

Text of a video recording with the same title on Channel Makheni

An open letter to Dylann Roof by Makheni Zonneveld – June 2015 Dedicated to all hate crime victims worldwide

27 April 1999 – First democratic election in SA

10 May 1994 – Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela inaugurated as the first black president of SA

More happened in 1994, including the birth of 3,979 million babies worldwide...

- Some are studying
- Some are working
- Some are going to be great leaders
- Some are great entertainers
- Some have already broken Olympic records And
- Some are still going to do great things that will benefit humankind.
- Sadly, Some are already dead and some are locked up for various crimes. One of them is Dylann Roof for the cowardly act of gunning down innocent people in a place of worship

Why an open letter to Dylann Roof?

Because I wrote an open letter to Roxane Gay after her response to the Charleston massacre. (New York Times 23 July 2015). The recording of the letter to Roxane is also on this channel and you will find the text of both letters on www.beyondmulticulturalism.com.

I stated the following in the open letter to Roxane Gay:

1. Forgiveness is a gift to self
2. Our society creates Dylanns everyday
3. There is a Roxane and a Dylann in all of us.

Dylann, I join the chorus of voices that condemn your cowardly act. Only cowards carry out such despicable acts that get our society marching backwards instead of forward.

In spite of that, I join the families of the 9 innocent people you killed, the congregation at Charleston AME and everyone else who expressed their CHOICE to forgive you. I can hear you think, “Oh no not another one of those forgiveness forgiveness people!” By now you have already figured out that when we forgive you we do absolutely nothing for you but we do a lot for ourselves.

We CHOOSE to heal ourselves from the pain you have inflicted on the people who are immediately affected and on all of us as a society. We choose to forgive you because hating you will be unnecessary self-inflicted secondary victimization.

Having said that, I know that you are a product of our society.

How do we create Dylanns?

No child was born a bigot

No child was born a racist

No child was born with prejudice

No child was born with hatred

No child was born a chauvinist

No child was born with the US vs. THEM mentality

No child was born with crazy delusions of superiority and that includes you Dylann.

You were born 15 years after the old Rhodesian flag became history and in the year the old South African flag became history. Many of your peers have never seen those symbols and even those who have seen them do not automatically see them as symbols of supposed superiority.

You were exposed to brainwashing that systematically taught you to hate. Whoever brainwashed you led you believe that you were fighting for a just cause. Dylann, I learnt during our struggle for liberation in apartheid SA that, “It is better to die for an ideology that will live than to live for an ideology that will die” Steve Biko. Unfortunately many ideologies that will die or that have already died are presented to the Dylanns of this world as ideologies worth dying for. You are going to be a martyr for a bankrupt ideology.

Holier than thou?

Are we in fact better than those who brainwashed you?

Are they the only ones who create Dylanns?

Are Dylanns necessarily people who run around with guns?

How do we differ from those who brainwashed you?

Firstly they do it consciously but we do a lot of that without realizing that we are creating Dylanns.

Secondly, it's a matter of extent or degree. They got you to commit a despicable crime but we create Dylanns who do hurtful acts that are not necessarily crimes. Every act of discrimination hurts. No matter how minor it appears to the perpetrator. I know – I have lived in this skin for 6 decades.

However, we should never ever pretend that man's inhumanity to man is limited to racism - because it isn't. People find all sorts of reasons for their US vs. THEM attitudes. If you want to see US vs. THEM behaviour that is not based on the black and white issue, just check out the next news bulletin.

How do we create Dylanns if we are not conscious of it?

What do we teach our children when we make remarks like, 'What can you expect from a female driver?' while they are in the car?

Why do we get surprised when they later become male chauvinist pigs? Every male chauvinist pig is a product of society.

What do we teach our children when we make negative remarks about foreigners? Every xenophobic person is a creation of society. In my home country, South Africa, we as black people use derogatory names for fellow Africans from the North of our country. We call them Makwerekwere or Maghrighamba and attribute all crimes to them – just like you attributed rape to the peace-loving decent people that you attacked. We then act surprised when our countrymen kill these foreigners. We fail to see the link. We fail to see our contribution to the xenophobic attacks.

Where is the Dylann in us?

Have you ever made assumptions about anyone or anything without sufficient information? We all make assumptions.

That's the Dylann in us.

Have you ever made generalizations about others? Like: 'All English football fans are hooligans' or 'All Nigerians are fraudsters?' We all have stereotypes in our heads.

That's the Dylann in us.

Have you ever pre-judged anyone based on the stereotypes in your head? We all have prejudice in our hearts.

That's the Dylann in us.

Have you ever discriminated against anyone because you have prejudice in your heart? If you haven't it may be because you do not have power to act. When we have power to act, we discriminate against people just because we have prejudices against them. It all starts in the head, then it goes to the heart, and once we have power to act it goes to the hand. We discriminate.

That's the Dylann in us.

Where is the Roxane in us?

There is a Roxane in us because we battle with forgiveness

I will not repeat what I said about the Roxane in us. Please tune in to: An Open Letter to Roxane Gay, also on Channel Makheni

For as long as we do not understand what drives our behaviour and what drives the behaviour of others we will not make headway. For as long as we do not realize the ripple effect and the domino effect of our small actions, we will not make headway.

How does this manifest in the workplace?

When we go to work, we take ourselves with.

Are we tackling the real issues?

We sometimes make the mistake of thinking that workplace diversity is limited to observable differences like ethnicity, gender and physical abilities

Do we see workplace diversity for what it is?
Are we asking the right questions?
Are we investing resources in solving the real problem?

I believe to handle workplace diversity effectively we need to understand drivers of behaviour – and we should be willing to see the Roxane and the Dylann in us.

It's not easy - I mentioned in the open letter to Roxane that I was in the process of writing a book titled organizational and individual diversity competency but after reading her response I changed the title of the book to An Open Letter to Dylann Roof. *(Update, I have since changed this title and the book will be published in 2018).*

The text of both letters and the MP3 which I recorded in 2003 titled 'Heal Yourself Heal The Nation' are available on www.beyondmulticulturalism.com.

When I present keynote addresses on diversity competency or conduct workshops or facilitated conversations – inevitably, a woman or a black person complains: It's not fair, we have to work twice as hard to get half the recognition or they (meaning whites and/or men) are competent until proven incompetent but are we incompetent until proven competent.

I always respond: "I'm glad you know the rules of the game – now play according to the rules of the game. Go ahead, work twice as hard and be as competent as you can because no one can take that away from you".

Labi Siffre states it far better than I do:

"The higher you build your barriers - the taller I become
The farther you take my rights away - the faster I will run
You can deny me - you can decide to turn your face away
No matter, cos there's
Something inside so strong - I know that I can make it

Though you're doing me wrong, so wrong
You thought that my pride was gone
Oh no, there's something inside so strong
Oh oh oh oh oh something inside so strong
The more you refuse to hear my voice - the louder I will sing
You hide behind walls of Jericho - your lies will come tumbling
Deny my place in time - you squander wealth that's mine
My light will shine so brightly - it will blind you
because there's something inside so strong...
Brothers and sisters when they insist we're just not good enough
Well we know better. Just look 'em in the eyes and say
We're gonna do it anyway – we're gonna do it anyway were gonna do it
anyway – we're gonna do it anyway
We're gonna do it anyway – were gonna do it anyway
Because there's something inside...”

Thank you Labi for inspiring us for decades. Do yourself a favor
buy 'Something inside so strong'. Buy, not free download. I stand
to gain nothing if you buy it because he does not even know me.

My job is to inspire people and who inspires me? Labi Siffre's song
– I play it in the car and sing along – that is why by the time I start
a talk I'm all fired up!

I hope you will subscribe to Channel Makheni, which is actually on
positive inspirational messages, but none of us can afford to ignore
these sad realities. If you care about the society we are creating
please pass on this link.

Ps. By the way, Dylann whether you guys like it or not 'we' are in
the majority. 'We' includes people from all ethnic groups who want
to move our society forward. We're gonna do it anyway!
People from all ethnic groups in Charleston stood together in
solidarity and showed that peace-loving people are in the majority.
Evil prospers when you and I do nothing.

May all those who are directly affected find comfort in the
knowledge that you and I really care.

Please also tune in to: An Open Letter to Roxane Gay.

Thank you for tuning in.



Makheni is a social activist because she cares about the kind of society that the next generation will inherit. She is also a people developer who offers training in the 'hard to implement' skills that are called 'soft' skills.

She specializes in:

The Psychology of exclusion, Workplace Leadership and Effective Presentation skills. The communication tools that she employs are: speaking, conversation and workshop facilitation, face- to-face & online coaching, storytelling and writing.

The video recording of the letter above as well as other recordings are available on her YouTube, Channel Makheni. A free copy of her MP3 titled 'Heal Yourself Heal the Nation' is available on request on the contact page of www.beyondmulticulturalism.com.

Her e-book, The Intersection – Where Storytelling, Leadership and Diversity competency meet is available from her website.

Contact details:

Email	makheni@makheni.com
Websites	www.beyondmulticulturalism.com / www.makheni.com www.diversiteitspecialist.nl www.makhenithestoryteller.com www.breinvorkeuren.nl
Facebook	Makheni Zonneveld
Twitter	@makheniz
LinkedIn	Makheni Zonneveld
Skype	makheni (appointment via email)
FaceTime	makhenilink@gmail.com (appointment via email)