

Nez Redi
Finance and Banking with Real Estate Emphasis
University of Missouri

I hope this letter finds you in great spirits!

I want to start this off by saying THANK YOU so much for letting me experience this life-altering trip to Cape Town, South Africa. I feel that this trip provided me with the wake-up call I needed in pursuit of what fuels my flames, entrepreneurship and giving back. My favorite quote is “He who has a why can bear any how” — Friedrich Nietzsche. This trip has helped me better align myself with my “why” and has inspired me to be relentless in chasing my dreams.



Cape Town is breathtaking, a mix of mountains, an ocean, and a city all in one. Even with this spectacular view, I would have to say my favorite part of this trip was building relationships with some extraordinary people. I can truly say these people touched my life. Having the opportunity to hear so many different perspectives, backgrounds, and stories left me wanting more. Not only did they teach me about the tumultuous history of South Africa, but they also let me in on how it has shaped their individual lives. They created an atmosphere that welcomed any conversation.

Due to this atmosphere, we often got into deep discussions about politics, social and socio-economic issues, racism, discrimination facing South Africa and the United States. We had so many tireless conversations that a few of them gifted me a book by their favorite political activist, "I Write What I Like" by Steve Biko.

These deep discussions tore down all our barriers and helped us understand one another on different levels. Through our conversations, I heard countless stories of blacks being antagonized at every corner. The government during the Apartheid was keen on separating the people as much as possible. One way they did this was by splitting the country into three sections: the whites who got all the privileges, Blacks viewed as the lowest level scums, and Coloreds characterized by their mixed/lighter colored skin as well as Indians/Asians that were slightly more privileged than blacks. This divisive ideology tore the country apart, and the remains still impact the lives of millions.

We took a tour of a township called Langa. This township is described as one of the harsher regions. A couple of weeks prior, tourists were robbed at gunpoint during a visit to another township called Fellepe. Due to heightened criminal activity in these areas the guide told us to leave practically everything behind but reassured us that he is from the township and knows everyone. This tour painted a sad and cruel picture of what the Apartheid did to these people. There was Trash at every turn, two to three families living in confined rooms no bigger than a small storage container, and alcohol abuse at every corner. It was truly a WAKE-UP call. The guide told us in those days, Whites paid the black laborers mostly with alcohol leaving millions addicted and children growing up in broken family units. The traditional African household was no more in these areas. This cycle repeats itself because the children learn from their parents and get caught up in the same brutal cycle.

This experience is something I never saw coming. I feel like the trip was handcrafted for me, and yet I was not the original student chosen for this trip. I believe God works in mysterious ways, and this, in my mind, is one of his mysterious. Thank you so much for making this trip a reality for me. My goal has always been to travel back to Africa to build schools across the continent. To help give a voice to those who are marginalized and overlooked because that could have easily been my story. I believed in this dream so much so that I started a clothing brand to help fund my dream about two years ago. Now here I am pursuing entrepreneurship in hopes of being someone who can change the world. Taking this trip has shown me the faces of a few children of the millions I should be dedicating my life to changing. I must be the voice for those who cannot speak for themselves. We must be the change we wish to see in this world. Thank you again for this amazing opportunity!