OPINION

OPINION | Blacks should shun the myths society created about them

By Nonkululeko Gobodo - 31 January 2023



Nonkululeko Gobodo
Image: SUPPLIED



We have been grappling for 370 years with the big problem of being black and inferior, which is nothing more than a mere myth, says the writer.
Image: 123RF

I have been reading Noel Chabani Manganyi's book *Being Black in the World, published* in 1972. Manganyi is a revered clinical psychologist. Back then they were grappling with the issue of being black in the world. It was good to see what was happening in SA in 1972 through the lens of a black psychologist.

It struck me that the concept of being black did not exist before 1652. It is an illusion created when white settlers first arrived in SA and told Africans they were black and inferior, while they were white and superior. We have been grappling for 370 years with the big problem of being black and inferior, which is nothing more than a mere myth. Before 1652 Africans did not see themselves as being black and inferior. They were just people who lived their lives according to the social dynamics of the time.

What also struck me is how we have no idea of the extent of the psychological damage suffered by black people because of racism. Today's generation, both black and white, were born into a country that functioned according to this illusion; we all do not know what normal looks like. Only human beings are concerned about the colour of people's skin. The whole of nature embraces diversity. I always marvel at the different species of roses in my garden, all with different bushes, leaves, flowers, and colours.

Black people need to find their own unique creativity so that they can make their own contribution in the world.

White people created myths that black people were failures, inferior and incapable. Black people cannot fulfil their full potential and make a real contribution in the world when they believe these myths about themselves. Myths are not in themselves real and can therefore not affect anybody unless they are believed. Black people have not been allowed to function as their true selves.

They do not really know who they are outside the myths invented by society about them. They have been robbed of finding their own creativity which comes from their authentic selves and authentic power.

Over the ages the world has been gifted with creations and innovations from individuals from different nations. Africa has not been able to fully gift the world its own authentic creations because the West set the standard and Africans allowed themselves to function according to these. People who do not know who they are, are not able to fully discover their own creativity.

The world has therefore been robbed of enjoying Africa's authentic creations.

We all know that racism is about economics; fearing survival and preserving white privilege. White people would be unable to tell you their real reasons for hating black people because their prejudice has been socialised.

I appreciate the fact that not all white people hate black people.

Black people can no longer wait for others to change so that their circumstances change. It is time they take responsibility for the change. It is time they released themselves from the limiting beliefs they hold about themselves. The world must support black people by giving them space to heal and find themselves. Our unfortunate past is not a death sentence for black people. We can all, black and white, start the long journey to heal the past.

These concepts apply equally to gender inequality.

Women also need space to heal and find their authentic selves outside the myths invented about them.

Black people and women do not need anybody's permission to embark on their journey of healing and self-discovery. We can all start to be serious about ending race and gender inequality and see economic growth in 20 years. I expand on this topic in my book, *Awakened to my True Self.*

Nonkululeko Gobodo is the CEO of Awakened Global, a social initiative that focuses on race and gender inequality. She is a chartered accountant and the author of a book: Awakened ... to my True Self.

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