



Suzette Dlamini

MPhil in Management Coaching alumnus

A few years ago, Suzette Dlamini's daughter was diagnosed with cancer. Coming from a nursing background, Suzette formed part of the medical team on her daughter's road to recovery. Feeling that she had lost her identity during this challenging time, she decided to apply for the MPhil in Management Coaching to "find Suzette" again. Here she shares her journey:

Being there for others

I grew up in the Eastern Cape, and from a young age my parents taught us about people and the value of getting to know people in their own language. After school I went to the University of Port Elizabeth, but I dropped out in the second year of my BCom because I wanted to study in a field that involves people, not numbers. I went on to study nursing, and finished with an Honours degree in Nursing.

Then love and marriage happened. I've been married for 24 years, and together with my husband we own a small family business. We believe in having more than one stream of income. We are now based in Gauteng and I still do occupational nursing on an ad hoc basis.

A personal crisis changed the way I think and do things. My daughter was diagnosed with cancer three years ago. Putting my nursing qualification to use, I played the role of both mother and health professional during that time she received chemotherapy. The treatment was successful and she completed matric in 2018. But during this difficult time she was very concerned about me and called me out for not living my own life as I was doing everything for her. She said, "Mommy, whatever happens to me, you need to find yourself, find Suzette, because you don't know who she is". This was the catalyst for continuing my studies.

Being the ambitious person that I am, I applied for the MPhil in Management Coaching straight away, even though it's been more than 20 years since I have studied anything! I was advised to do the Essentials of Management Coaching Programme offered by USB Executive Development first.

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My goal for the USB-ED short course was to upgrade myself. And Suzette upgraded to the point of feeling confident enough to apply for the MPhil the very next year!







Suzette Dlamini's story

Being there for myself

In class you are surrounded by people who are masters in what they do. I therefore had to work through an inferiority complex, which had never been part of my challenges before. I mean, we were running our own business and there is nothing inferior about being part of your daughter's medical team. But walking into class was quite a challenge. However, the team behind the Management Coaching programme are really real people and I think because I respond well to people, I could deal with my own self-esteem issues. They helped me to discover my own identity and made me realise I also have something to offer.

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My coach Becky Mosehle (also an alumnus) reminded me that I need to challenge the assumptions that limit me. I had to work through that and realise that I was doing this programme for me; not my family or anyone else. I had to advance my own identity and redeem the time for Suzette. It is still a challenge but I found the strength to say, "I need to do this for me".

I had all the support from my family. It was extremely difficult to not be so readily available anymore and to tell them when I wanted to be by myself. I think this shift was not a change of identity but maybe becoming what has always been there. A sort of spiritual change that I found at the business school – who would have thought!

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How am I applying the theories that I have learned during the programme? I listen differently. I observe differently. I am focused on the individual and try to make other people feel that they matter. I want my clients to know that I listen.

The academic challenge for me was the adult learning. It is not about how well you can memorise work. It is how it changes you and how you apply it. You don't just learn to get good grades at the end; it is all about the application. For me, adult learning has miracle powers – that is the power of age. Without adult learning I would never have found Suzette.

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