

PROGRAM DATE: 2018-02-08

PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: DR. LULU GWAGWA – CEO OF LEREKO INVESTMENTS

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 in studio today in Johannesburg is Dr. Lulu Gwagwa who is the CEO of Lereko Investments; Chairperson of Aurecon Africa and non-executive director for FirstRand, Massmart and Sun International. Welcome to the show!
DR. GWAGWA	Thank you very much Dr. Malka and thank you very much to you and your listeners.
DR. MALKA	We're so glad you could join us especially on our theme now where we're focusing on women in the corporate space and to begin with, your career has not really been a traditional career; you've spanned three core sectors of society; public sector, academics as well as the private element and in some of your positions you've really had a significant social impact in housing and spatial arrangements of South Africa. For example you served on the twelve member commission for the delineation and demarcation of provincial boundaries which decided the country's current provisional set-up or boundaries rather, that's an enormous responsibility to undertake, with a great deal of socio-economic sensitivities; can you tell us more about that?
DR. GWAGWA	Indeed I think I've had the privilege and I've been immensely blessed with opportunities. I think the kind of work that I've done and I continue to do, it really starts in Kromhoek Village; a small rural village in KwaZulu-Natal which was part of the Eastern Cape before these boundaries that I was involved in and I think the development or what you call the socio-economic impact in terms of the work that I've done, it really comes out of where I grew up and my own experiences as a child growing up in a rural village, in a big family and having to fetch water in the river and all the other chores that women do, working in the fields with my father who was a school principal. So it really starts in the way that I was brought up in the environment within which I grew up which is a rural village where every child is everybody's child. So I find that the many things that I do both in the corporate sector and just the inclination of what I end up doing and some of the work that I do in my own personal time really draws from that.
DR. MALKA	And looking at betterment of infrastructure; making life easier than having to still live under rural circumstances.
DR. GWAGWA	Absolutely, I mean one of the key things which I mean I'll come back to that to say I ended up being a town planner which was completely by default, but in a sense being a town planner they always say everything happens for a reason; now I know why I ended up in planning because the issue of space and spatial inequality in South Africa, spatial inequality in the continent and in the world, we talk about developing countries; that's about spatial inequality, is really core to what I do and the things that really interest me. So when you talk about infrastructure it is about how do we do improve the life of people staying in rural areas for example, so it's not just about economic infrastructure which is critical, which is a

	<p>catalyst for economic development but it's also social infrastructure or sometimes what we call economic infrastructure actually has got social implications, depending on where you put that infrastructure, so the issue of the relationship between development in general, socio-economic development and spatial equality is something that's very important to me and infrastructure is very, very important there. For me I always say to...as you said earlier on I chair the board of Aurecon and those are engineers and I always say to the engineers there, ultimately for me the test of the work that we do as engineers is whether my grandmother or my cousin in Kromhoek...because they are the ones who are fetching water from the river, when that child is sick it is them who take him to the clinic so whether that road is there or not and how far that clinic is and where it is located, it actually impacts on women more than anybody else because it's them who actually have to take that child. If that child has got to go to school and has to walk miles and miles and miles, it is the women again who has to wake up earlier to prepare the child and when that child comes back they're hungry and they've hurt themselves on the road, or whatever else, it impacts; infrastructure is just core to me as a woman and I think I come back to the issue of it's my own background, it's my own context, it's my own lived experience most of the things that I do, which is why I do the things that I do with a smile because I don't have to really rack my brain, it's things that I've been through and I continue to go through because I go to Kromhoek still.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Everything is interconnected and without being able to get those interconnections, whether it is looking at the digital space on having virtual interconnections, but more intensively in the physical sense of being able to connect people to destinations, connect children to schools, connect people to clinics, to home, to their workspace and that just wraps up the whole infrastructure story to make life easier so that people can function in society.</p>
DR. GWAGWA	Absolutely.
DR. MALKA	<p>Another key element and this stays in the same track that we're talking about is that you're instrumental in developing a policy for the transformation of the construction industry; you managed a R609 000 000 job creation programme; the programme was named by the International Labour Organisation as one of the best in the developing world and I wanted to ask you on that was women's empowerment in the construction ecosystem a factor of transformation in the industry?</p>
DR. GWAGWA	<p>That's a very interesting one because to be quite honest when we started with that work in the National Department of Public Works which I joined, again it's one of those opportunities that just land on your lap and you think okay let's drop everything that we're doing because at the time I was actually trying to complete my PhD, I thought okay let's park that, let's take this opportunity of being part of the new civil service in South Africa when I joined the National Department of Public Works in 1995 and one of my responsibilities was the construction industry and the other one was the National Public Works Programme which was essentially one of the key programmes - job creation programmes – that was introduced by the new government under President Mandela. So when we started we were looking primarily at reaching out to those communities that had no access, it comes back to the same issue that we discussed earlier on, so at the centre of what we did, we did not necessarily on reflection place the issue of women infrastructure at the centre of what we were doing but I guess because of if you're talking about poverty and you're talking about access, you're talking about people who haven't had opportunities, it's</p>

	<p>almost invariably that women will actually come back and be at the centre of that. So when we started a programme which we call the “Emerging Contractor Development Programme” in the National Department of Public Works, certainly women were part of that programme, but at the time women were very few in the industry and I think there still are very few in the industry, the industry is still very much male dominated and so although we worked as part of that programme to make sure that the women that participated in the programme, certainly not at the core, but in terms of the National Public Works programme as I said earlier on, because we were looking...there was...one of the elements of the National Public Works Programme was the community based public works programme and that’s the one that was evaluated by ILO at the time and they deemed it one of the best in the developing world. It was primarily looking at community based infrastructure and again if you’re talking about community based infrastructure it is about access roads, it is about how do we connect those women that are working in the fields to markets, it is about those access roads, it was about the community halls, about the clinics and whilst in the process of creating that infrastructure and making those connections you also make sure that you are creating skills but you are building skills in the community to make sure that that infrastructure is maintained going forward, but also you’re creating jobs and providing job opportunities for communities, which if you think about it, it’s actually not rocket science because you are creating infrastructure anyway but if you just wear a slightly different hat and say I am going to purposefully and deliberately make sure that I also build skills and create jobs and a lot of people will say it’s inefficient by its very nature, but actually it’s not. It’s about how you design, into your designs you actually have that in mind and that’s what we did and the ILO proved through their evaluation an international benchmark that we were able to achieve that through that programme.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>It must feel incredibly rewarding to have had such a meaningful impact socially, apart from developing the infrastructure, but being able to enable people to have the skills; the know-how, whether it’s in the construction space or ultimately any other space, that you’ve provided that enablement for them to move ahead with their lives.</p>
DR. GWAGWA	Absolutely.
DR. MALKA	<p>Now turning more towards yourself, you’re currently CEO of Lereko Investments; a black owned investment company, Chairperson of Aurecon Africa; a global engineering consulting company, you also serve as non-executive director of FirstRand, Massmart, Sun International. Additionally you’re involved in philanthropic work in rural KZN through the Mkhakazi...?</p>
DR. GWAGWA	...Mkhakazi
DR. MALKA	<p>...through the Mkhakazi Trust which you founded, it empowers local youth, that’s extremely impressive in any form or standard, so I have to ask you how do you manage to continuously deliver on your A game?</p>
DR. GWAGWA	<p>I think it’s about...ultimately it’s about purpose. Why am I actually doing this? I find for myself if I am able to answer that question it’s a lot easier because then when I wake up in the morning I know that I have committed to do X,Y,Z and for...to what end, so as I said earlier on, for me ultimately it is about...it is about impact so the issue of impact and the issue of legacy, the issue of making a meaningful contribution is something that is core to my belief system. I was brought up by a man who believed very strongly that in vernacular, which is Xhosa, he used to say (.....) now of course I have to translate that and it</p>

	doesn't quite give it...it's almost like if you throw something at the beginning of the river you'll actually catch it at the bottom of the river, that's just the literal translation. So it is about if you...
DR. MALKA	...would you say it's about investment and...
DR. GWAGWA	...it's about...
DR. MALKA	...nurturing...
DR. GWAGWA	...absolutely...
DR. MALKA	...and reaping the rewards..
DR. GWAGWA	...ja...the rewards and if you go in there and the purpose is about I want to make that contribution, so it's very different from saying I'm going there to make the next R500 000 000. In saying that I'm not saying that there's anything wrong with having R500 000 000, of course it's great, if I had that I would not have been stuck in the traffic now with the accident, I would have simply taken my jet, so it makes life easier but what I am saying is that if you go in there with the purpose of making that....the rest of the other things will come but they're not like your starting point and they're not your end game but they will come, in a sense, and that's what I've found is that the work that I do and I continue to do...and also because of the work I do I've developed immense relationships, network base so I am able, for example, in the foundation or the trust that I founded, the Mhakazi Trust, which does work with the young people in Kromhoek and surrounding areas, because of the network base and also integrity which is also key to it, I am able to pick up a call to one of the companies that I'm involved in and say to my CEO at Massmart in Kromhoek they are going to be writing matric and they're holding a camp for a week and the children are going to be sleeping at school and is it possible to contribute or to donate some food? Now the CEO knows who I am, because of integrity he knows that I'm not trying to get groceries for my house or groceries for my cousin or my cousins wedding. If...I'm a woman of my word, if I say it is for that school, then he knows that it is for that school, so I think that doing things with a purpose and making sure that integrity is at the core of who you are just opens further opportunities for you and this is what I've found in my experience and in the work that I do. So I've got a whole range of people that I work with that I call for advice, I call for support and they make it possible for me to do some of the things that I do and also to be part of the things that they do, which is also great.
DR. MALKA	Everything that you've spoken about today seems to be about interconnections, whether that's on a personal level, whether it's on a physical level on being able to build that, which for me also says that those are the roots, that we need collaboration in order to progress and move ahead.
DR. GWAGWA	It's because I think that human beings by their very nature, we connect, that's what makes the difference between the human part of the being, is about that connection, so the happier people and people that make more impact and people who have legacy, be it...you take our President Mandela, those are the people who had strong connections, who had the ability to connect and people who built relationships but I come back to the point I raised earlier on. It's about connecting with a purpose and that purpose is about a better life for all and remember I've got two children and so at the centre of it is also the selfishness of saying I'm a mother of two and I do want them to have a better...to live in a better world than the world that I was in, so again it's about those connections, so relationships be it at family level, if you don't have a strong relationship at a very basic level, at family level, you're going to have a

	<p>harder life out there but if you've got stronger relationships inside your own family, be it your children, be it your spouse, your siblings, when things are tough out there you know somebody's going to rub your feet when you get home, somebody's going to offer you a cup of tea. If you don't have good relationships with somebody who just works in your house...I've got somebody who's been working in my house for the last 20 years; Rose. Rose is so loyal and it is about relationship that we've built with her, so wherever you go build relationships, I think for me that's the key thing. Build relationships, build those networks and don't burn bridges.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>In your career you've reached the pinnacle of success but one of the things that I've found is that there tends to be this vacuum of women as we grow up the corporate ladder. So at senior level according to the Business Women's Association in South Africa, they frequently do a census, the last one I saw was in 2015, of JSE companies and it indicated that women accounted for 29.3% of executive managers, 21.8% of directors, 9.2% of chairpersons but only 2.4% of CEO's and I always think considering that women represent more than 50% of the South African population, they are significantly underrepresented in leadership and managerial roles; how do you think we can improve the representation of women in leading roles like corporate boards and top management positions than the situation we have today?</p>
DR. GWAGWA	<p>I think part of it is being a lot clearer in our minds as to why it is the case because it is not because women do not want to make contributions at that level, or that women are not ambitious, or that women are not lifting their hands and saying I'm here, I'm ready to serve. Women by their very nature, we serve. We serve our families, we serve our communities and therefore to serve corporate, to serve at political level is something that we are capable of doing but I think at the centre of it is about those gender relationships at the very core level. So if as society, we're not looking at what is happening at a family level again, at a household level, at a personal relationship level because if there's a womanincidentally I was talking to a young woman that I mentored just yesterday afternoon, I was saying to her one of the biggest decisions that you make as a woman, if you're want to get married, who you're going to get married to, because that has got such a big impact on your career going forward because if you're married to somebody whose preoccupation is being your husband then you are in big trouble because then they are constantly reminding you that you are not Lulu Gwagwa, you are somebody's wife and that is problematic. In saying that I am not suggesting...I am married and I have been married for a very, long time and I am a career woman but because with that individual that you are with, you are constantly negotiating space, but I think what has happened in terms of gender relations is that men don't negotiate that space and that time in the home; they have it.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Well I think in the past I think it was very much of a dictate.</p>
DR. GWAGWA	<p>Preci....that's exactly the point, they have it, so they're not negotiating and so if somebody has it and they own it and it's theirs for life, so you've got...you're just picking up the crumbs and I think that's one of the fundamental issues and that, at a socio-cultural level, obviously business exists in your socio...it's a socio-cultural environment and therefore you don't expect that when you come to corporate those relationships between men and women are going to change. Men sitting there, they know women are not ambitious so they are not looking for the promotion, women are not ready, women are soft, women are weak, women don't know much, and, and, and, and...so that attitude and that unconscious</p>

	<p>bias against women is actually there, so part of it is I think, working both with girls and boys. I think there's a lot of work that is being done internationally included UN level, but a lot of the focus is on girls, which is good, but I think we're also losing an opportunity to work with boys. For boys to understand what it means to be in a relationship, what it means to work with women and that we are all capable and so if you are strengthening women and you're losing the awareness and building men at some point you are get into men that have this complex and you start to get into an anti-woman kind of attitude. So what am I saying? I'm saying it is important to work at a socio-cultural level in terms of those gender relationships; it is important to work on the unconscious bias, bring that awareness at the corporate level and also it is important to sponsor women because anybody who ends up being a CEO, there's nobody I mean honestly, who ends up being a CEO who wasn't sponsored by somebody. Sponsor is somebody who supported you and who made sure that your path goes in that direction of being a CEO. You don't wake up on your own and say I'm going to be a CEO and off I go; you are going to find somebody who is influential in the company and that person is going to decide you are the person and they are going to make it possible. They are going to mentor you, they are going to open opportunities for you, when that plumb project that is being done in Rwanda that's important for the business comes up they are going to put you in the project team. At the moment women don't have those sponsors within businesses, so I think we can't sit in business at senior level and say talk about these numbers and lament women being very few without us doing something about it. I think the training, development programmes and all of that are important but I think at the core of it I think is that sponsorship.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>It's interesting, we also had Professor Sonja Brown from Howick University and one of the things we were talking about mentorship and she said "actually I think sponsorship is more important"...</p>
DR. GWAGWA	<p>...it is...</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>...because mentoring will be grooming but sponsoring is putting the person in the spotlight where everybody can see her capabilities, what she can do and what she can bring to better the company.</p>
DR. GWAGWA	<p>Mentorship helps you at a technical level; here is a project, this is...I mean I'm a town planner, okay I'm designing something so okay, maybe it's better to do it at this angle because of these reasons, if you do this....that's mentorship, I mean they are mentoring in terms of the concrete things that I do but once I'm ready, I've now mastered the design, who is going to say actually she's mastered the design, she is ready to go to another level and I think that's where the sponsorship is somebody who's going to...when there's a presentation to the board, they're going to put you in the team that's going to do the presentation at the board. So when succession plans are presented to the board, board members say oh ja, Lulu, oh isn't she the one who was presenting two months ago, that's the one and the board is like we've seen her, she really knows her stuff, she's confident, she's all of that. But at the moment you sit at board, teams come to present, its men women you hardly see, succession plans come, there's Lulu's name, we've never heard about her, we're reluctant. Hiring at that level is a big risk...is one of the biggest decisions, in fact, is the biggest decision that you make as a board is who you appoint at that level so you want to go safe as well. So you've never seen her, you don't know her, you're kind of mmmmmm reluctant. John's name comes and say ja, we've seen John, let's go with John. We'll put additional training</p>

	<p>for Lulu and then we'll see next time and of course she still doesn't pitch for that presentation. So sponsorship is very, very....I'm not undermining mentoring, I'm not undermining coaching. I think having done all of those the next step, the critical step for executive level is sponsorship.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>...sponsorship. One of the things that I wanted to ask you; I know that you were profiled by Dr. Judy Dlamini for her doctorate thesis and her book "Equal But Different" and when I interviewed her we spoke about the intersection of social class, race, gender and the impact that it has on female leaders career progression; can you share some of your thoughts on this topic?</p>
<p>DR. GWAGWA</p>	<p>When I was talking to Judy, when she was interviewing me for her PhD, looking at that intersection, I think one of the things is that if you look at particularly women, I guess it probably would be the same with other people but in particular with women; when you trace women leaders you are able to actually see that interconnection and I think that if I talk about myself, I grew up in a rural area, my father was a teacher which immediately provided that opportunity and my father in a sense, when he was moving around, different schools, he moved with me and so provided that opportunity for me in terms of education. So education becomes really, really key in providing that platform. I'm not saying it is only education, there are a lot of educated...there are many educated women who haven't really had the opportunity to break that glass ceiling but I'm saying education becomes quite important as that point that gives you that possibility of moving in your career and in breaking that glass ceiling. So if you look at a lot of women, education would have been key quite early on and in a number of instances also there would have been some...or at least in my case...a very strong man who was a strong father who provided that guidance as well, so that also is very, very important and in my career there have been strong women who have also supported me. For example, when I got to LSE when I was studying for my masters, Professor Mosa who was a woman, a very, very strong woman there, saw something and I lacked confidence and self-esteem having...coming from South Africa at the time, being black and being a female but I think she saw something and really put pressure, but compassionate pressure to try and draw something, that something that was in there. So having somebody like that who really says you've got it, you've got it and that affirmation was very important and I think for me that was really one of the biggest turning points in my career is the affirmation that I got from Caroline Mosa. Because she was a woman also, strong, head of department in that instance and saying that I can do more and I actually in the end did more and ended up passing my masters at LSE Cum Laude and it was purely because somebody affirmed me and I think it is important to affirm women. I mean I am today where I am but I was saying to the young woman I was talking to yesterday again that that affirmation is still important to me even today, again it's got a lot to do with us as women and where we come from, where we constantly think maybe I'm a fraud, maybe I'm not supposed to be here, maybe I don't belong here, where the spaces that we are in are not quite ours and so you feel like you are an invited guest around a boardroom, but actually it's not yours. So either affirmation by other women or self-affirmation also, at building your own base of saying how do I affirm myself when I go to that boardroom to actually make sure that I make a contribution, I know as much as they do, I've prepared also, sometimes if not more...I've prepared more than them because I need that validation around the boardroom table.</p>

DR.MALKA	You've mentioned the young lady that you're mentoring and I'm sure she's not the only one...
DR. GWAGWA	...ja...
DR. MALKA	...you have a passion for developing people, whether it is through your trust or through your quarterly girls lunch with Dr. Lulu; can you share with us a few of the highlights on how these initiatives have managed to impact on people's lives?
DR. GWAGWA	I think the girl...I mean I work with a number of young women and it's a passion of mine and that has a lot to do, as I said earlier on, with people like Caroline Mosa who worked with me and who pushed me to be where I am, who kept saying to me it is possible, you can do this and I was able to do it in the end and also somebody who was current leave, he was a supervisor for my PhD, my PhD I did it over several years because I dropped it, parked it, took a job, parked it, had children and she kept coming back and saying but Lulu, brilliant work that you've done, you can't drop it now. So I know what it means to have somebody in your corner and so I've made it my business to be at the corner of a number of young women. So the girls lunch I started last year, it really started with me having lunch conversations with my daughter and her cousins, my sisters children, I come from a very big family so there are a number of them and then their friends, they invited their friends and then the friends invited friends and then...
DR. MALKA	...you'll have to get a bigger venue...
DR. GWAGWA	...yes so before we knew...we were now not at home or in a restaurant, we're a big venue, so now I have these lunches every quarter and it's between 30 to 35 young women and I decided to go for the group of 21 to about 35 because they're either...they are in that very transitional stage where....
DR.MALKA	...very foundational
DR. GWAGWA	...you're either finishing university; you're not sure whether to go for a post graduate degree or not or you're starting your new job and you don't even know what goes on in corporate and so I thought let me...because I know what it felt like for me as a young woman at that time. You're starting relationships as well...boyfriends, you're not sure whether it's for real or not, you're not sure whether to think about getting married or not, you're swearing you'll never get married and you're starting to have issues with your parents; you're not sure whether to leave home or to stay and so you're finding your space and you're desperate and it's all very confusing which is a very different thing from adolescence so I don't want to go there so I'm not dealing with that lot, it's the lot beyond...so it is about I say we talk about everything and nothing and it is about really providing a platform for them to raise all these issues that are confusing for them and to also network with other young women who are at the same level as them because sometimes you just need to know that somebody else is dealing with the same issues so it's not because you're stupid or you're behind or anything, then you start to feel oh okay, I'm on the right track more so if everybody's feeling this way. But what, after two lunches, I worked out that actually I'm not going to add much value if it's just me in each lunch so let me invite bigger girls like me, about 4 or 5 to actually anchor the conversation with me. So each lunch there's like 4 of us and again I draw from my network base, so I will draw 4 other women and we will sit with these young women over lunch really breaking bread. It's informal, anything is on the table and everything goes and it's been very important because out of that somebody says well I was looking

	<p>for this, what do you think, okay I'll connect you with so and so, then you put out an email to so and so; so and so meet so and so. These 4 other big girls as well do the same. Again coming back to the issue of networks, the last lunch I invited FNB, I sit on the board, I said please bring us somebody to come and talk about personal finance. When I started working nobody talked to me about personal finance, that credit cards are trouble, I thought well working first thing credit card, first thing let me go and buy hire purchase my new bedroom suite, I didn't know that this is a no-go zone, so we invited FNB, again didn't pay for anything because this is what FNB does, they are in this space so they came and they spoke to the young women. We're having lunch on 02 December and again we've invited somebody to talk about visioning so we'll be visioning for 2018, so each young woman will be working on a visioning...a personal visioning board for 2018. So because there are so many women out there, young women who need mentoring, coaching, sponsorship, I'd like to do that but there are only 24 hours in a day, so these girl's lunch is another platform where I'm able to talk to 35 young women at the same time and provide some support and provide a platform for them and I've had really, really remarkable feedback from the young women. I mean one young woman that we had two lunches ago who's got an illness and she came there depressed and I don't think I can do anything, there's no point in going on because I'm ill and the other young woman says well, who's not dying? I mean because at that age people just talk like that, they challenged her, because she says she's got a terminal illness and the other girl said what do you mean terminal illness? We are all terminal here. Who said when we walk out there we're not going to be knocked off by a car? So whilst I was still thinking about how I'm going to address it the other girls were on her, they didn't give her a chance. What was really moving for me is the last lunch which is the second lunch she came, she said when they start...no, checking in she said you know what, after the last lunch I'm done with the terminal illness because everybody's dying, I'll get on with my life, I'm going back to school, I'm taken..I'm looking at that promotion and I was like who's talking, how did we get here? But it was just...as I say I did nothing, I didn't say anything, it was just the platform of having other women and giving her that opportunity to talk to other people and mine was simply to provide a platform, so I...</p>
DR.MALKA	...so it's almost creating the right environment...
DR. GWAGWA	...right environment...
DR. MALKA	...being
DR. GWAGWA	...exactly for those conversations...
DR. MALKA	...and it just sparks...
DR. GWAGWA	...and for those connections and it all goes, so I, as you can hear I'm extremely passionate about this.
DR. MALKA	One of the questions that I ask all my guests on this show who have made incredible contributions to their respective careers and disciplines is about some of the factors that they consider to have been key areas to their success. Hard work is always a common one, perseverance or a particular person in their life; can you share with us what you think have been some of the key factors that have driven your success?
DR. GWAGWA	I think for me at the centre of it has been where I come from, both in terms of my family and the community that I come from. I think what that has done in the midst of all the opportunities that I have had, kept me grounded and so my father used to say as you can hear, I'm very close, I'm the first born of 5 girls and I always say to people I'm the son that he

	<p>never had and so I had a very close relationship with my father. He used to say when we were growing up wherever you are, if you do something and you think if I appeared you would run away, then you should know that you shouldn't be doing it, it's as simple as all that and that very simple thing has stayed with me like everywhere I go, whatever I do. I almost...my father died 35 years ago but I swear, if I'm doing something and I'm not sure, I actually think about my father, would I have run away if he appeared and if he knew this is what I was doing. So I think for me the issue of being grounded in who you are is very important. I think I need to have my feet on the ground and then have my hands and my head in the air, in the globe, but without those feet on the ground I'm on shaky ground so I can't really anchor myself on anything. So it's been an important thing, that thing of being really, really grounded, I think for me has been one of the key things in terms of my success which has made sure that the issue of ethics and integrity therefore, are very important to me and I think as you progress in your career there are many things that come in your way, in different shapes and forms and you really need to discern which one and whether you should or you shouldn't. If you are invited to sit on a board it's always flattering, you need now to sit and think why am I actually invited on this board, who is this company? If my children knew that this is what this company does, would they still respect me if I'm associated with this business? So it is those things which are important, as you said earlier on the issue of hard work, the issue of education has been core to me, the issue of relationships and all of those have been very, very important to me, but at the centre of it has been that groundedness and integrity has been almost the centre and the umbrella that actually has pulled all of those things together for me.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>I have this wonderful picture formed in my head of strong, heavy, big feet rooted into the ground anchoring, nurturing up to a value system that is robust, ethical, integrity but at the same time allowing this freedom to reach out and latch onto opportunities and allow them to grow.</p>
DR. GWAGWA	<p>Absolutely I think I mean I can't underestimate the people that have made it possible for me as well, I mean I think I've mentioned a number of those people that have made it possible, because in the end as I keep saying, it is...other people are there who make it possible for you, you know, be it your PA or somebody who's working in your house who makes it possible for me to wake up in the morning, put on my dress and off and come back at night, the house is clean and food is prepared. That support system is core for women, without that support system for women you are in trouble because in the end children will call a mother. My husband is a medical doctor, at some point he was working in Pretoria and I was working in Jo'burg and my son was at Pretoria Boys High School and he broke an arm and guess who he called?</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>...mom...</p>
DR. GWAGWA	<p>...he called mom but mom is in Jo'burg, he is in Pretoria and his father is a medical doctor...</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>...doctor...</p>
DR. GWAGWA	<p>...on top of it I'm not a medical doctor and it's got nothing to do with the father, it's about the mother that ultimately the children are going to call you regardless of their relationship...strong relationship with their father, regardless of how caring that father is. Where am I going with this? If you don't have that support system therefore you're in trouble because if they can't find their socks they're going to call mommy. Mommy where are my socks? I don't know I didn't pack your socks. So I think having</p>

	<p>that support system for women and giving ourselves permission to build that support base because sometimes we feel guilty about having a cook, a cleaner, an au pair, a driver, you kind of feel like it kind of means I'm not a mother, it means I'm not a father, it means I'm not a wife, it means I'm not a good daughter-in-law if I've got all of these things. Who said to be a mother means you've got to wash all the socks physically yourself, who said that? Mother means you...I got pregnant and I delivered a child, that's what mother is, it's not necessarily washing of socks, you know.</p>
DR. MALKA	...being a slave...
DR. GWAGWA	<p>...precisely. So I think that sometimes we think that we've got to do this ourselves and I think that we also need to really liberate ourselves by building a strong support system, having a PA, if you can afford it have two you know, have all of that which therefore frees you to participate and also to see the opportunities because if you are stuck in washing socks the opportunity is going to fly by, you're not seeing because your eyes are in the socks that you are washing and the opportunities flying by you didn't even see it and you're complaining that James got the opportunity, it's because his eyes were up and yours were in the socks, that's why, so sometimes we also not...don't necessarily do ourselves the favours.</p>
DR. MALKA	Very important to look at the bigger picture.
DR. GWAGWA	Absolutely.
DR.MALKA	And lastly, in closing the conversation today could you please share a few words of inspiration which you'd like to impart to young women that are listening to us today?
DR. GWAGWA	<p>I think, I think I come back to Judy Dlamini's book its about "Equal But Different" we are all equal, we are born equal, we all can. Women can, there isn't a single thing that a woman can't do, not like one thing. We were told we can't go into mines because it was heavy work but actually we lift children. I mean look at my body size and if you look at my children how big they are, I lifted those children, there's absolutely nothing that we can't do. I think that CAN attitude is important, you can do this, you just need to make sure that you're grounded and you are ethical and you surround yourself with people that will affirm and support you and you walk away from relationships that don't build you, that are constantly questioning you. Stay with people that really add value to you but adding value means that they can tell you off when you're going wrong and say but really...did you have to do this and did you think about this, people really that have your interests at heart, but also develop yourself. In the final instance this world out there needs somebody who's been to school. If you are going to be a CEO unfortunately you must go to school and you must continue to learn, you must have that edge and yearning for knowledge and for new ideas you must be open and open for ideas and constantly develop yourself. Corporate South Africa and the corporates internationally now, globally, there are programmes, they sponsor us to develop ourselves so raise your hand to develop yourselves, whatever it is. Sometimes it will mean for the next two months you aren't sleeping at night, that's fine, just constantly develop yourself. I have a PhD, I am currently studying for a masters in Philosophy and part of it is about I'm constantly seeking new knowledge so that I can contribute in any situation; I'm able to leave a mark. So I think as women, as young women...and also the globe is looking for women because we are the under-tapped resource and I think globally the world has woken up to say there's a resource here that is under-utilised, so be ready and be there and lift your hand also and say I'm the one. Let's be ready to....let's not wait</p>

	until we are 137% ready. Men 37% they're already lifting their hand, I'm ready. Let's just be ready and let's lift our hands when we're ready and let's constantly affirm ourselves.
DR. MALKA	Thank you so much for sharing insights into your life, telling us about what has worked for you, looking at people to not box themselves into their own misconceptions of what it is to be a woman, to be a successful woman and to start realising their ambitions, continuously developing and transforming to reach for those stars.
DR. GWAGWA	Thank you.
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