

JOSEPH MATHEATAU

SOUTH AFRICA'S FIRST BLIND BARISTA



BIOGRAPHY

“I'm Joseph Matheatau. I am a barista without sight. I'm proud to be blind. I lost my sight, but I never lost my dreams and goals in life. I came across lots of challenges, but I never gave up and never will. I may not see the rays of the sun nor the rain drops, but I can feel it on my skin.”

Joseph Matheatau (43) was about 3 years old when he noticed that he was different from the other children. He couldn't see with his right eye and the sight in his left eye was very poor. He learned from a very young age to use his sense of hearing to identify people by their voices.

During winter months, Joseph stayed home as he was unable to navigate his way to school. His hometown, Balaclava in Thaba 'Nchu, did not have the facilities to accommodate visually impaired persons, but still Joseph went back to school every year. At school the teachers could not understand why Joseph loved playing but struggled with schoolwork - they thought he was lazy and naughty. Joseph was determined to make something of his life, and he knew the only way to do so was to get a good education.

Joseph was diagnosed with glaucoma – a condition that causes damage to your eye's optic nerve and gets worse over time. If damage to the optic nerve from high eye pressure continues, glaucoma often causes permanent loss of vision. Without treatment, it can cause total permanent blindness, which is what happened to Joseph. By the time he saw a specialist the condition was too far gone. “When I heard I'd never get my sight back, I tried to stay calm, but there was a big hole in my heart.”

From a young age Joseph watched his grandfather's careful ritual of brewing tea on the fire, as there was no electricity. Joseph said he could never understand why his mother always asked him, as a blind person, to make tea for her when he visited. Till one day when she said to him: **“You might not be able to see, but you can still make it in life and making the best cup of tea is a good start.”**

“It was very difficult when I went completely blind. I had to adapt. I had to learn to shave without looking at myself in the mirror and dress myself without seeing the clothes. Learning how to cook, clean and iron without seeing what I was doing and to walk was difficult at first, but I had to train my mind to master all these things.”

Joseph landed in Worcester in 2014 to further his studies at Innovation for the Blind's Career Development Department (now known as The Hein Wagner Academy). He completed his marketing management course including entrepreneurship, business and sales management.





The very same year Innovation for the Blind was looking for a student to be trained as a barista and they saw a determined blind young man with a million-dollar smile that can light up the world of the blind. Together with Truth Coffee Roasters they started the journey of training the first blind barista in South Africa.

Apart from being a barista, Joseph is also a motivational speaker and continues to inspire both young and old. "I'm really humbled to show the world what I'm capable of doing and for that young boy and girl out there never to give up on your dreams despite the challenges you might come across. I share my life experiences how I managed to pull through despite the adversities I was faced with."

Joseph will inspire you with his life story. Let Joseph show you how his biggest obstacle turned into a life changing opportunity.

RECENT MOTIVATIONAL TALKS & COFFEE DEMONSTRATIONS

- SPAR Franchise Conference
- Lilizela Tourism Awards
- African Summit South African Tourism
- I Love Coffee Shop
- Reddam House Constantia
- Vodacom Special Needs Advertisement
- Red! The Gallery and Café
- Robertson Wine Valley AGM

MEDIA & INTERVIEWS

- Metropolitan 'We See You' Campaign
- Country Life Magazine
- Food & Home Entertaining
- Good Taste Magazine
- DSTV Commercial
- Daily Voice
- Voertaal
- SA & Beyond Magazine
- Beautiful News
- Koffieboon (kykNet)
- Destiny Man
- EuroNews

"It was a nightmare learning to froth the milk! But today, after successfully preparing a cup of coffee, I get the smell of success."
- Joseph Matheatau



Mobile: (+27)78 695 0240
Email: josephmbarista@gmail.com

Facebook: @blindbarista
Website: www.blindbarista.co.za

joseph