was Chinese. And yet the same story still worked.

It still named enemies.

It still said,

*"These people are the reason you suffer."*

First it was landowners. Then employers. Then teachers. Then the educated. Then anyone doing better than average.

The faces changed, but the roles stayed the same.

The targets are usually roles, not skin colour. People who own things, people who can do things, and people who don't listen to slogans—but rather think for themselves.

Wherever those roles exist, you see that story again. When that story spreads, the damage follows—even when everyone looks the same.

Millions of innocent people were persecuted during the Cultural Revolution.

And yes—millions were killed.

For scale, think Johannesburg—gone.

## From Leader to Idol

But for Mao the plan worked. He became popular again.

His critics had been silenced, jailed, beaten, or killed.

Those who questioned his failures were gone.

By the 1970s Mao wasn't just a leader.

He had become an idol.

His picture was everywhere—in homes, schools, shops, and government buildings. People sang songs about him the way struggle heroes are praised here at home. The most famous one was "The East is Red."

## What the Slogans Left Behind

**B**ut at the end of it all, what did China have to show for it? Mao died of a heart attack in 1976. People were still almost as poor as when he started. The “revolution” had delivered struggle songs... but not prosperity.

## The Line That Ended the Performance

**M**ao was eventually replaced by Deng Xiaoping. While Mao was still alive, he bullied Deng constantly. Deng’s “crime” was that he was a “Clever Chinese”—someone who used logic instead of slogans. So Mao punished him.

Deng was sent away to a type of political prison called a “Re-education Camp.” It was where you were forced to “believe correctly.”

No freedom. No questioning. Hard labour and Marx lectures, every day.

After Mao died, the Party brought Deng back. And before long, he became the main guy making decisions.

## The Rules That Made Paydays Normal

**D**eng immediately changed China’s direction. These changes were called “reforms.” And they were the opposite of Mao’s ideas. His first trick was brilliant. Instead of arguing about ideology, he simply said:

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*“Black cat or white cat, if it can catch mice, it’s a good cat.”—Deng Xiaoping*

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He meant: stop arguing about “capitalist” or “socialist.” If it grows the economy, it’s good.

Deng had other famous lines too.

He said,

*“seek truth from facts.”*

In other words: Do what works. Leave the emotional hang-ups behind.

He also said,  
“some must get rich first.”

This was completely opposite to the idea of forcing equality while breaking rules of how money works.

And my favourite:

“The revolution is so that people can live, not so that they can die!”

Deng simply said he was building:

“Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.”

But isn't China still communist?

On paper, yes. On the ground, no.

China began to protect investment, reward work, allow profit, and welcome capital.

That's the money game.

### The Switch That Changed the Rules

Even Singapore noticed. Listen to this:

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*“I would say the greatest was Deng Xiaoping. At his age, to admit that he was wrong, that all these ideas—Marxism, Leninism, Maoism—they are just not working and have to be abandoned... you need a great man to do that.”—Lee Kuan Yew*

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**D**eng Xiaoping's first major change was in agriculture. He ended the communes and divided the land among families. In simple terms, the land was now back in private hands.

Before this, the government controlled everything.

Farmers had to sell all their food to the government, and the government would then feed the people. But Deng changed the rule. After farmers sold the required amount, whatever was left over was theirs to keep and sell freely.

## The Day Work Started Paying

Suddenly, farming became profitable. People worked harder because they were working for their own future, not only the state. Productivity jumped by 25%. By 1985, the results were so clear that Deng began removing more rules on food prices.

Even earlier, in 1979, Deng began reducing government control over state-owned businesses. Private people were allowed to run government factories under contract. And the businesses started doing well.

Then came the Big One: the “Open Door Policy” in 1978. For the first time, China opened its doors to foreign investors. To some true believers, it felt like a sellout. To families, it felt like food.

Deng took small fishing towns like Shenzhen and declared them “Special Economic Zones” in 1980. He lowered taxes and removed minimum wages there. He made it easy for foreign companies—even from “enemy countries”—to invest, build, and employ people.

Remember, Mao’s answer to failure was isolation—shut the world out, blame outsiders, and vow that China would rise without ever working with “*imperialists and oppressors.*”

The results were unbelievable.

Shenzhen had 30,000 people in 1979.

Twenty-one years later, it had 1 million.

Its wealth doubled every two years.

Soon the bigger cities followed.

Each change created more chain reactions.

Small businesses multiplied. Families stopped surviving week-to-week and started planning years ahead.

Paydays became normal. That’s when *the Soft Life* starts feeling real.

Imagine that here: a street where the shops stay open, paydays are real, and parents can plan school shoes without praying for a miracle. That’s what growth looks like when it touches a home.

Think about this comparison:

- South Africa grew at 2.8% a year for 25 years after 1994.
- China grew at 2.9% a year under Mao (33 years).
- Under Deng’s reforms, China grew at 9.5% a year, from 1978 to 2013.

## What *the Soft Life* Looked Like

This wasn't "numbers on TV." It was real life.

It showed up in kitchens, schools, and homes.

That means food every day. Shoes replaced before they tore.

It added about 15 extra years of life to each person.

China's GDP per person went from about \$156 in 1978 to \$18,721 in 2020.

That's what happens when rules reward work instead of slogans.

All because one "Clever Chinese" stopped performing the struggle—and started changing the rules.

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*"The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love."—Paul*

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Fear makes us see "oppressors" everywhere; love makes us see our people—and build for our children.

China didn't escape poverty because its people became better. It escaped poverty because the rules stopped punishing effort and started protecting it.

Life started working for every generation.

## The Question We Can't Avoid

How does a government make such a change?

If stories shape belief, and rules shape results—what is government actually meant to do?



# 10

## The Most Expensive Distraction in South Africa

**T**eacher: *“Class, do you see that thing at the front of an aeroplane that spins like a fan? It’s called a propeller. So tell me—what is the purpose of the propeller on an aeroplane?”*

Student: *“To cool the pilot down.”*

Teacher: *“That is not the correct answer!”*

Student: *“Of course it is—just stop the propeller and watch how the pilot sweats!”*

That’s the joke.

Now watch how we do the same thing with government.

This isn't about parties. It's about what government is for. You don't have to "switch sides." You can just want the country to work.

Listen to the promises we hear—you'll notice the pattern. They promise to cool us down—while the plane keeps dropping.

### **Why Cool the Pilot While the Plane Crashes?**

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*"When the purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable."—Dr Myles Munroe*

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A golfer must first play golf.  
A car must first move people.

Same thing with government: before it tries anything else, it must do its job well.

Most of us hear "government" and think "help." That's how we end up talking about cooling—while the plane isn't flying. And I get why—when life is hard, help sounds like hope.

### **What Government Is For—Before Anything Else**

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*"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil... he does not bear the sword in vain... Therefore you also pay taxes..."*

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Government has force, so it must use it against evil. That's what taxes are for.

In plain terms: stop criminals. Protect ordinary people.

That's not politics. That's common sense. Wanting that doesn't make you cruel. It makes you normal. It just means you want people safe.

The first time I saw government’s purpose written like that, I froze.  
I read it again. Then a third time.

And then it hit me.

I’ve listened to politicians talk for hours, but you hardly ever hear “law and order” spoken like it’s the main job.

Once I understood the us-vs-them stories, it clicked.

The money game made it even clearer.

That’s when I saw it: the same system that promises to fix the mess can also keep it going.

So here’s what it looks like in real life:

When you report a crime, something must happen.

No chasing. No excuses. Just action—every time.

If we take this seriously, a government that fails at law and order must fix it fast. Otherwise, everything else starts breaking. It’s like charging passengers while the plane is falling out of the sky.

### **When Delay Becomes a Green Light**

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*“Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, the hearts of people are fully set on doing evil.”—Son of David*

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**I**n other words: when punishment takes forever, people get brave. In 2016, the instruction was simple: find out what happened within 30 days.

By 2017, it should’ve been done. It dragged on for years.

Suppose your doctor was accused of driving drunk over a weekend. You’d want to know—but your life doesn’t depend on it.

Now imagine your doctor was accused of deliberately injecting patients with a deadly virus. How long would you wait for answers?

You’d want answers within days—not months. Because that strikes at the purpose of being a doctor.

No reasonable person gives a full year to “clear the air” after that. By 2017, trust was cracking—because nothing was answered. Yet we still paid taxes—while the government postponed its main job.

That delay tells criminals: nothing will happen.

When attention shifts away from the purpose, thieves get room to move. That gap is where they breathe easy. And the cost is real: lost investment, lost jobs, empty stomachs.

Hunger. The poor suffer first.

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*“For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required.”—Luke*

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The government accepts power. It must hold itself to a high standard. If the plane can't fly, nothing else matters. No law and order—no normal life.

### **Before You Believe Promises, Watch This**

**L**ook: is the plane still flying? Prosperity doesn't come from promises, plans, or speeches. It comes from a government that does the basics.

*The Soft Life* begins where law and order are taken seriously. That's where life starts working.

It looks like shops that stay open, streets that feel normal, and parents who plan months ahead instead of bracing for the next shock.

That's what we really want. A country that feels boring again—in a good way. Where you can make plans—and they actually happen.

Not slogans. Not distractions.

When politicians sell “Father Christmas” instead of law and order, corruption becomes cheap—little risk, little consequence, almost no chance of getting caught. And when corruption is cheap, prosperity gets strangled.

People need help. But the plane is still dropping.

Once the purpose is clear, politicians can't hide behind noise anymore. This isn't about blaming anyone. It's about seeing the pattern.

One line says it plainly:

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*“...for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.”*

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Same message: punish bad. Reward good. Simple.

## First: The Fish Rots from the Head

The government is responsible for law and order within itself. If it fails here, everything else collapses.

It decides whether we have a government—full stop. It decides whether paying tax feels fair—or whether we’re all paying while nothing works.

Instead, local government keeps getting worse.

Are we really supposed to ignore nearly R80 billion vanishing on paper—without one person facing consequences?

That’s the whole problem in one sentence.

It wasn’t investigated. Not traced. Just ignored. It vanished—unexplained.

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*“...the cumulative amount of irregular expenditure not dealt with stood at R79.22 billion.”—Tsakani Maluleke, Auditor-General, MFMA 2019–20*

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In other words: money spent outside the rules, with no consequences.

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*“...the more corruption, the less investment and the less economic growth...”—Paolo Mauro, IMF*

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Now imagine if government set aside that R80 billion—and used it to investigate, recover, and correct wrongdoing.

You’d feel it in your street first.

Basic services would start working again. Businesses would gain confidence to invest. Jobs would come as trust returned. People would start moving up again.

Corruption would become too expensive to risk. Public servants would spend more time serving the public. Dodgy meetings would no longer be safe.

Government must do its main job. That doesn't mean you hate the government. It means you want it to work. Only then does it earn the right to tell you what to do and collect taxes. Most South Africans feel this—even if we don't always say it out loud.

## Second: Who Shows Up When It Burns?

In July 2021, we saw what happens when government fails. Reportedly, over 300 people lost their lives. The economy lost an estimated R50 billion. More than 100,000 people lost their jobs.

Many people saw the unrest coming. Yet we watched helplessly as it unfolded.

Government is supposed to protect us. It's supposed to keep us safe—full stop. So people can work, plan, and move up in peace.

In that moment, the government failed to protect its citizens. Years of progress were destroyed in days.

Leadership appeared only after the damage was done—mainly to express disappointment.

At the very least, it should come with an apology.

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*“One of my black-owned businesses was set alight. It set him back seven years... He has gone back to working under a tree.”—  
Melanie Veness, PMB & Midlands  
Chamber of Business, Nov 2021*

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A bakery cannot stop baking bread and still call itself a bakery. Would you accept it if they promised meat instead?

Likewise, government cannot abandon law and order and expect respect.

Politics keeps training us to think government creates prosperity—instead of protecting the rules that allow it.

The good news is that propellers can be repaired. As more citizens discover the purpose of the government—justice instead of just slogans—the plane can fly again.

### Third: The Ref That Stops the Chaos

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*“Kings cannot tolerate evil, because justice is what makes a government strong.”—  
Solomon*

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Citizens will always need a referee. Disputes must be resolved without violence. Only government can provide this at scale.

Yet many of us have stopped reporting wrongdoing because nothing happens. We are used to waiting years for basic justice. Justice delayed is justice denied.

I’m not blaming ordinary people. And I’m not saying every public servant is corrupt.

It’s easy to stop measuring government by its purpose. To measure it by promises, slogans, and hand-outs.

This distraction suits the people in power. And some citizens still hope for results from leaders who forgot their main job.

When the purpose is forgotten, abuse becomes normal. Poverty follows.

Without justice, every other promise is just talk.

One country didn’t promise jobs. It made jobs normal: Singapore.



# 11

## Why South Africans Still Wait for Jobs

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*“If you do not know history, you think short term. If you know history, you think medium and long term.”—Lee Kuan Yew*

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Singapore was colonised too.  
It only became independent in 1959.

At independence, Singapore was poor—really poor.  
Its GDP per person was about \$541. They were starting from the bottom.

It looked like a shack settlement. If you imagine any informal settlement in South Africa today, that was all of Singapore.

What did it have?

Ports.

But Singapore had no oil, no gold, no diamonds, no platinum. Nothing under the ground.

Singapore grew because it chose free trade.

The government refused to decide who gets the chances. It did not control who could trade with whom. It did not punish some businesses and reward others. It let the money game flow—prices and competition did the work. Business could breathe.

### The Shortcut That Feels Like Help

Lee Kuan Yew was prime minister from 1959-1990.  
He faced the same pressure our leaders face today.

Around him were dividing voices:

“Us” and “them.”

Reward friends. Punish enemies.

With that mentality, business becomes the suspect—because fear sells fast.

His response in 1965 was simple and brave:

*“I am nobody’s stooge. I am not here to play somebody else’s game. I have a few million people’s lives to account for. Singapore will trade with the whole world...”*

Singapore is also multi-racial.

Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Eurasian communities have long histories of tension. There were even violent clashes in 1969. Some groups were wealthier than others. Yet the government refused to win votes through division. It insisted on harmony.

Singapore didn’t handle the community that was falling behind with slogans or blame. From 1981, it pushed education and skills—so more people could stand on their own two feet.

Then it kept the rules steady so effort could finally lead somewhere.

That’s how you help people move up without turning the country into enemies.

Singapore opened itself to investment.

By 1994, Singapore was about four times richer than South Africa. By 2021, it was around ten times richer.

It's one of the easiest places to start and run a business.

Corruption is low. Very low.

Corrupt politicians went to jail. Games ended quickly.

It has low taxes, no minimum wage—and the rules strongly protect anyone's home, land, or business from ever being threatened. That one thing lets people plan and build.

Business is treated as a friend, not a suspect.

Now look at GDP per person:

- 1960s: ~\$541 per person
- 1994: ~\$33,000
- 2008: ~\$67,000
- Today: ~\$130,000+

That makes Singapore roughly three times richer than the United Kingdom—one of its former colonisers.

South Africa, by contrast, has been stuck around \$13,000–\$14,000 for over a decade. That's why job hunting here can feel like begging.

In Singapore, one in six households has around R17 million in money put aside—excluding property and businesses.

About 88% own homes.

Almost everyone works. Unemployment has stayed between 2% and 4% for over twenty years.

Struggling people get support—about R5,000 to R12,500 a month. That's what help looks like when most people are working.

Can you imagine South Africa where work is normal?

That's *the Soft Life*—not luxury, just a country where effort actually leads somewhere. Where dreams start looking possible—without begging. School fees without panic. Groceries without fear. Sleep with peace.

People stop being scared to even try. And things start moving.

Singapore had a choice: play the money game, or referee it. It chose referee. It made the rules simple—and then got out the way.

That's how effort starts paying. That's how people start building a future.

## When the Referee Starts Playing

A propeller may cool the pilot, but its job is to fly the plane. In the same way, government can create jobs by accident. But job creation is not the main job.

Yes, building roads, ports, and infrastructure can create jobs—but that is a side effect, not the mission. It is still just “cooling the pilot” while the plane stays on the ground.

Government’s job is to referee the money game, not to play in it.

When the referee joins the match and starts kicking the ball, the game stops being fair.

That’s why slogans can’t save a bad referee.

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*“You know that the rulers... lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.”—  
Matthew*

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Great governments serve the efforts of their people.

They make it easier to stand on your own two feet—and move forward.

Bossy rules kill effort, kill creativity, and people get stuck.

Great governments referee fairly. They enforce rules. They reward effort. But some governments want to play and referee.

They want the prizes and the praise. That tends to end badly.

## When Government Tries to Be a Business

We do not have to imagine what this looks like. We can see it clearly in how our government owns and runs businesses.

Every failed state business is a reminder:

This is what happens when the referee insists on being a player.

Here’s what the Auditor-General found:

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*“The 15 state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that we audited had a total budget of approximately R100 billion for the year, but the finances of most of them are in shambles...*

*Only one SOE received a clean audit in 2020–21.*

*South African Airways, Denel and South African Express Airways are in grave financial difficulty...*

*Some SOEs continued to ask for—and receive—funding from the government, diverting funds intended for primary service delivery.” The Citizen’s Report 2020–21*

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## The Promise Trap

For decades, our government has promised work. Plan after plan. Strategy after strategy. All announced with big words and big hope. All promising growth and jobs. Is any South African still counting?

Then the President said it out loud:

*“We all know that government does not create jobs. Business creates jobs.”*

He said around 80% of jobs come from private business.

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*“The key task of government is to create the conditions...” —Cyril Ramaphosa, State of the Nation Address, February 2022*

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Put simply: government must make it easier to start, run, and grow a business.

In South Africa, people can call you names for saying this. You don’t have to fight anyone—just notice what creates jobs.

## How Jobs Start Showing Up

When you look closely, a clear pattern appears. When we look at the countries that deal quickly and seriously with corruption inside government, we find strong law and order. Unsurprisingly, we also find growing economies.

The same pattern appears when we look at countries where it is easy to do business. They know their role. They stick to it. People make progress—and the economy grows. That's how work becomes normal.

The money game doesn't take sides. It does not negotiate with anyone. It follows its rules—every time.

Look at GDP per person. It shows how easy or hard it is to move up in life.

## The Pattern That Keeps People Waiting

If you read nothing else here, catch this: when rules work, work becomes normal.

South Africa fell from 28th in the world in ease of doing business in 2006 to 84th by 2020.

This wasn't only about business.

By the early 2000s, South Africa had also slipped in how much people trust the people in charge.

These numbers aren't about shaming anyone. They show how much room people have to work, plan, and breathe at home.

When that confidence fades, people pull back—and that's where jobs quietly disappear.

## The Number That Decides if Life Moves

This is where the waiting shows up: GDP per person. This number is not just about money.

It is about people.

It decides whether life moves—or stays stuck.

When it rises, fewer people live in poverty.

People eat better.

They get healthier.

They live longer.

When it falls, the opposite happens.

People get poorer, weaker, and sicker.

A falling GDP per person does not just slow growth—it shortens lives.

In South Africa, about 58% of people live below \$5.50 per day, which is about R94 a day.

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*“Although South Africa has made progress in reducing poverty since 1994, the trajectory of poverty reduction was reversed between 2011 and 2015... Approximately 55.5% (30.3 million people) of the population is living in poverty... 13.8 million people (25%) are experiencing food poverty.”—  
Victor Sulla, World Bank, April 2020*

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South Africans, on average, die at 60 years old.

GDP per person is about how long people live.

A country that prospers can give its people 10 to 20 extra years of life.

A country that fights prosperity quietly takes those years away.

I’m not talking about ordinary people here. I’m talking about ideas that refuse to change even when people suffer. And blame-stories spread so fast.

And we must be honest: do these ideas actually help the poor—or keep them waiting?

Blame-stories can distract from the real job: rules that protect people trying to make it and punish crooks.

## One Page That Shows Who Moves Up—and Who Waits

Just notice how much easier it is to move up when rules are trusted—and people who work are rewarded.

Where government tries to plan and control business, people tend to stay stuck. Where rules are bent, people stay poor.

Higher GDP per person basically means: easier to make it in life.

Country	How honest it is / How easy it is	GDP per person
Singapore	Very honest / Very Easy	~\$131,000
New Zealand	Honest / Very Easy	~\$50,000
Denmark	Honest / Very Easy	~\$69,000
South Korea	Honest / Easy	~\$53,000
Sweden	Honest / Easy	~\$63,000
United States	Moderately Honest / Easy	~\$76,000
Georgia	Improving / Easy	~\$18,500
South Africa	Becoming more corrupt / Getting Harder	~\$14,000
Venezuela	Corrupt / Hard	~\$6,000
Democratic Republic of Congo	Corrupt / Very Hard	~\$4,500
Somalia	Collapsed / Very Hard	~\$1,300
South Sudan	Collapsed / Very Hard	~\$900

That's the pattern: where rules work, people move forward. Where rules break, people wait.

Next chapter, we're going to look at one of the biggest blame-stories in South Africa—"*White Monopoly Capital*"—and ask a simple question.

Does it take us to *the Soft Life*, or does it keep us waiting?"





# 12

## They Added “White” So You Would Stop Asking Who

A talented young entertainer, Mac G, lost his job. Instead of waiting for rescue, he started a podcast called *Podcast and Chill*. Broadcaster Sol Phenduka joined later. It grew into the largest podcast in Africa.

I eventually watched it because people kept talking about it. It is funny, natural, and very South African. It also keeps people connected to modern pop culture.

Because of the podcast's success, a major radio station later recruited Sol Phenduka. This was not charity. It was value. The show brought more listeners, which brought more advertising. That usually means more staff and more jobs behind the scenes.

The podcast itself employs a team. When they interviewed an artist who was struggling with tax problems, the audience raised six figures for him in a few days. That is real economic movement.

Now think about the ripple effects.

The podcast team will produce new shows.

Other young people will start their own podcasts.

Those podcasts will hire editors, producers, marketers, and sound engineers.

This is how the money game works.

Every successful business creates chain reactions. Those chains lead to more businesses, more jobs, more opportunity. Wealth moves naturally when people are free to act, create, and build.

That is why prosperity always starts with one person. That's how life starts working—quietly, then all at once.

## When Government Steps Aside, People Rise

**H**ere is a simple question: who gave South Africa the growth that came from *Podcast and Chill*?

The honest answer is this: a private company did. Google.

Google owns YouTube, and YouTube made *Podcast and Chill* possible.

Mac G has always been talented. But think about his idea before YouTube existed.

He would have needed thousands of Rands. He would have written a long business plan. He would have filled in endless forms. He would have sent them to many government offices.

Then he would have waited.

He would also have had to meet political rules. He may have been forced to add a co-owner he did not choose. If things moved too slowly, he would need "a connection." And that connection would want a brown envelope first.

All of this would happen before he even got permission to start.

Why?

Because the government is both player and referee in the media.

These rules may sound well-meaning. But in reality, they would have crushed Mac G's dream. He would have given up. He would never have hired anyone.

Sol Phenduka's career would never have grown the same way. Other podcasters would never have been inspired. And thousands of future jobs would never exist.

Now compare that to what really happened.

Mac G entered his name and email address.

He clicked "Agree" on YouTube's terms and conditions.

And the podcast began.

YouTube asked for nothing more. And in return, it unlocked massive value in black hands. That is what it looks like when work gets rewarded.

It allows ideas to grow. It lets people try. It lets wealth move naturally.

That is how prosperity spreads—from one person to many.

That's how doors open—so people can move forward clean.

## How the Gate Stays Shut

Before YouTube, the media space was tight—like one big gate. Mac G broke in without being "chosen," and that's why this story matters.

In the story from earlier chapters, Greedy Godfrey had a monopoly.

A monopoly is one seller at the door—one winner.

Once competition entered the market, things changed.

Prices dropped. Even ownership of the sweets economy at the taxi rank started moving around.

## Who Keeps the Door Locked

Every lasting monopoly is a government monopoly. I call it a "Governmentoly."

A "Governmentoly" survives because the state blocks competitors. By "the state" I mean government offices and officials—the people who control licences, permits, and tenders.

The same owners stay on top and *the Soft Life* disappears.

That kind of deal is what economists call a "cartel."

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*“Most cartels last about five years. Many collapse much sooner. Only a few survive longer, and those usually do so with state help.” Margaret C. Levenstein & Valerie Y. Suslow, Journal of Economic Literature, 2006*

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A clear example is Eskom.

Load shedding has become a normal part of life. Customers suffer. Yet we cannot move to another supplier—because the government does not allow others to sell electricity freely.

Government-set prices pushed competitors out of the market.

Eskom was left alone.

That is how it became a monopoly.

It still exists alone today because the government blocks competitors. Otherwise, we could buy power from many sources.

Eskom's monopoly came at a cost.

Load shedding began in 2007. At the time, Eskom owed about R50 billion. Borrowing continued. By 2021, the debt was about R401 billion.

Another problem was how the government decided the price of electricity. There was no pressure to do things better, cheaper or faster.

You already know this lesson: businesses become clever under competition. Eskom did not need to.

The bill has now arrived. And ordinary homes carry the cost.

*The Soft Life* needs:

- productive people to be protected and rewarded
- crooks to be stopped and punished

But some slogans keep our eyes on the wrong thing.

It's like someone pointing at a person's shirt while your wallet is being stolen.

The money game rules are how wealth moves around. Block them—and jobs and ownership get stuck.

## Why This Slogan Works So Well

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*“One falsehood spoils a thousand truths.”—  
African Proverb*

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Now watch the move. You’ll spot it faster next time.

**“White Monopoly Capital.”**

You don’t have to “pick a side” while reading this. This slogan does something interesting—and it helps people avoid talking about something important. Most people don’t question it—because it can cause problems with people close to you.

It’s easy to miss, and you’re allowed to test an idea quietly, even if you never say it out loud.

### What the Slogan Does to Our Thinking

The phrase “White Monopoly Capital” caused big debates. I’m showing how the slogan works.

People heard “White Monopoly Capital” and the focus jumped to skin colour. That’s normal. But the real issue is not the colour of the monopoly power. The issue is who protects the monopoly.

Once you see this, the slogan begins to look different.

### The Plan Behind the Slogan

The slogan isn’t just a complaint—it’s a tool. A plan to add more rules and permissions.

The South African Communist Party says this plan is meant to end in socialism. In plain terms: they want politicians and their connections deciding who may build a business.

The plan is called the “National Democratic Revolution.”

ANC papers name “monopoly capital” as the main target.

Its “solutions” are more licences and permissions from offices.

To see it clearly, start at “capital.” Then “monopoly.”

Leave “white” for last.

### **A Foreign Idea in Local Pain**

**T**he term “capital” comes from Marx’s book.

In simple terms, “capital” means a business, factory, or company. It’s the place where people get paid every month.

Thabo Mbeki quoted from it while defending himself against being called “neo-liberal”—meaning “anti-poor.”

In our politics, that label ends debate instead of answering arguments.

### **The Word That Hijacks the Sentence**

**T**he word “white” is at the beginning of this slogan.

And so it often triggers emotion before people ask questions about “monopoly.”

Any monopoly works against *the Soft Life*.

Government should stop them. Because it keeps prices high, keeps jobs low, and keeps the same people with connections winning.

It’s like one shop locking the door so no new shops are allowed to open.

### **The Real Question the Slogan Hides**

**T**he real question is:

Who is allowing these companies to block competition?

Us-vs-them talk can distract us from asking this question.

The right question matters for us who want our country to beat poverty—and for people to live longer lives.

That’s the dream.

A country where building is normal. Where fear is not the background music. Where effort leads somewhere.

Hold that picture for a second—because the slogan tends to pull your eyes away from it.

That’s why we slow down here—the slogan is fast, but truth takes one extra step.

This isn’t about winning an argument—it’s about seeing clearly. So ordinary people can make progress without fear.

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*“Do not correct a scoffer, or he will hate you.  
Correct the wise, and he will love you.”—  
Solomon*

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So when people worry about wealth not moving around, they should look at the government. It does not matter whether wealth is labelled “black” or “white.”

No monopoly survives without state support.

When Greedy Godfrey makes money, Bigmouth Ben talks.

Why would Envious Earnest not start a competing business?

He would hire people. Prices would drop. Creativity would rise. That is how wealth moves.

If “White Monopoly Capital” exists, then the real problem is the government, with race stuck on the front. The monopoly survives because government keeps competitors out.

Skin colour cannot protect a monopoly. Only government decisions can.

Yet this way of talking often leads to supporting laws that protect monopolies. The effect is that monopolies stay protected while people stay angry about race.

And somewhere along the way, people connected to politicians win while citizens fight. They end up benefiting from that stuck ownership—while the unconnected are shut out.

That’s why “White Monopoly Capital” ends up covering white owners and politically connected black people too.

That’s Government Monopoly Capital.

The word “white” often becomes a distraction.

That doesn’t mean our pain is fake. It means this slogan came from somewhere else, then landed in our pain like petrol on a fire.

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*“Do not act unjustly when deciding a case.  
Do not be partial to the poor or give preference  
to the rich; judge your neighbour fairly.”—  
Moses*

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## Why Competition Protects Ordinary People

I grew up when cell phones were a status symbol.

After Motorola, Nokia took over the market.

They made huge profits. Then other brands entered. Competition arrived. Everything changed.

Today, even children have cell phones. People no longer ask,

*"Can I afford a phone?"*

They ask,

*"Which brand do I prefer?"*

The same thing happened with televisions in the 1980s. A family with a TV was considered rich. Years later, almost every home had one.

Many brands competed. Prices dropped. Quality improved.

This is what happens when government steps back. Competition forces businesses to improve.

A Governmentoly, however, behaves very differently.

Take Eskom.

Government had a plan to fix it in 1998. President Ramaphosa announced another plan in 2019. Then again in 2020, 2021, and 2022.

No private business can survive by delaying decisions for 24 years.

Eskom would have lost customers years ago. Other companies would have stepped in. Just like YouTube, you'd see black-owned suppliers.

Consumers would barely notice the mistake.

This is what happened to Nokia.

It made bad decisions. But customers were protected because other companies made better ones.

With Eskom, there is no escape.

The government wanted electricity to be cheap. That intention may have been good. But fixing prices by law killed the reason to improve and compete.

Other suppliers were pushed out.

Eskom was left alone.

Now the cost is clear. Jobs are lost. Living costs increase. And the poorest pay the highest price.

Bad decisions in a monopoly do not disappear. They pile up over time. And people pay for them with money, dignity, and years of their lives.

## From One Person to Prosperity

**G**roup thinking can train people to feel stuck. But real change happens when a person is empowered.

We have already agreed on what we want as South Africans. One of those goals, written in our Constitution, is to

*“...free the potential of each person...”*

Prosperity does not live in groups. It lives in individual people, inside real households.

That is why trying to manage wealth by “class” always fails.

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*“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.”—Ezekiel*

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## How One Person Sets the Money Moving

**N**o major change ever starts with a “class” of people.

It always starts with one person. Sometimes one family.

You may never start a business.

But you can still be that one.

For now, just notice what works—and what keeps us stuck.

Next, let’s look at the kind of politics that makes these questions feel dangerous in the first place.



# 13

## How Enemy Stories Keep the Door Closed

I was living in Soweto when I watched a man die.  
He had been accused of being an *"impimpi"*—a snitch, a sellout.  
This man was not working with the apartheid police.  
His crime was questioning what his comrades wanted to do.  
He was killed for thinking independently.  
That's when I first realised how group thinking punishes thinkers.  
No room for facts. No room for debate. The lesson must be taught  
through fear.

## How the Enemy Story Gets Made

Last chapter we asked:  
Who keeps the door closed?

Enemy stories steal the safety to think. Without safety, people can't make progress.

Imagine a country where thinking for yourself is safe. Where dreams can come true without you begging a crowd.

Where doing the right thing is not brave—and *the Soft Life* starts feeling possible.

Enemy stories keep your eyes on skin colour.

They make it risky to ask questions—because the moment you question the story, you get treated like the enemy.

When questions become dangerous, making progress becomes harder.

That is why it spreads so easily. Not because people are bad. Because it works.

## How Anger Becomes a Weapon

This kind of politics trains people to feel stuck. It rewards anger more than responsibility.

Debate becomes bullying. Questions become threats.

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*“Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared.”—Solomon*

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Facts challenge anger. So they are rejected.

All blame must belong to the enemy group. Personal accountability is treated as betrayal.

You are either “with us” or “against us.” There is no space for personal responsibility. It removes guilt from leaders and spreads it across the crowd.

When leaders are accused, they say:

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*“We are a collective.”—Dakota Legoete,  
ANC Acting Spokesperson, City Press, Feb  
2019*

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But a collective cannot think.  
A collective cannot choose.  
A collective cannot be held responsible.  
Only individuals can.  
And only individuals can build a life that moves up.

### **When the Crowd Turns on You**

**B**eing part of a group doesn't mean you're not selfish.  
And valuing the individual does not mean promoting selfishness.  
Leaders stoke envy against another group—for their own gain.  
I'm quoting scripture here to describe what envy does to the human  
heart—not to insult anyone.

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*“For where you have envy and selfish  
ambition, there you find disorder and every  
evil practice.”—James*

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### **It Never Stops at “Them”**

**G**roup anger always needs a target. Once the first target is gone, it  
finds the next. So the same system eventually turns on its own  
supporters.

Would people still respect your rights after punishment becomes  
normal? It can seem empowering to cheer while someone else takes the hit.

The harshest punishment is saved for supporters of the system.

## When the Crowd Turns on Its Own

Us-vs-them thinking:  
“You are either with us or against us.

*If you are with us, you are a comrade.*

*If you are against us, you are an impimpi—a sellout.”*

Us-vs-them thinking has no third option.

It cannot accept an individual who thinks for himself. That's why it struggles with the rule of law.

A judge cannot be “with us” or “with them.” A judge must be with the law. But the law judges individual actions, not groups.

*Who did what?*

Us-vs-them thinking asks:

*Which side are you on?*

That is the conflict.

## When the Law Is Pressured to Pick Sides

A lawmaker who has served since 1994 once wrote an article attacking black judges. She did not attack white judges. The harshest attack was saved for black judges.

In her words, an impimpi is “*worse than your oppressor.*”

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*“The most dangerous African today is the mentally colonised African... When you put them as interpreters of the law, they are worse than your oppressor... In America these interpreters are called [racial insult] ...”—Lindive Sisulu, “Hi Mzansi, have we seen justice?”, Jan 2022*

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That is when slogans replace sense. You sound confident, but you say nothing solid.

She was pressuring black judges to pick a side instead of sticking to the law.

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*“I don’t believe I was a judge of workers or employers. A judge must be a judge. It is not the judge who protects the worker. It is the law.”—J.R. Ludke, retired Brazilian Judge*

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The law cannot be loyal to a group. A judge protects justice.

## When Success Becomes a Crime

**Y**ou may only succeed if the group allows it. The moment you succeed on vision, hard work, or skill alone—the story changes.

Load shedding is the biggest threat to South Africa’s economy.

So the government finally appointed a new Eskom board to turn things around. Among them was Mteto Nyati—a brilliant black business leader who has led MTN, Microsoft South Africa, and Altron.

If anyone could help fix a broken operation, it was him.

Nyati was placed there to succeed. But immediately, he was faced with the test:

*Are you with “us” or with “them”?*

Nyati answered the “wrong” way.

He said his job was to fix Eskom.

He explained that certain BEE and localisation rules were slowing the work down. This was happening while the country was bleeding—businesses closing, jobs disappearing, and households getting poorer because of load shedding.

He said:

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*“Procurement rules are not as agile as they should be... We need to remove costs and connect directly with people who have the knowledge to get us out of this crisis.”*

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The response:

*“How dare a business leader say that a rule made ‘for us’ is making his job harder?”*

In this mindset, a driven black professional cannot succeed on merit. His success must come from “us” or “them.” And if he says the wrong thing, punishment follows.

Within a day, the Black Business Council responded. Not by answering his point, but by attacking him personally:

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*“The Black Business Council strongly condemns the irresponsible and reckless utterances of Mr Mteto Nyati regarding transformation and localisation... His views project that blacks are being done a favour in their own country.”*

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He was trying to get the lights back on so people can work, earn, and move up. That’s how *the Soft Life* starts feeling possible.

They responded with race, emotion, and accusation—changing the subject to stir anger instead of answering the argument.

The message was simple:

*“You are not with us. You are with them. You are a sellout.”*

This is the painful pattern: laws built on these politics often end up punishing blacks more. The mindset demands that you obey the identity of being “the oppressed.”

If you rise above it—if you become effective, independent, and successful—your punishment becomes harsher.

A capable black businessperson becomes a traitor.

A thoughtful black economist becomes an enemy.

The goal quietly shifts from justice to misery for everyone. From opportunity to being kept average.

It’s worth being careful of this trap—even when it claims to speak on your behalf. This is not a call to forget the past. God forbid.

*“We, the people of South Africa, recognise the injustices of our past...”*

That sentence opens our Constitution for a reason.

That truth is settled in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

But some read that sentence as *“punish forever.”*

Others read it as *“get over it.”*

Both are wrong.

Recognition is not bitterness. And healing is not denial. The goal is written down:

*“...to heal the divisions of the past...”*

So here’s the trap:

If you keep the country stuck in “victims vs enemies,” you never have to fix the rules.

You never clean up government.

You never protect and reward builders.

You never punish crooks.

These stories make failure stay hidden. But once you see the real purpose of government, the spell breaks.

You stop clapping for slogans and you start asking for law and order, fair rules that reward hard work.

You can ask those questions without announcing yourself.

And that brings us to the real question—one we’ll face next:

What does one decent person do when the crowd wants a slogan?



# 14

## Be the ONE

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*“Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.”—Edmund Burke*

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**Y**ou’ve heard of the four-minute mile.  
It’s 1,600 metres in under four minutes—one fast lap, four times.

Athletes had been trying to break this record since 1886.

For 68 years, coaches and top runners worked on it.

They trained harder. They studied science. Yet no one succeeded.

Over time, the problem stopped being physical. It became mental. People began to believe the record was impossible.

Experts had their checklist: perfect weather—about 20°C. A calm day. A big, cheering crowd.

Then came Roger Bannister.

He ignored the experts. He did not wait for perfect weather. He did not wait for a big crowd. He trained in a way that made sense to him.

The media criticised him. They called him a “lone wolf.”

Still, he kept going.

On 6 May 1954, Bannister broke the four-minute mile.

What shocked everyone was the day he did it.

It was a cold day. The track was wet. The crowd was small.

But more importantly, he broke the mental barrier.

Others saw it was possible.

Just 46 days later, another athlete, John Landy, broke the same record.

Within a year, three runners broke it in a single race.

After that, the impossible became normal.

Over the next 68 years, more than 1,600 runners broke it—today, even high school athletes do it.

### How “Normal” Gets Reborn

**I**t always starts with one person. One person ignores the noise. One person does what they believe is right.

That single act breaks the barrier for everyone else.

What changed was what people thought was possible.

And the effect continues into the next generation.

One brave lap—and the whole country sees the track.

What once felt impossible becomes normal. It's when moving up in life stops feeling like a miracle.

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*“I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life, so that you and your descendants may live.”—Moses*

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## The One Who Starts It

Now it's your move.

Will you go with the crowd, or will you choose for yourself?

Will you stay stuck in the same old story, or will you choose prosperity and responsibility?

Will South Africa keep repeating what hasn't worked elsewhere, or will it become Africa's most inspiring success story?

## When One Person Is Enough

Most people who love their country feel stuck.

They vote, they hope—and then they wait.

They are told that real change requires power, connections, or sacrifices they cannot afford.

But what if that is not true?

What if there were a simple three-part way for ordinary people to quietly shape the direction of a nation—without shouting, marching, or burning themselves out?

This is how one person becomes many.

That's how things actually change.

I call it E3:

*Elect. Engage. Educate.*

It's a practical way to turn concern into real influence.

Some will experience it as a responsibility. Others will experience it as an adventure.

In the next three chapters, I'll show you what E3 is—and why it works.

It fits into your normal life.

It takes only a few minutes from time to time. But together, it can break South Africa's four-minute mile.

And it starts with you.





# 15

## How to ELECT for a Prosperous South Africa

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*“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other.”—Matthew*

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Sis Thandi, a housekeeper, asked her wealthy employers for a salary increase. The couple was shocked. Sis Thandi already earned far more than other housekeepers in the area. On top of that, the couple paid for her daughter's full university education in another city. They even bought her a car when she started university.

Polly invited Sis Thandi to a meeting.

She explained how much they already paid her. She pointed out that other housekeepers earned far less. She reminded her of the cost of her daughter's education. Sis Thandi nodded the whole time.

Then Polly moved to the key question.

*"So, Sis Thandi, I'm glad you understand that we already pay a lot,"* Polly said. *"I don't see why you need a raise. Can you give me three reasons why we should pay you more?"*

Sis Thandi smiled.

*"Okay,"* she said. *"First, I cook better than you."*

*"Who told you that?"*

*"Your husband did."*

*"Alright... reason number two?"*

*"I clean the house better than you."*

*"And who told you?"*

*"Your husband."*

Polly relaxed. This was easier than she expected.

*"And the third?"*

*"Well,"* Sis Thandi said quietly, *"I can get a man's attention better than you."*

Polly froze.

*"What?!"* she shouted. *"Where did you hear that? Did my husband tell you that?"*

*"No, Thomas, the electrician, told me."*

Polly leaned in quickly.

Her voice changed.

*"Thandi, lower your voice. There's no need to shout,"* she said softly. *"How does a 50 per cent increase sound?"*

*"Well,"* Sis Thandi whispered back, *"I was thinking 75 per cent."*

Polly smiled.

*"I agree. You work so hard, shem. You deserve it!"*

## The Negotiation You Didn't See

**P**olly was not negotiating for the household. She was negotiating for herself. This kind of double-cross happens when we trust someone to negotiate for us.

If you choose the wrong negotiator, you don't lose a debate—you lose your life's progress. You lose your chance to move up. You stay stuck. And that's the opposite of *the Soft Life*.

It starts when delivery shows up. When work becomes normal. So you can breathe. So you can plan and make progress.

Some politicians are very convincing. They promise to care. They promise to deliver. The question is: who delivers?

Start with better questions—even if you never say them out loud.

Who is negotiating for you?

What do they gain?

Who do they really serve?

Once you understand who their “master” is, you can already see how it will end.

## Betrayed by the Promise of Land

**T**his is the same trick politicians use on ordinary people. Citizens trusted politicians to “bring the land back.”

The promise sounded right. The anger felt justified. And the pain behind it is real. But pain can be used—especially when it wins votes.

What do politicians gain from this promise?

In South Africa, the courts were forced to step in.

The law was not the problem.

Delivery was.

In 2019, the Constitutional Court basically said:

“*Stop blaming the Constitution. Stop blaming ‘the law’.*”

The Department just didn't do the work.

People waited more than 25 years for land. Not because the rules blocked it. But because the ones paid to deliver it were “*unresponsive.*”

They didn't do what the law said.

The judges called it a “*colossal crisis*”—a massive mess.

Instead of fixing the failing department, politicians changed the story—so they could keep the promise alive.

Next thing, they demand land without compensation.

That's like someone who owes you R1,000, doesn't pay for 25 years, and then says,

*"I'll pay you this time—but only if you give me R1 million first."*

### **When Land Becomes a Vote Machine**

If someone ignores the Court, or claims judges are “captured,” let them hear from a former president.

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*“People expressed a deep sense of betrayal by government officials and politicians... Many who lodged land claims before 1998 have still not received land... Corruption was widespread, with land going to unknown people... Beneficiaries often received no ownership, no title, and sometimes no recorded rights at all.”—Kgalema Motlanthe, High-Level Panel Report, 2017*

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Politicians had more to gain by promising land than giving land.

When it finally happens, it goes to random people, not citizens.

In Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe ruled from 1980.

For 20 years, he didn't give land.

Only when his popularity started falling did he launch violent land grabs in 2000.

That land went mainly to politicians, generals, and connected people.

Today, millions of Zimbabweans go hungry.

### **The Promise That Never Pays**

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*“The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.”—David*

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If a leader relies on anger and envy instead of delivery, don't support them. When you're tired, stressed, and you just want life to work, a good story can feel like hope.

### You Can't Eat Explanations

People whose income depends on delivery—hard workers and builders also make promises. But they are rewarded very differently.

If they fail, they lose money. They lose customers. They disappear.

That's how it works for a plumber, a spaza owner, a taxi operator, or a small contractor.

They do not get endless chances to explain.

If you need results, who should you trust to deliver them?

Trust the person who loses money when they don't deliver. That's how life starts opening up.

Imagine a business promising you a service and then delaying it by 14 days. You would already be unhappy.

What about 14 weeks? Or 14 years?

You would leave long before then.

In December 2007, Mbeki said this about load shedding:

Eskom said, *"We must invest."* Government said, *"Not now."* He admits, *"We were wrong."*

In May 2016, Zuma goes full confidence:

*"There will never, ever, ever be load shedding again."*

In July 2022, Ramaphosa says:

*"This is no time for business as usual... we need to act boldly... to make load shedding a thing of the past."*

Different leaders. Same movie.

The promise keeps changing outfits—but the results don't arrive for over 14 years.

Now think about your daily life.

Bread arrives. Milk arrives. Coffee arrives.

You don't hear any explanations. They simply deliver.

## The Noise That Steals Your Future

First, ignore confusing words and clever excuses.  
Voting is not about feelings.

It's about law, order, and rules people can rely on.

When leaders are accused of dishonesty or corruption, do they act fast?

Or do they say, "*We're investigating,*" and nothing happens?

A leader who delays clearing their name will also delay justice when you are wronged. They will delay when your business is robbed. They will delay when your family suffers.

Do not vote for speeches.

Vote for proven honesty. That's how you protect your progress.

## The Report Card They Hope You Skip

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*"Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is dishonest in very little will be dishonest in much."*—Luke

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Start with what leaders have already been trusted with. Look at municipalities, metros, provinces, and national departments.

Then ask one simple question:

How did they manage the money?

South Africa has an Auditor-General. Her job is simple.

She checks whether government departments:

1. Spent the money they claimed to spend, and
2. Spent it legally.

"Clean audit" means they passed.

Here's what she found in her 2020-21 *Citizen's Report*:

Out of 40 departments, 38 failed.

Two departments passed: Western Cape Health, and Transport & Public Works.

## Where Things Are Already Falling Apart

The Auditor-General also tracks municipalities.

She reports that 230 municipalities show signs of collapse. She says there is “*serious doubt whether they can continue operating*”—meaning they might not survive.

If these municipalities were businesses, they would already be closed.

If you live in a struggling province, this is not a sentence on you. You didn’t cause this. But you can stop rewarding it.

Provinces show a party’s past results when it was in power.

So—find your province first. Then compare.

- Western Cape – 1 failing municipality.
- Limpopo – 20 failing municipalities.
- Gauteng – 21 failing municipalities.
- KwaZulu-Natal – 27 failing municipalities.
- Mpumalanga – 30 failing municipalities.
- North West – 37 failing municipalities.
- Eastern Cape – 39 failing municipalities.
- Free State – 50 failing municipalities.
- Northern Cape – 61 failing municipalities.

Now you can’t unsee it.

That is not a promises problem. It’s a running-things problem.

Each year:

1. Read the Auditor-General’s report
2. Identify clean audits and the leaders responsible
3. Reward success
4. Punish failure

That is how you vote for prosperity. So your life can start working—quietly.

## The Trick Hiding in Plain Sight

Let me give you an even simpler way to find a trustworthy politician. Here’s a shortcut: don’t back any leader who tries to keep you feeling like a target for an enemy. They leave you angry at an “enemy” while delivery disappears. It catches good people too.

When this type of leader fails—when promises collapse or corruption is exposed—they do not face the problem. Instead, they change the story.

They stir anger at “capitalists.” They stir anger at “imperialists.”

They reopen old wounds and replay old enemies.

And strangely, this increases their popularity.

Any other type of politician must answer for failure. Such a politician survives by turning failure into anger.

Look at the Auditor-General's reports since 1994.

Year after year, the worst-run municipalities tend to be led by a leader who relies on this trick.

### **The Shortcut That Saves You**

Leaders who rely on a victim-vs-enemy story have something you can see coming. Anger is a shortcut to votes, not a plan for prosperity.

Vote for prosperity.

Karl Popper warned about this pattern decades ago:

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*“The transition from democracy to tyranny is easiest when a popular leader learns how to exploit hatred between rich and poor... soon they are enslaved.”—The Open Society and Its Enemies, 1945*

---

If they care more about results than “revolution,” you can trust them.

### **Every Time Government Plays, the Poor Pay**

Secondly, watch the referee who wants to play. Pay close attention to any politician who wants to be player and referee. Electing that kind of leader usually ends badly.

They will tell you they want the government to run businesses for the poor. They will say they want to keep prices low. I fall for it too. Then I ask: does it work?

SAA cost more than R60 billion over 13 years. And the poor pay first.

A 2020 report by TIPS, a research group, shows how badly this has gone:

- PRASA: So corrupt it earned the nickname “the gravy train.” Many former leaders face criminal charges.
- SA Post Office: Falling apart and still searching for a “development plan.”
- Alexkor (diamond mine): Financially troubled, with local communities complaining they don’t see the benefits.

When politicians insist on running businesses, the poor do not win. Politicians do.

So take seriously any politician who wants to sell or close failing state businesses. That process is sometimes called privatisation—or a concession. It simply means letting people whose income depends on delivery do what they are good at, while government focuses on law, order, and fair rules.

A vote for a government focused on law, order and fair rules that reward hard work is a vote for *the Soft Life*.

## When Business Has to Kneel

Then there are laws like Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). I get why it sounds right. If you’re thinking about dignity and fairness, it’s easy to understand why people back it.

Through this law, almost every business is forced to pass money, deals, or control through political hands.

It often protects monopolies. You’ve seen this already.

It slows growth and keeps ownership stuck. That is how politicians and their friends became wealthy.

BEE was sold as empowerment for ordinary people. But politicians have more to gain from empowering their connections.

Ordinary people were promised a ladder. Too often, connected people got the lift.

Once you start noticing the rules of the money game, you start to see how BEE breaks them. And you see how politicians are negotiating for themselves, not ordinary people like you and me.

A trustworthy politician wants government out of business. That shows seriousness about their real job: law, order, punishing crooks and rewarding hard work.

A politician who insists on running businesses wants something else.

Don’t vote for politicians who sound caring. Vote for those who act in caring ways.

Being a referee is caring.  
Letting businesses compete is caring.  
Strong businesses grow the economy.  
They create jobs.  
They pay taxes.  
Those taxes fund real public services.  
That is far more caring than you and me rescuing failing state companies again and again.

### **The Laws That Chase Work Away**

**F**irst, look for a trustworthy politician. Second, choose one who wants to be a referee, not a player.  
Third, choose leaders who support laws that don't get in the way of business.

Pay attention to leaders who support lower taxes. When you tax something less, you get more of it—more investment, more jobs, more growth. That's how doors start opening—more chances, more paydays, more room to dream again. That's how the Soft Life starts feeling normal.

Imagine I ask you to drive Grandma to collect her pension each month. If I cover your petrol, you help gladly. If I threaten and shame you, you still help—but resentfully. Threats make people comply on paper and dodge in real life.

Prosperity does not come from anger written into law.

Justice matters. But anger is not a plan.

Prosperity comes from growth encouraged by a trustworthy government, freedom to build, and reward for hard work.

### **Less Threats, More Work**

**G**overnment must treat productive people as a friend, not an enemy.

When politicians don't know how to grow the cake, they start threatening the bakers.

They call it *"transformation."*

In 2019, the Minister of Employment and Labour says:

*"Now we must use 'harsh measures'."*

And the moment you hear that, you must already see the chain reaction.

*"Harsh measures"* against businesses hurt poor people twice.

Rules that reward productive people also create chain reactions. And when it reaches the poor, it arrives twice as generous.

When business grows, jobs grow. When jobs grow, families breathe.

I have often used the phrase “law, order, incentives, and rewards” as the government’s main job.

But when government deals with productive people, it is better to reverse the order:

**Rewards → Incentives → Order → Law**

A healthy government learns to reward good behaviour. And there are many people—of all skin colour—who want to do good. When rewarded, we get more of what we want:

growth, jobs, longer lives for our parents, and  
dignity for the poor.

Rewards respect freedom.

Mandela did not fight for rules that bully productive people into obedience. He fought for freedom. He understood that leadership must inspire, not intimidate.

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*“I have fought against white domination, and  
I have fought against black  
domination...”—Nelson Mandela,  
Treason Trial*

---

Over time, the results start to show.

Inequality among black South Africans has increased the most, even with these “equality” laws. Even when people mean well, anger-driven policies end up hurting the poorest most.

So look for a trustworthy politician.

One who acts as a referee, not a player.

One who rewards productive people and punishes criminals.

That leader will grow the economy—for you and your children.

## Why Growing Government Makes Us Poorer

**P**oliticians who see themselves as kings reveal it in the same way. They keep growing the size of government.

They add new departments, ministries, and commissions. They create new agencies and state-run businesses.

Every addition means more spending.

Even when they launch projects that promise jobs. They must spend more money on running that project. And in the end, the job is created for their connections to run the project.

Sometimes, new departments are necessary. Some services must be run by government. Roads, water pipes, sewer systems, basic education, and health care are examples.

The problem begins when government grows beyond its purpose. When it starts competing with businesses, charities, churches, and community groups. Slowly, it pushes them out.

That's not dignity. That's dependence.

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*“This will be the behaviour of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons... He will take your daughters... He will take the best of your fields... He will take a tenth of your grain... And you will be his servants.”—Samuel*

---

When government becomes larger, it also becomes more expensive. Not because services improve—but because salaries multiply.

Imagine a household where almost a third of the money goes to salaries—before groceries, before repairs, before school shoes, before medicine.

That's what Tito Mboweni showed about government: in 2018/19, pay for government employees was about 35.4% of national spending.

And the scary part?

That pay bill grew faster than any other spending item since 2006. It more than tripled—from R154 billion to R518 billion.

So when government grows beyond its purpose, it doesn't just grow in promises. It grows in payroll.

Government workers deserve fair pay—if the government governs well. But every Rand spent by government first comes from citizens. The poor feel it first in taxes and cost of living.

So it must be worth it.

A trustworthy leader will say:

*“Government is too big. We are doing too many things badly. We must focus on law, order, and infrastructure—and reward others for doing the rest.”*

## Not All Votes Are Equal

This is E3 step one: *Elect* for Prosperity. When election time comes, ignore the daily noise. The shouting is designed to distract you.

If you can, read a party’s constitution online. That tells you what they truly stand for.

This book has already given you a simple filter. If you want prosperity—jobs, growth, and money moving—look for a party who meets these tests:

- **Trustworthy**  
Their past actions matter more than their words. Check how they handled money and power.
- **Business-Friendly**  
They want to remove roadblocks so large and small businesses can work freely and legally.
- **Business-Rewarding**  
They support tax cuts, tax breaks, or other rewards for businesses and hard workers that create jobs.
- **Business-Referee**  
They want government out of playing the game. They support contracting or selling businesses to people who can run them—especially the ones that are not part of government’s real job.
- **Servant-Leader**  
They reject the “king fantasy.” They support a smaller government that focuses on law, order, infrastructure, and basic services—nothing more.

A politician or party with these qualities understands this:

Prosperity is not created by politicians. It’s created by people.

## Not a Life Sentence

**D**on't be scared to start. Your vote is not a life sentence. If you realise you chose wrong this time, you fix it next time—wiser. Even if you only follow this a little, you're already safer than before. In five years you vote again—stronger and sharper.

Choose leaders who make it easier for builders and hard workers to deliver—and harder for crooks to eat.

That kind of servant leader produces prosperity—for you and your family.

Don't vote for excuses. Don't vote for anger. Don't vote for those who pretend to care.

Don't vote for leaders who want government to be in business.

Don't vote for leaders with a king complex.

Vote for trustworthy politicians.

Vote for prosperity.

That's how you vote for a life where things work—quietly and reliably. Where your effort can finally count. That's how you start seeing a future again.

Vote for *the Soft Life*.





# 16

## HOW TO ENGAGE for a Prosperous South Africa

A ship was caught in a storm and wrecked on a beach. Only one man survived. He woke up alone on a stretch of coastline. Everything was gone—except what he had in his pockets. His phone had no signal. He climbed a high tree. Still nothing. He tried again. Eventually, the battery died. Silence. No calls. No messages. No help. So he did the only thing he could do. He learned to survive.

The place had regular thunderstorms, so he built a shelter from grass to stay dry.

Every night, he planned escape. After weeks, he accepted that no one was coming.

One afternoon, he left to gather food. Dark clouds rolled in. A violent storm broke.

He ran back as fast as he could.

But when he arrived, his shelter was on fire. Lightning had struck it. Flames were tearing through the only thing he had built.

Rain soaked him. The shelter burned to the ground.

That was the moment something inside him broke.

Hopelessness washed over him like waves hitting the shore. He turned toward the beach and walked into the rain, crying.

He collapsed onto the sand, staring up at the sky. Rain mixed with tears.

Hours later, he woke up to voices.

He lifted his head and saw a bakkie approaching the beach.

Rescue workers jumped out and ran toward him.

As they reached him, they asked,

*"How did you end up out here? No one ever comes out here. We only came because we saw your smoke signal."*

### **When the Worst Day Becomes the Signal**

**T**he man felt hopeless when his shelter burned to the ground. Everything he had built was gone.

But that fire—the very thing that crushed him—was also the reason he was rescued.

Sometimes the thing that discourages you the most is not the end.

It is the signal.

That fire is calling you to do one simple thing:

*Engage for the Soft Life.*

I have spoken to many South Africans who fit this description. People who love this country.

But many of them have gone quiet.

They are tired of seeing corruption rewarded while honesty feels punished.

If that has ever been you, know this: you are not alone.

You are not powerless.

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*“I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”—Asaph*

---

If South Africa is draining you right now, that might be smoke.  
That sense that things are upside down?  
This is not the moment to give up.  
You don’t have to stay silent forever.  
When you *Engage*, you turn that smoke into a signal.

### **The Other 1,825 Days Nobody Talks About**

Voting is how we choose leaders. Engagement is how we shape the country between elections. No one gets to reduce your voice to one day every five years.

When elections arrive, many try to shape the country—in different ways.

Between elections, there are 1,825 other days.

Those days matter more than a single ballot.

A country is shaped by daily habits, daily choices, and daily courage—not one dramatic moment.

Small steps don’t look powerful. But taken daily—together—they change what becomes normal.

When thousands of people like you take simple, consistent steps, something shifts.

Politics follows.

### **No Marches. No Votes. Just Results.**

The Constitutional Court of South Africa made a historic ruling. It now affects ministers and provincial leaders. They must tell the public who paid for their campaigns.

No more secret funding. No more buying support behind closed doors.

It was not a political party.

It was not an election.

It was a non-profit.

Investigative journalists at *AmaBhungane* took it to court.

The rules were too weak, and secrecy made corruption easier.

Just like that, a major change happened—without an election.

Another civic group, OUTA—ordinary people who keep government honest—challenged AARTO.

The Pretoria High Court agreed with them.

AARTO—a driving-penalty system—went too far. Ordinary people would have been punished unfairly.

The Court stopped AARTO in January 2022.

No election. Not a change of government.

Just ordinary citizens using the tools that are already there.

These are not small victories. They make honesty safer, corruption riskier—and protect tomorrow. That's how people start making progress again.

Here's what that means:

A country does not only move forward on election day.

### **One Quiet Move Can Still Change a Law**

**I**f you choose to, get involved with organisations that keep government honest. Support journalists, watchdogs, and civic groups.

You can do it quietly, without arguing with anyone.

When citizens *Engage*, it does not matter who is in power. People start making progress again.

That is how you build a trustworthy government—one that referees fairly. It rewards people who work. It makes *the Soft Life* easier.

### **Cameras Don't Vote—They Change Things**

**S**outh Africa is full of brave journalists who investigate wrongdoing every day.

Follow them. Subscribe. Back them with a small monthly donation.

During the State Capture years, they followed money trails. They connected dots. They exposed lies.

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*“Investigative journalists did a lot of work that the Commission found very helpful...”—Raymond Zondo, Chief Justice of South Africa, On the Record Summit, 2022*

---

When you support independent media, you are not being political.

You are building a future you can plan for.

This is how free people shape their country—without slogans, without violence, without waiting for elections.

And you help make *the Soft Life* possible.

### **Where the Builders Are Already Moving**

**D**on't forget the business and economic organisations. Five minutes of reading or scrolling can show you what is really happening in the economy—who is investing, who is hiring, and where opportunities are growing.

You may discover something you enjoy.

You may discover a cause worth supporting.

And you may end up contributing to real change—without shouting, marching, or begging politicians.

Just by understanding how your country actually works. And once you're engaged, learning becomes easier.

### **The Bills You Pay Without Watching**

**C**onnect to the places where decisions are made in South Africa. You already pay for them every day—through VAT and taxes. So it's fair to keep an eye on them.

It helps to know what they are doing, what they are meant to do, and where they are failing.

Don't worry—I'm going to show you how to keep this simple in the next two chapters.

This is not about becoming a legal expert.

It's about staying involved.

Start here:

Parliament and the Presidency—laws and budgets.

Your province and municipality—schools, clinics, roads, water, lights, rubbish.

Then the watchdogs. One at a time.

The IEC (“*are elections clean?*”), the Public Protector (“*is government misbehaving?*”), the Human Rights Commission (“*are people being abused?*”), and the Auditor-General (“*where did the money go?*”).

Once you start following these institutions, you’ll start seeing the non-profits that keep them honest. You’ll see them quoted, tagged, and referenced. When you find a good one, follow them too.

If this feels like a lot, it’s only because you can see the whole map. We’ll simplify it soon.

## Smoke Draws Help

**Y**ou may be an accountant, a lawyer, a technician, a driver, a teacher. Or simply someone who can see when something is wrong.

You do not need permission to act.

You can start an organisation around any smoke signal that bothers you.

Journalists may start calling.

Others may adopt the idea.

Something small can grow into something big. That is how change starts.

You don’t need to be a member of Parliament to begin.

You can start small.

*Engage* where your conscience is stirred.

*Engage* where the smoke is rising. Because smoke is what draws help—silence never does.

I’m about to make it simple, almost automatic.

Next chapter is the most powerful way to *Engage*.





# 17

## How to EDUCATE for a Prosperous South Africa

A young boy was walking past the elephants at a circus when he suddenly stopped.

Each elephant had a small rope tied around one front leg.

No chains. No cages. Just a thin rope.

The boy knew something didn't make sense.

These animals were massive. Any one of them could snap the rope and walk away.

So why didn't they?

He noticed a trainer nearby and asked him.

*"Why don't the elephants try to escape?"*

The trainer smiled.

*"When the elephants are young, we tie them with the same rope. At that age, the rope is strong enough to hold them. They pull and pull, but they can't break free."*

He paused.

*"As they grow older and stronger, they never try again. They believe the rope can still hold them. So they stay right where they are. The rope is not the cage. The memory is."*

That's how a free person can still live like they're tied down.

Many of us were taught things by apartheid that still sit in us.

Not the laws. The mindset.

A habit of waiting. A habit of fear. A habit of playing small.

Not because we're weak—because that's what was drilled into us.

Political talk was meant to make people aware of oppression. To unite people for liberation. That was necessary at the time.

But the rope stayed—long after freedom arrived.

And the first private change is to stop waiting for leaders to carry your life.

Start thinking like the country is yours to build.

This is the first thing you *Educate* your circle about: the rope is not outside you anymore.

It's inside your head.

## **When Tomorrow Feels Yours Again**

**W**hen that rope loosens, you start living like tomorrow is yours.

It looks like a life that starts working.

Where you can find a job you like—quickly.

Where you can move up in life without begging anyone. Where progress starts feeling normal.

Freedom to dream again—not of revenge, but of restoration. Not chasing a perfect past—building a prosperous future.

You are bigger now.

Stronger now.

Free.

## How Minds Change Without Fights

**W**hat people clap for today becomes law tomorrow.  
We *Educate* to loosen the rope.

If you're wondering what *Educate* looks like in real life, it's not lecturing people or winning arguments. It's mostly about how you notice things, how you speak, and when you stay quiet.

Over time, I've found a simple way to do this without starting fights.

**E**xamine power, not people.

Always ask who made this rule, and who benefits? The damage is in the rules, not in people.

**D**etach people from policies.

Politicians are not races. Bad laws are not cultures. That separation matters.

**U**nderstand rewards.

Watch what a rule rewards—and what it punishes. Jobs don't disappear by accident. Poverty follows bad rules.

**C**hoose safe conversations.

*Educate* those who are willing to listen. Some people aren't ready to hear it yet.

**A**sk questions instead of announcing conclusions.

Questions invite thinking.

Statements invite arguments.

**T**ell stories, not slogans.

Real examples open minds.

Slogans close them.

**E**ncourage what works.

When government, courts, or police do their job well, say so.

People repeat what is rewarded.

No shouting. No labels. No public performances.

Just clear thinking, shared carefully—one conversation at a time.

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*"If you think you're too small to make a difference, try spending the night with a mosquito."—African Proverb*

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## The Identity Nobody Explained

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*“The Spirit you received does not make you **slaves**, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to **sonship**.”—Paul*

---

The opposite of slavery is not liberation.

The opposite of slavery is “sonship”—being an heir.

It means you belong. It’s yours too.

A way of thinking that says,

*“This country is mine—and I want the Soft Life for it.”*

It means you don’t fight—you build.

The elephant is not weak.

The rope is not strong.

What holds it down is memory.

This is how you *Educate* without fighting—one conversation at a time.

The final chapter will show you an even easier and more fun way to *Educate* and reach further than you ever imagined possible.

All in your spare time.





# 18

## Let's Build the South Africa We Deserve

You've read this far.

That means you stayed with it. You value understanding.

You now have what you need to *Elect, Engage, and Educate* for *the Soft Life*.  
It can look like a lot. But it's not complicated.

You don't need to join anything, change your life, or argue with anyone.

You just need to do one simple thing.

One step. Three moves: *Elect, Engage, Educate*.

So you start moving toward *the Soft Life*—not someday, but in your real life.

## The One Move That Makes This Real

Subscribe to my YouTube channel.

You stay up to date with what's happening in South Africa.

I keep it light, fun, and clear—so you know what's happening in your country without drowning in noise.

I also bring you voices—podcasters who build and investigate—plus experts and leaders.

So you're informed, you hear voices of reason—and one more thing.

From the moment you're subscribed, you have permission to share this book—freely.

Email it. WhatsApp it. Forward it however you like—but the best way is to share the download link, so people always get the latest version.

No cost. No fear. No legal drama.

If you enjoyed it, you're free to pass it on.

That matters. But it's only the start.

## When Knowing Turns Into Choosing

On top of that, you get simple election guides. As we get closer to national elections, I'll break down the parties in plain language.

No jargon. No slogans. Now you're not guessing.

I'll tsimplify what they're actually saying and what it means in real life—so you're ready to *Elect* for *the Soft Life* with confidence.

You hear voices that help you think.

And you're ready to choose.

That helps. Then it gets serious.

## When Soft Lifers Start Moving

You also get access to ready-made emails. When something in South Africa frustrates you, we don't have to march or shout.

You start acting like an owner.

You copy, paste, and send emails that government takes seriously. Many do it from their phone—on the couch—while life carries on.

So if something really matters, *Soft Lifers* take the right steps.

Small actions. Real progress. That's how doors start opening again.

So now you're not only informed.

You can vote with clarity.  
You can act without drama.  
And you can *Engage* and *Educate* without fighting.  
This is where it starts to move.

We're working to get this very book to one million people before the next election.

By connecting, you become part of that effort.

So without changing your routine, without fighting anyone, and without adding stress, the country still moves forward. You keep living your life—working, raising kids, planning.

That's what *the Soft Life* looks like in real time.

It looks like planning holidays instead of funerals. It looks like job ads instead of queues. It looks like effort finally paying again.

### **The Trap of Knowing Without Acting**

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*“Knowledge is not power. It is only potential.  
Applying knowledge is power. Knowing when  
and how to apply it is wisdom.”—Takeda  
Shingen, 16th-century military leader*

---

**T**ake one small action and let everything you've read start working together.

Here is the danger.

Many people love knowledge. They enjoy debates.

But knowledge without action becomes a trap.

I will have failed if this book ends with agreement but no movement.

I hope you don't leave this as something you agreed with, but something you quietly acted on. You don't owe anyone an explanation for that.

## Where I Got It Wrong

I am not innocent in South Africa's current problems.  
I voted for promises that sounded right.

I was carried by liberation excitement. I did not question policies. I accepted beautiful words like "equality" and "unity" without understanding what they really produced.

I am grateful that I eventually asked hard questions.

I compared politics to my real work of empowering people. Where I helped people succeed, the rules kept holding them back.

That's when it clicked.

I hope this book has done the same for you.

I've taken my first step by writing it.

And I can see you taking yours—by choosing to *Elect, Engage, and Educate for the Soft Life*.

Because poverty is not beaten by anger.

It is beaten by opportunity.

And that future is still ours to choose.

## The Moment It Stops Being Talk

If you stop at talk, life stays the same.  
When you act, things move forward—even imperfectly.

I wrote this book for the person I believe you are:

Someone who finishes this book...

then opens their phone...

then takes the first step.

Someone who chooses to act—not one day, but today.

That is how countries change.

That is how prosperity spreads.

And that is how South Africa rises.

By now, you've seen how prosperity actually works.

You've seen *the Soft Life* is possible.

Now the question is whether you will act.

You can help get the money moving again.

You can help end poverty—not with slogans, but with structure.

Hardship gives way to growth.

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*“Act on what you hear. Those who hear but do not act are like someone who looks at their face in a mirror, walks away, and immediately forgets what they look like.”—James*

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So act.

Begin your part in building a prosperous nation.

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*“Act like people with good sense and not like fools. These are evil times, so make every minute count.”—Paul*

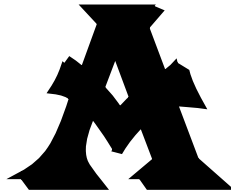
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I'll see you in the comments of the next video.

But before you close this book, make it personal.





## One Decision, One Ripple

**R**ight here is the line.  
This book won't change anything if it stays in your head.  
Things only change when it becomes a decision you can live by.  
Not a public fight.  
Not a new personality.  
A private standard.  
So before you close this book, make it personal.  
Read the next page out loud.  
Not for me. For you.  
Then carry on with your life—but carry on with direction.

# THE SOFT LIFE DECISION

*The Soft Life* is not a gift.

It's a standard I choose.

As a *Soft Lifer* who wants a country where hard work pays off, I commit to this:

## **I THINK FOR MYSELF**

I refuse to be bullied by labels.

I trust what I can see for myself is true.

## **I AM NOT A SPECTATOR**

I stop waiting for rescue or quick fixes.

I take responsibility where I stand.

## **I PUT GOVERNMENT BACK IN ITS LANE**

Keep us safe. Keep rules fair. Punish corruption.

Make hard work pay again—so effort leads somewhere. Then step back and let people build.

## **I ELECT SERVANTS, NOT MASTERS**

I judge leaders by results, not slogans.

I vote like my future depends on it—because it does.

## **I ENGAGE THE MOMENT**

My frustration is a signal to act—not to shout.

I choose calm action over loud anger.

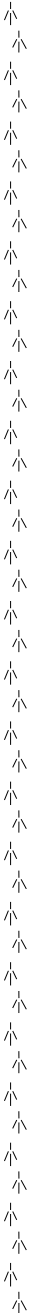
## **I EDUCATE THE FUTURE**

I don't preach. I tell stories.

I help others see how prosperity works—and how we move toward it.

*The Soft Life* is a decision.

I have made mine.









# PASS IT ON

This book is free because this message must move.

## THE THREE-PERSON MOVE

Send this book to three people today:

Latest version link:

<https://www.bonsaigroup.co.za/the-soft-life-free-download>

- the friend who wants a life that works
- the cousin who is trying to start something
- the elder who still believes the “secrets”

## THE STATUS SIGNAL

Post The Soft Life Decision on your WhatsApp Status.

Caption it: *“I’m choosing the Soft Life. Ask me why.”*

(If you can’t share publicly, share privately. One person still counts.)

## THE DINNER TABLE TALK

This week, tell one person the story of Greedy Godfrey.

Show them how prosperity works.

Then ask: *“What must government do so hard work pays again?”*

## ONE IN A MILLION

One million free hard copies is the milestone.

The digital must reach far beyond that.

Let’s bring *the Soft Life* home.



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# Stop Apologizing for Wanting a Life That Works

We were told that freedom would bring prosperity. Instead, we got a country that doesn't work—an economy that feels like a closed door, and a daily life where effort doesn't lead anywhere. Too often, only the connected get ahead.

If you've ever been silenced for asking an honest question, or punished with labels for wanting a country that works, you've seen the trap in action.

Some words don't just explain—they trap you in one story.

**The Soft Life is not a luxury—it's a life that works.**

In these pages, you'll spot three things. Once you see them, you can't unsee them:

- The story hiding inside the words people repeat
- The money game—why some move up while others stay stuck
- The real purpose of government—and why everything breaks when it forgets its job

You'll stop waiting for rescue—and start spotting the trap in real time.

This is not a political manifesto. It's a mental break-out. A roadmap from the struggle to a life that works.

**The Soft Life is a decision. Make yours today.**

