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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: MARGARET HIRSCH – COO HIRSH HOME STORES

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA	Hello, I'm Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka, welcome to 'Womanity – Women in Unity'. The show that celebrates prominent and ordinary African Women's milestone achievements in their struggles for liberation, self-emancipation, human rights, democracy, racism, socio-economic class division and gender based violence.
DR. MALKA	Joining us on the line today is Mrs. Margaret Hirsch who is the COO of Hirsch's Home Stores which, together with her husband Alan, she co-founded in 1979; 38 years ago. By 2012 the company had a turnover of over one billion rand; today it is a national footprint in South Africa as the leading independent chain of mega appliance and home furnishing stores with at last count 17 branches and concept stores. Additionally Margaret Hirsch has received numerous business awards such as the 2016 Top Business Woman; the 2015 Most Influential Women in Wholesale and Retail for the African continent; she has been inducted into the Global Women Leaders Hall of Fame in 2014, to name just a few of her accolades and she is also known for her philanthropic work. Welcome to the show!
MRS. HIRSCH	Thank very much, thank you for having me.
DR. MALKA	It's an absolute pleasure and we're particularly interested in understanding more about your successes in the entrepreneurial space, as a business woman, as a leader in society and as well as the philanthropic work that you've done.
MRS. HIRSCH	Right.
DR. MALKA	To begin with you are the COO (Chief Operating Officer) of Hirsch's Home Stores which started as a wife and husband duo with, I believe it was just a R900.00 investment and one store, to become almost forty years later a multi-chain setup with a turnover well over a billion rand....
MRS. HIRSCH	...right...
DR. MALKA	...that's an impressive achievement. Can you please share with us a few of the landmarks in this journey of entrepreneurship as well as family business?
MRS. HIRSCH	Okay well it started...our family business started more by accident than anything else 'cause in 1976 after being married for five years I fell pregnant and my boss fired me straight away and in those days there was no CCMA so you couldn't do anything so I just had to take my handbag and go home and then that's how I started my own business. I was a shorthand typist and I was typing in the morning at 25 cents a sheet and the men would fetch it in the afternoon and other men would bring their typing in the afternoon and I would type it in the night and they'd fetch it the next morning. At the same time, that was 1973/74/75/76 is when Alan J.....started Game, Dion Friedland started Dion's, Tony Factor was set in Jo'burg and my husband who was a refrigeration mechanic said to his boss why don't we start discounting appliances and his boss said to him if you're so clever why don't you go and do it, so he did. So we went from having two jobs and no children to having two children and no job in the space of one year which is a great catalyst to get you going and that's basically how our business started just with the two of us and off we went and we worked very, very hard and our business started to grow and grow and we just...in those days we just did repairs and then we started selling appliances and so it went. When we came to 1994 - if you want the really big mark in our lives - we didn't know what was going to happen to the

	<p>country so I said to my husband we've got so many fantastic people working for us and I'm just worried that something's going to happen and they won't have a job so what we did is we started them all in their own companies so we sold our trucks to our drivers and we started them in their own business; we sold our bakkies to our technicians and started them in their own business; we sold...we organised all our installers, our DSTV installers, our gas installers, our electricians, our plumbers and we started them all in their own businesses and today they're all thriving businesses and they all still work under our umbrella, so although we've done well, there's lots and lots of other businesses that have done exceptionally well and my biggest, biggest joy is when one of the first men that I sold his truck to and started his own business where his son had gone to university and qualified and couldn't find a job, he came into his father's business, he's taken it up to new heights and he's really, really doing well. So that to me is my biggest joy to see that these men who would have...he said that my son would never have had a job or he would have been...joined the six hundred thousand qualified people with degrees who don't have jobs in South Africa but because I could offer him something my son now has a job and he said to me this is my greatest joy. So I think that was a really, really big catalyst in our lives and then I think the next big turnaround for us was in 2000 when I went to Jo'burg, I'd never ever been to Jo'burg in my life, I was fifty years old, I had been to the airport, I had been to one function at Sandton City but I didn't know Jo'burg and we just took the plunge and decided to go to Jo'burg and that really took our business to new heights and then I think the third thing after that was in 2012 when I won Business Woman South Africa, for me it was really a milestone because I was up against really fantastic women who I thought were you know streets ahead of me, I was a toaster saleslady from Durban North and I won and it was just amazing and from then I knew that in that year I would do something fantastic, that I would leave a legacy and that's when I discovered the Girls With Dignity Programme where I started making re-usable sanitary pads with my friend Sue Barns in Durban here and I still take them out into the schools, I try and do one school a week and get them out there so that girls who normally would not go to school can go to school and can pass their exams and can have a decent life. So I think those are really the big milestones in my life and every time something really challenging came up it turned into something really good which turned my life into a much more positive force for good.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>That's a fantastic success story and definitely those are elements that we're going to delve into in the conversation in a little bit more detail. I think initially having that outsource vision in 1994 of being able to help other entrepreneurs become thriving business men or business women in their own right is fantastic and one of the questions when I was looking at the history of Hirsch's that there really seemed to be a catalyst which was happening in that period; 1998 that's where you see on the timeline big changes but I'm sure those developments started well behind the scenes, as you mentioned in 1994 because you went on to start opening stores, first it was every four years then every two years and now it's almost one every single year there's a new store that comes up and I also noted that in 1998 that was when your children Richard and Lucy joined the family business so I wondered if that was coincidental or happenstance?</p>
MRS. HIRSCH	<p>I think it just...it was a catalyst then because both my children went overseas, my son worked in London he worked for an American company called The Gap in London so he learned retailing in a different...a whole different aspect but he could see the whole side of it. My daughter worked in Superbowl California and she also went to England, then came back to</p>

	<p>South Africa yes and they did decide to join the family business, we didn't push them into to it they decided to do it, but then it gave us much more freedom and in fact I wouldn't be able to be talking to you now if my son wasn't running the business and I think this is where a lot of people when they're dealing with entrepreneurs they don't realise when you're an entrepreneur you have to be working your business every minute of the day because when you're not working you're not earning and at least now I have the you know, the freedom of mind that I can go and do something else and help other people and what I do is I love starting new businesses, that's what my absolute passion is. So I go out and I work with other entrepreneurs starting new businesses but knowing that my children now are running my business and my business will continue to grow stronger.</p>
DR. MALKA	And that it's in completely competent hands that you have full confidence in.
MRS. HIRSCH	Absolutely.
DR. MALKA	We've chatted a bit about the expansion strategy from the South African perspective, are there any plans to go further into the continent, beyond South Africa's borders?
MRS. HIRSCH	<p>Not at the moment but you know as I say my son is MD now so goodness knows what he might do but you know for me I think South Africa is a big country, it's a growing country, it's a country of wealth and opportunity. I love this country, I've lived and worked in England and the USA and in Australia and I can tell you that I live in this country and I choose to grow my business in this country because I believe in this country. I honestly believe that we are just where everything's going to happen, we're the breadbasket of the world and we're a country where we've got such rich minerals and such beautiful people so for me I would like to stay in South Africa. I do work with Lionesses of Africa in Africa helping entrepreneurs with my friend Melanie Hawkin who is the CEO of Lionesses of Africa and we take the entrepreneurs from around Africa and we help them, we're the catalyst that gets the beaders from Hillcrest and the handbrake maker from Kenya and the lady in Rwanda making the jewellery and we help them to get their products to the lucrative markets of the UK, the USA and Europe and bring the money back into the country 'cause so often that money goes out and never comes back into the country, we bring that money in dollars and Euros back into the country and we help them so I do work around Africa as well but my focus is South Africa, I think this is where it's at and there's so many people in this country that need just that leg up to get their businesses going and through Hirsch's what I do is I have a ladies group, we meet once a month in all the stores and I take the people out of corporate who have an idea of what they want to do with a business and I marry it with the action that needs to be taken to grow that business, I sound like the womb where the egg and the sperm come together and I'm the womb where we grow that business so that it can be born. From that stage I work with Standard Bank incubator where we incubate the businesses up and now we've done so well that we're with Standard Bank accelerator where we accelerate them and I'm very happy to tell you that one of my first ladies who started with me two years ago has recently sold her business to Liberty for an undisclosed number of millions.</p>
DR. MALKA	That is a wonderful success story, another one, not just in your own right but what you're doing and touching other people's lives and key things that you mention there it's the value chain going end to end, making sure that we actually become the beneficiaries as a country and not just exporting goods and losing out on the revenue so we've got that full cycle, then very importantly is the mentorship component and the connections because often you can have all

	the right ingredients but if things aren't connected in the correct order or the right way those levers are just not going to be pulled in the appropriate direction.
MRS. HIRSCH	That's right. Ja I think it's really important that you...we as people who are doing well in South Africa that we mentor the people who are coming up through the ranks. If you speak to somebody who wants to start a business the first thing they say is where can they get a loan and I say is that is the very last thing you should be wanting. The last thing you want is a loan because the sooner you have a loan, if you take a loan the minute you start making money what's the very first thing you've got to do, you've got to pay that loan back. So you feel that you've worked really hard, you're getting somewhere but you've got no money because you're paying all the money back so I advise them not to do that and the woman that I work with, I work with a woman called Mary-Ann Vundla and she was Nelson Mandela's chef when he was in power and we take women out of the townships who have absolutely no education and we teach them to cook and we specialise and our speciality is African funerals so you know when an African person dies the bereaved people don't...they can't do anything and people come from far and wide and we cook the food for them and we look after them and then they culminate in a massive funeral on the Saturday and these women now all have businesses and last year I had eight hundred women to my school and each one of them has a business and each one of them is earning money to feed their children and to look after themselves. So for me...and I do that right across with lots and lots of different industries from chocolateers to bakers to ladies to run..hire out maids, I have lots and lots of businesses that I start off and get them going but I make sure that whoever I teach, they then in turn teach other people to run a business and to have a successful business.
DR. MALKA	Financial independence is absolutely critical for women's empowerment and clearly entrepreneurship is one of those roots to independence and one which you have embraced wholeheartedly and are able to give back in terms of future generations so that they have sustainable businesses, but to go...
MRS. HIRSCH	...you see once you've...sorry if I can just say once you've taught the mother, the mother in turn if she has a good work ethic and has a business and the children see her working hard and saving and ploughing the money back into the business and investing that money and growing it, they will do the same. If they see their mother drinking and smoking and you know wasting money on rubbish they will do the same, so that's why I think it's so important to teach the women to do something that's really good, something sustainable and if there's food in the house, you know, if a person's got a full stomach their brain will work, if they've got an empty stomach their brain cannot work and for children to see their mother's doing this they will continue and they will become good sustainable citizens in the future.
DR. MALKA	A hundred percent and arguably your mother is your first role model and if you can continue to have firm, sustainable, robust role models around you then that obviously leads to significant influence going into the future. You mentioned one tip, don't take a loan, have you got any other tips that you can share for our aspiring entrepreneurs?
MRS. HIRSCH	Well I think the biggest thing that I battled with when working with entrepreneurs is they love to sleep and it drives me insane because every time I...what are you doing now....sleeping, what are you going to do on the week-end, I'm going to sleep. Now shall I tell you something that I sleep approximately on a...if on a busy week I sleep two hours a night and on a

	<p>normal week I sleep four hours a night. Now this is astounding for most people but if you...I tell people I'm sixty six years old, if I slept eight hours a night like you do I'd be asleep for twenty two years of my life, how successful would I be and the answer is not as successful as I was because I've been working while other people are sleeping, so the first thing I say is...and you obviously can't go from having you know eight hours a sleep which you're used to down to four hours straight away but you can wean yourself off sleeping a little bit at a time and sleep a little bit less every night but you've got to take that time to do something more....better for you so what I start people doing is I get up at four o'clock in the morning and I get up and I have a drink of water and I just get myself towards myself and then I meditate and I think meditating is very important and how I quote meditate is imagine how dirty you'd be if you hadn't washed your body since you were born and then I say to people if you haven't meditated that's how dirty your mind is, it's full of all sorts of rubbish and you've got to clean it out and you clean it out by meditating. So I meditate and I clean my mind and I refresh my mind so I start the day fresh and then I go to gym so I do some exercise because a lot of people are very sedentary, they just come and they sit all day and they sit in their motorcar and they sit at night watching television, they lie in bed so they don't do anything, so I think it's very important to get that balance in that you do something and then I go to work and I work exceptionally hard, I'm at my desk at seven o'clock every morning until approximately seven o'clock at night and then I go home, I shower and change and then I work with my suppliers so I do have a social life because my suppliers...I work with them on a social basis so that they...I get to know them, they get to know me and then when I come home at ten o'clock I do my emails from about ten o'clock until just after midnight and I still study, I'm one of the few people you know who's got a student card and a pensioner's card so I'm still studying and I'm at business school now and studying all the new modern techniques for modern business 'cause robotics is the new industry that we're going into so I'm studying robotics so that I can get my business into the next millennium.</p>
DR. MALKA	I think those are fantastic insights and I'm just going to repeat them quickly, so we have got one; don't take a loan because that's one thing you're going to be paying off as you start your business....
MRS. HIRSCH	...with interest...
DR. MALKA	...with interest...two; cut down on the sleeping hours because every second counts and as an entrepreneur you've got to be hungry, you've got to be out there working in the time that other people are sleeping; thirdly being conscious about taking care of your brain, meditation, clean the gunk out; fourthly physical activity because we lead very sedentary lives and get out there, get energised and get the body working in preparation for the day; fifth buckle down for some hard work, seven to seven, after that don't forget the socialising component to feed the spirit and get engaging the suppliers that you do and lastly to end the day it's about studying, that lifelong learning should be a philosophy that is embraced because our world is changing 24/7. Great tips!
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to entrepreneur Mrs. Margaret Hirsch who is the Chief Operating Officer of Hirsch's Home Stores.
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DR. MALKA	You are listening to "Womanity – Women in Unity" on Channel Africa, the African perspective, on frequency 9625 KHz, on the 31 meter band, also available on DSTV Channel 802. Today we're talking to entrepreneur Mrs. Margaret Hirsch who is the Chief Operating Officer of Hirsch's Home Stores.

	We would love to receive your comments on Twitter: @WomanityTalk.
DR. MALKA	In the previous segment of the show we spoke about three of the key driving factors which have been catalysts for change in Hirsch's from 1994 when Hirsch's started to create more of an entrepreneurial spirit, for example selling trucks to the drivers, selling bakkies to the tradesmen; in 2000 moving into Johannesburg, Gauteng to start with a new line of stores and in 2012 when Margaret Hirsch won Business Woman of The Year South Africa and one of the key initiatives that she launched was the Girls In Dignity Programme. We also spoke about some of the tips of what an entrepreneur should aspire to have.
DR. MALKA	Now going back into the conversation from before, education is a priority for this show to empower girls and women with knowledge, you mentioned yourself that it's lifelong learning that as a business you're moving into study from an AI and robotics perspective, one of the projects that you have on the go is Girls With Dignity which is aimed at purchasing thousands of panty packs and sanitary pads to hand out to girls in underprivileged areas so they can attend school full time; can you please tell us more about this project and how it's progressing?
MRS. HIRSCH	Ja it's going very, very well, as I said I work with my friend Sue Barns who is a fashion designer by profession but has now left the fashion industry to make these fulltime. We make one pair of panties in the pack and then three pads one on, one off, one in the wash and we take them out into the schools but what we do when we get to the schools is we talk to the girls and we explain to them about their bodies, a lot of them have absolutely no idea how their bodies work and what's going to happen to them, so we explain to them about their bodies and we try and impress upon that they should be celebrate until they get married, which we struggle with, but you know it's just to give the girls some idea because you've got to understand they come from homes where their own parents have no idea of the proper values in life so they're not told, you know, you shouldn't do this and they just go ahead and then they end up with babies themselves. I just spoke at a school in Thembisa where in Grade 8 three of the girls they can bring their babies to school with them while they are breastfeeding and just to see these children who are children themselves with babies was just horrendous and I think if we can just stop that happening, so we explain to them about what happens to them, what happens to their bodies and give them some insight into planning their lives because we do the vision boarding, you know planning your life and what you want from your life and I think when we do that we just have such success with the girls, one they can go to school every day because otherwise if they don't have the pads they just don't go to school which means they don't write their exams, which means their marks are poor and the boys marks are better so then they get given the wrong impression that they're more stupid than the boys and then they don't want to go to school and then they start messing about and it's just a downhill spiral where when we give them the pads they can go to school, their marks are higher, their self-esteem comes up and with that they start to feel stronger in themselves and then they don't feel that they're going to be dependent on these boys and they get ahead like that, so we have tremendous success with our Girls With Dignity Programme.
DR. MALKA	And the reality is that if a girl is out of school during her period it works out to be I'd say almost 25% so a quarter of the year that she's not attending school, how can you ever catch up from each year of being out a quarter of the year, it's crazy.
MRS. HIRSCH	Yes absolutely so now we're trying to make sure that those girls do go to school every single day and with that their marks go up and they can write

	<p>the exams, they pass their exams and it gives them more...you know yourself if you've failed your exams you don't want to go and write again whereas if you pass and you're doing well you've got that incentive to write again so that's what we do and it works tremendously well.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And keeping on the theme of women, our programme "Womanity – Women in Unity" is all about gender equality which is increasingly becoming more and more a global focus and as that global focus has happened there's obviously been significant inroads in terms of the rights that women have been afforded, whether that is equal pay for work of equal value as well as legal rights, but there's still areas that need more attention, can you tell us what areas you think still need more attention?</p>
MRS. HIRSCH	<p>I think basically with women they...we just have to build their self-esteem up you know I've got a lady who works with me and when I met her she was living under a bridge with three children and she had no self-esteem and I brought her in and we sorted the children out, we got her in and I taught her, she'd never seen a computer, she couldn't type or anything like that and I went through everything with her and I taught her what to do and how to work in the workplace and I think the work ethic is what we've got to really work on. Let me just give you for instance I was sitting in my branch in Umhlanga and this beautiful girl walks in and she says to me "I want a job" and I just said to her you know you're not going to get a job going on like that and she sat down and she burst into tears and she said to me you know I've been looking for a job for two years, I know that I'm good, I know that I'm a fantastic person but nobody will give me a job and I looked at her and she had this sort of cropped top on and low slung jeans and I said to her you've got to understand that nobody will give you a job looking like that and I said to her why did you dress like that to come for a job and she said well because I want to look like Beyonce and this is what she looks like and I said well Beyonce is not looking for a job in an office, you're never going to get one looking like that, so she was very crestfallen and she was walking home and she looked up and her neighbour worked for SA Airways and she saw these brand new uniforms hanging on the line so she knocked on the door of her neighbour's house and she said where are your old uniforms and she said they're in a box under my bed, she said well can I have them and she said yes you can and she came in the next day dressed completely in the SAA uniform and she said I'm here for the job and so I said to her okay what can you do, she said I can't do anything, I don't want to do anything, I just want the job, so I said what is your perception of a job, she said well a job is somewhere where you get dressed nice everyday and you go there and you get free tea and often lunch and then you getat the end of the month they give you money. She had absolutely no idea that she had to work and produce goods for her money and I think if we can just get that work ethic into women that you actually have to work for your money, I think it's going to be a lot...because a lot of them just think that they just have to attend.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Well I'm sitting here with...lost for words to be quite honest.</p>
MRS. HIRSCH	<p>Can you believe that a person...she was matriculated, she was twenty years old and she had no idea that she actually had to produce anything as part of her work, she just thought it was somewhere you went, you attended you got money, so I think if we just get that work ethic into schools and if we can teach them from schools to universities that this is what you have to do and you've got to produce a return on your investment, if you want your boss to invest a salary in you what are you going to give him.</p>

DR. MALKA	Totally and I do hope that that programme makes its way into your Girls With Dignity project as well so that they know what to expect and actually what life expects out of them.
MRS. HIRSCH	And this is what I teach them...I life skills because you know at school they teach you reading, writing and arithmetic's they don't tell you when you go into the world this is what's going to happen to you and how my whole journey started is my father died when I was ten and I saw my mother thrown into a world where she couldn't cope and she was immediately swindled out of her insurance money, she had no money and she had no way of supporting herself and I just said to myself in those days this will never happen to me and that's why I've been a strong woman and looked after myself my whole life because I never wanted to be in that position.
DR. MALKA	And that's actually sort of the direction that I wanted to ask you, it's one of the questions that I ask all of my guests on the show who've made tremendous achievements in their respective fields of expertise, it's about some of the factors that they consider have contributed to their success, so clearly looking at where your mom was and you saying to yourself I am never going to be here, that was one of the catalysts and drivers for change, but if you could tell us you know a little bit more in terms of what have been some of the key drivers in terms of your success?
MRS. HIRSCH	Well I think you know when you start and you're a little bit successful it just helps you to want to be more successful and then when you can do something and you can teach somebody else to do that thing, you know, the old Zig Ziegler the late great Zig Ziggler said you can have whatever you want in life if you help enough people to get what they want and I think that's what it's all about, if we help other people to get what they want they immediately will grow and will push you up and you'll get where you want to be and that's what's happened to me in my life. So I've think I've just helped a lot of people to get to wherever they want to be and I've just got to be where I want to be so at the moment I have everything that I want in my life and you know I say in life you've got to start by you've got to learn, you've got to learn all about it then you start to earn it 'cause you've got to earn your money, I can't tell you how to do it if I can't do it but now I'm at a stage in my life where I'm at the return stage, where I'm returning what I know back into the community to help others to be able to earn and to learn.
DR. MALKA	So it's learn, earn, return, great rhyme. Can you share with us some of the pivotal moments in your life growing up and what influenced you in those years?
MRS. HIRSCH	Well I think growing up without a father is a great thing and a lot of children today are growing up without a father and those of you who saw my post my father's day post on face book said you know I didn't have a father but I knew I always had my heavenly father who was there with me every minute of every day which made a huge difference. I also looked at my mother and there are lots of other...I mean have you ever heard Peggy Sue Khumalo talk? Peggy Sue Khumalo was our Miss South Africa I think in 1996 and she was...her mother...she was born in Newcastle in KZN and her mother went to work in Springs as a domestic worker and she stayed with her granny and when she matriculated she went to work with her mother as a domestic and she said one day two years in she just looked at her mother and said I don't want to become this person and I know that there's more to this in my life and she did what I did, I started my working career working as a hairdresser washing hair in a hairdressing salon and Peggy Sue Khumalo went and she knocked on every door until she got a job

	<p>and the only job she got was washing hair in a hairdressing salon so she started like that and then she went from strength to strength and the story she tells is when she was in the finals of Miss South Africa her mother was working still as a domestic worker, her friend brought her in and she said as she walked out in her big ball gown she looked up and she saw her mother standing in her little three piece uniform and she said mom I'm doing this for you so that other people will not have to go through what you've gone through and I think as women today in South Africa we are progressing and we're doing so much more because we don't want to land up where our mother's have landed up.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And I think to be honest parents always want their children to do more and have more than what they had in the past.</p>
MRS. HIRSCH	<p>Absolutely...</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>...so that's...</p>
MRS. HIRSCH	<p>...you do I mean I want my children to have more than I've had and I've taught them to aspire to want to have more than I've had as well.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And I also think you know sometimes there's a tendency for people to think that that's wrong and I'm definitely not a supporter of that because I think if you believe in wealth, if you believe in success, you grow it.</p>
MRS. HIRSCH	<p>And you know the old fashioned way was you shouldn't have wealth and abundance but the new modern way is there's wealth and abundance out there, if you don't have it somebody else will so why not you?</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Very apt. What would be the best life lesson that you've learned thus far?</p>
MRS. HIRSCH	<p>I think that you know the difference between a winner and a loser is the winner is the one who just keeps going, the loser is the one who gives up and you can never give up, life's going to throw you all sorts of obstacles in your way and you just have to get over them. When I look back in 1988 we were doing extremely well, we bought our own house, we paid for it, we paid for our cars and everything was going swimmingly and somebody said oh you've got to get a good littleso we listened to somebody else which you should never do and we went and we bought a company that was very similar to ours it was going very, very well, we had two million rand in the bank and in those days it was a fortune and the guy wanted two million rand for his business so we bought it and the day that I bought it he released three million rands worth of cheques so I went from having two million rand in the bank to three million rand in overdraft in one afternoon. So most people would give up at that stage but we couldn't give up because we had nowhere else to go so we just had to carry on and we carried on and we became stronger and I think when life throws you some really hard knocks those are there to make you stronger and if you can just get over them you'll always move on and get to where you want to be.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>That's an incredibly important lesson both from a finance perspective but also about perseverance and keeping going. We've chatted about the past, the present and the near future, can you tell us what's next for you, what milestones do you still want to achieve?</p>
MRS. HIRSCH	<p>Well we're still growing our company, we're very, very lucky in an industry where our industry at the moment is 13% down year on year we are about about 10% up year on year so we break industry norm, we do incredibly well with what we do, we work incredibly hard at our job every single day of the year. We work with our staff to grow them to be the best that they can be and to make sure that their lives improve and for me as I said to you I'm just so passionate about South Africa, I love South Africa and I think if we can just get the...for me as I see it the young entrepreneurs coming up through the ranks are going to come up and they're going to</p>

	break through and I said this before and Helen Ziller said not all politicians are looking after their own interests but we've got this cream of politicians sitting on top and if the young entrepreneurs, emerging entrepreneurs can come up and break through those politicians who are preserving their own mess and can do something and make this country great, I think that we live in the greatest country in the world and I think if we all just work together we'll make it great and we'll just have a great life and that's what I'm aiming for. I'm aiming to help as many entrepreneurs to grow as much as I can so we can make this a wonderful country to be in.
DR. MALKA	You are such a passionate citizen of South Africa and also a proponent of believing in where our country can go and its potential. Lastly as we close out the conversation can you please share a few words of inspiration which you'd like to pass onto girls, young women or even older women in the continent who are listening to us?
MRS. HIRSCH	Well I think as a woman today they always say to educate a woman you educate the whole family so it's very, very important for us to be educated number one, but number two you don't have to leave everything just to be educated. I honestly believe that when you finish school you should start working and you should start teaching yourself in the evening and one of the ladies who was my Business Woman of the Year in KZN, Brenda Govendor, she was widowed when her little boy was four and she didn't have any qualifications, she went on to become a CA whilst she worked, she didn't like being a CA she now is an engineer and she teaches women to be engineers, so you know you can work and you can study and you can improve yourself and life is about continuous never ending improvement and that's what we must aim at, if everyone does well our whole country will do well and as Mother Theresa said if we all sweep our own doorsteps our whole world will be clean and that's what we've got to work, each one of us have to put in as much as we possibly can and together we'll make this country great.
DR. MALKA	Thank you very much, that's such a vital message about responsible citizenship that whatever we put out for ourselves it has an impact on the rest of society. We really appreciate you sharing stories of not just about your own experiences but also the stories about some of the other women whose lives you've touched and the successes that they've had so it's been a pleasure having you on our show, we really appreciate it thank you so much.
MRS. HIRSCH	Thank you very much thank you and I look forward to speaking to you again.
DR. MALKA	Thanks.
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