

Vanessa Mhlom, founder of Pleroma Patch, encourages youth to 'rise, build, heal and lead'

Vanessa Mhlom is the founder of Pleroma Patch, a South African-born wellness brand pioneering a simpler, smarter way to care for your body, through transdermal vitamin patches designed for modern life.

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#) 23 Jun 2025



Vanessa Mhlom, founder and CEO of Pleroma Patch. Image supplied

With a background in cybersecurity and a passion for meaningful innovation, Mhlom brings together science, elegance, and purpose to reshape the wellness industry from the inside out.

Driven by her own experiences of burnout, hormonal imbalances, and high-performance pressure, Mhlom created Pleroma to fill a critical gap: natural, effective wellness that doesn't demand more time, pills, or complexity.

The result? A powerful line of discreet, vegan patches that support sleep, recovery, and menstrual health, with more products on the way.

This [Youth Month](#), we find out more about her journey...

 ***Briefly tell us about yourself and your journey.***

I'm a proud Xhosa woman, a cybersecurity consultant by profession, and the founder of Pleroma Patch, a South African vitamin patch brand.

My journey has never followed the script - and I think that's the beauty of it. I come from a lineage of strong women who taught me that where you begin is never where you have to end.

I've worn many hats - student, consultant, speaker, builder - but at the heart of it all, I am someone who believes in wholeness, in impact, and in rewriting the narrative for what young Black women can create and become.

▣ ***What inspired you to start Pleroma? Where did it all begin?***

It began with burnout. I was leading teams, working late nights, studying for my master's at NYU, building big dreams - and my body couldn't keep up. I tried every wellness product out there, but nothing would fit my pace of life.

So, I created something better. Something clean, effective, beautiful, and backed by science.

I started Pleroma because I believe wellness should be simple, inclusive, and powerful. I wanted to create a product that meets people, especially women, where they are and gives them back their energy, clarity, and confidence.



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▣ ***How did you come up with the name Pleroma?***

Pleroma is a Greek word that means “fullness” - and the moment I heard it, something in me stirred. I thought, That's it. That's what I want people to feel. Not just well - but full.

Full of life, joy, purpose, and potential. We're not here to survive. We're here to thrive. That name became my north star - a reminder that wellness isn't just about vitamins, it's about vitality. It's about helping people experience the fullness they were born for.

▣ ***How did you take your first step into starting up Pleroma, and what did it teach you?***

My first step was simple: I dared to believe that I could. I Googled, researched, tested ingredients,

contacted manufacturers, designed prototypes, and used my own savings to fund the first batch. I had no roadmap, just a burning vision and a laptop.

It taught me that clarity comes from movement, not waiting. That you don't need everything to start - you just need courage, conviction, and a willingness to learn fast.

That one bold step can create ripples far beyond what you can see.

▣ ***What has been the most difficult learning curve for you? / What has been the biggest lesson you have learnt?***

The hardest part? Letting go of perfection and embracing progress. As a founder, it's easy to want everything to be flawless - the brand, the product, the plan.

But entrepreneurship is messy. It's stretching. You launch, you learn, you pivot. I've had to learn to trust my intuition, to recover from mistakes with grace, and to stay deeply anchored in my why.

The biggest lesson? You are allowed to evolve - and in that evolution, greatness is formed.

▣ ***What advice do you have for other young people looking to start up in an industry like this?***

Start small. Start scared. Start anyway!

The wellness industry can be intimidating, but it needs your voice, your ideas, and your uniqueness. Don't wait for validation. Don't wait for perfect timing. Start with what you have.

Learn everything you can. Stay close to your customer. Build something real, and make sure your product solves a real problem.

Never forget: You are enough to begin!



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▣ ***What challenges do you believe young people in South Africa face today?***

So many young people in South Africa are battling invisible ceilings - lack of access, limited funding, generational trauma, and systems that weren't built with us in mind.

We face the pressure of building futures while healing from pasts. But despite it all, South African youth are resilient. We are innovative, bold, and deeply rooted in possibility. The challenge is real - but so is our power.

▣ ***How do you want to inspire or influence other young South Africans through your work?***

I want every young South African to know that their dreams are sacred. That they can build things that didn't exist before. That being from a township, a small town, or an underfunded school does not disqualify you - equips you.

Through Pleroma, I want to show that wellness, science, and luxury can come from Africa. I want to leave a trail that says, "If she could do it, maybe I can too."

▣ ***If you had the opportunity to address the nation's youth, what message would you share?***

Your story matters. You do not need permission to dream. You do not need perfect conditions to begin. The world is waiting for your voice, your courage, and your magic. We are not just the future - we are the now.

So, take up space. Be bold in boardrooms. Be gentle with your heart. Be relentless about your purpose. And never, ever shrink for systems that weren't designed to hold your brilliance.

▣ ***What does Youth Month mean to you?***

Youth Month is a sacred remembrance of sacrifice, resistance, and audacity. It's a time to honour those who fought with their lives so that we could live with freedom. But it's also a call to action. A reminder that our generation must now lead with purpose, integrity, and impact.

To me, Youth Month says: Rise. Build. Heal. Lead. Because our ancestors are watching - and our future is waiting!

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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