

Ignite our national mojo

By Dhiru Soni, issued by Regent Business School

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Boks victory shows what magic we can achieve as an inclusive nation in the scrum



Members of the victorious Springbok rugby team enjoy their moment with the World Cup trophy after the tournament in Japan last month. South Africans are in need of more of this type of unity that brought the nation's people together then.

A few weeks ago, people from across South Africa set aside their problems, challenges and differences to celebrate the national rugby team's World Cup triumph. Citizens of all hues, shades, shapes, sizes, races and classes were rejoicing in a sense of unity, hope and national pride.

It was as if the country was cast with a unifying magic spell. We seemed to have regained our best energy – a revitalised national mojo. The jubilation of our success in rugby reunited a fragile and divided rainbow nation. Our national mojo is our source of confidence – the thing that lets us know that collectively we can be successful as a nation. It helps us to do the things we need to do to achieve, succeed and have impact.

The word “mojo” is about opportunity, hope, aspiration and seeing that light at the end of the tunnel which enables one to do better tomorrow and the day after. Unfortunately, the real picture of South Africa's development trajectory over the past two decades since the demise of the apartheid regime suggests that the political economy of the country is in a state of inexorable crisis and does not come even close to adequately serving all the people of the country. The promise of a better life for all has been betrayed. The failure of South Africa's political economy has kept racial inequalities in wealth distribution inherited from the apartheid system the same.

Predominantly black communities have regularly protested, sometimes violently, against poor public services, the lack of employment, poorly paid jobs, corruption and indifference by elitist political leaders.

We all know that when the dust of the rugby euphoria has settled, the country will once again be in crisis mode, acknowledging the fact that we still are the most unequal society in the world. This setback will leave the country's national mojo devastated, especially when we need it the most.

So how can we go about restoring our national mojo for success particularly given that most South Africans aspire for our fractious nation to become a harmonious multiracial society?

If we want to reverse our country's persistent crisis and downward trajectory then at a meta level, we need to embrace the intrinsic messages embodied in the famous speeches made by global icons such as Winston Churchill's "We Shall Never surrender", Martin Luther King jr's "Join Hands With Me And Walk Down Pennsylvania Avenue and Sing that Old Negro Spiritual 'Free At Last'", John F Kennedy's "Don't ask what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country", and Nelson Mandela's "No single person can liberate a country. You can only liberate a country if you act as a collective".

It is also a critical juncture in South Africa's fragile history to reflect on the issue of contemporary leadership. It is an unfortunate epoch when our leaders are failing in epic terms.

As a collective, we have to marvel at the joy we all experienced through the national rugby team's victory. It was a case of 15 very diverse individuals and skills which bonded through the auspices of a brilliant coach and leader and added constructively to their true north of winning the world championship.

Our country needs iconic leaders of the calibre of the ones mentioned here. It has never mistrusted leaders more but is seeking direction desperately.

In a fast-moving and unpredictable South Africa, it is easy to become overwhelmed. Therefore, we must harness our inner-strength, drive and focus so that we can find that inner-magic which helps us regain our latent mojo. To do so, we have to make our rejuvenated mojo inclusive.

There are millions of people who are unemployed living in abject poverty. We have to work as a collective to empower the less fortunate to cultivate their mojos for the better good of all.

Let us not keep what we have at the top of the pyramid to ourselves but use our skills, mojo, to ensure all are able to participate in a sustainable economy. It's our duty to pay it forward in the creation of a new national mojo.

It is relationships that determine outcomes and in this respect there was no one better at bringing people together and creating effective, hightrust relationships than our very own icon, Mandela. He inspired a national inclusive mojo in conceptually portraying a rainbow nation full of hope and dreams of a successful and sustainable future.

The Boks' successful world rugby campaign was an echo of Madiba's conviction in collective action for the betterment of all.

South Africa desperately needs to reignite a new national mojo for its development. Let us not keep what we have at the top of the pyramid to ourselves.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Soni is the director for Research and Innovation at Regent Business School, but writes in his personal capacity.

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