

# Remember the past, act in the present, improve the future

 By [Shan Raddiffe](#)

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In celebration of Youth Month, we chatted to candidate attorney at Webber Wentzel, Luntu Quntana, who was "born in East London, bred in Johannesburg and now currently being buttered in Cape Town" about what Youth Day means to him and the changes he would like to see for future generations...



## ■ *Tell us a bit about yourself and why you decided to get into law?*

I have a heart for people, a head for problem solving and find enjoyment in outdoor activities such as paragliding, swimming with sharks and learning to surf. Growing up in the Eastern Cape in an environment where injustices of the past still abound, then moving to Johannesburg to see the "big" world placed me in a constant search for a balance between solving problems in a way that adds value to others, while stimulating my desire to keep learning and law was an arena that promised to fit the bill.

The legal profession drew me with its possibility to make a difference in both my life and those of others; the meaning of this has evolved from my first day of university. Admittedly, the tales of successful lawyers in Nelson Mandela, Patrice Motsepe and, close to home for me, Judge-President of the Eastern Cape High Court Selby Mbenenge played a role inspiring the choice.

## ■ *What is the significance of Youth Day to you, as a young attorney?*

Youth Day is a commemoration of the sacrifices that the youth of 1976 made in having the courage to be the change they wanted to see and stand up to the challenges they faced in their day.

Today, Youth Day provokes a sense of responsibility as a young attorney to not be a passive citizen, but rather an active participant in my community and spheres of influence. To never take for granted the opportunities I have as they did not come easy, and to further be of assistance to those I am able who may have not had the advantages I have had.

## ■ *What do you feel is the most important right children have today?*

A child's right to shelter, healthcare and to be properly fed as set out in Section 28 of the Constitution is one I hold dear to my heart. Having run a soup kitchen on the streets of Braamfontein for four years, I encountered many children who lived on the streets who were as young as 10. Their stories varied but all of them spoke of a disrupted childhood and a potentially broken future. Children are our future and giving them the basics would go a long way in securing the future we desire as a nation.

▣ ***Name one thing you would change for today's youth...***

The alarming rate of youth unemployment. I had the privilege of working as a researcher on a report for national treasury on youth unemployment and that experience exposed me to the realities faced by a large part of my generation. Being in institutions of learning insulates us from reality and once many leave, to find that all you have is a piece of paper and graduation pictures is an image that I wish no youth ever has to see.

▣ ***Pass on one piece of advice given to you by an elder...***

*"Reflect and improve."*- Mmatshipi Matebane. A mentor of mine, who sent me those words on my 21st birthday and simple as they were, they had an impact. I was at the height of my academic career and things were looking up on all spheres; I expected a "You're doing great for someone your age". That invocation to constantly reflect and having a conscientious attitude of continual self-improvement has shaped my approach and kept me grounded.

## ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

Shan Radcliffe is the editor of Bizcommunity HR, Education and Legal.

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