



*In this article leading executive coach Rene Carayol shares his thoughts on Ramaphosa's Modern and Contemporary Leadership.*

## **Our Youngers and Betters (Part 4)**

Maybe, 'born free' of the past is precisely what we are looking for and maybe, just what we need, and what many bravely gave their lives for.

But here's the rub, the inherent deference we have for our elders stands in the way of upsetting them, challenging them and removing them. It's a serious issue in the west, but multiply that when it comes to Africa.

### **Deference to Elders**

This interlocking of deference to elders and the blind loyalty to tribalism is hugely controversial but it's high time that it is consigned to the past.

### **Nelson Mandela's Purpose**

As ever, Nelson Mandela caught this new mood by perhaps recognising that he had a clear purpose, goal and maybe timeline, "I will not leave South Africa, nor will I surrender. Only through hardship, sacrifice and militant action can freedom be won. The struggle is my life. I will continue fighting for freedom until the end of my days".

### **Great leaders always know when best to stand down.**

Both Ramaphosa and Dlamini-Zuma are veterans of the struggle against apartheid, at 65 and 68 years of age respectively, they still wear those badges of courage proudly. But these might not be the contemporary credentials necessary to see a completely different and inclusive future that lives beyond today's political divides.

## **Trevor Noah's Perspective**

Another of the influential 'young ones' is Trevor Noah, who has rapidly become one of the best known South Africans (and Africans) on the planet, by becoming host of the massive US TV hit, 'the Daily Show' in September 2015.

He sums things up from this new provocative perspective – "I was born in South Africa during apartheid, a system of laws that made it illegal for people to mix in South Africa. And this was obviously awkward because I grew up in a mixed family. My mother's a black woman, South African Xhosa woman ... and my father's Swiss, from Switzerland ... My mom used to get arrested for being with my dad. She would get fined. She would spend weekends in jail".

In 1996, South Africa's announced its new constitution. It is universally recognised as the most progressive and admired in the world. Such a modern and contemporary mandate deserves modern and contemporary leadership.

## **Modern and Contemporary Leadership**

Ramaphosa must establish a cohort of young, fresh and inspiring leaders and this will require him to:

- Ignore their lack of political experience as this is precisely what is necessary
- Focus on their ability to persuade and influence
- Look for EQ as much as IQ
- Find a balance of free thinkers and doers
- Look beyond gender, race, tribes and all implicit bias
- The capable are qualified despite academic achievements or not
- Look in unorthodox places for this new talent
- Embrace dissenting voices
- Hold out for team players
- Be guided by their strengths not their shortcomings

## **A Generation of Young and Unencumbered Leaders**

Ramaphosa's real and sustainable legacy may well come from not just identifying and promoting this new generation of young and unencumbered leaders, but handing over sooner rather than later.

It's been very rare in Africa for power to be handed over in peaceful means by the ballot box but that all appears to be changing for the better in recent years.

## **The Way Forward**

The military coup (despite how Mugabe left high office in Zimbabwe) has hopefully become a thing of the past, but Africa is still lagging behind the rest of the world in the emergence of younger and fresh leaders with a much more inclusive and less partisan vision of the way forward.

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