

see myself as a companion. I facilitate, ask questions. I've been very lucky and I'd like to share that with others."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Ngubeni's emphasis on wellness coincides with the global trend towards self-realisation. "This is the Age of Aquarius – it's a time for alignment," she says. "The financial crisis has shown us that the premises

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With that in mind, Ngubeni insists on sustainability in all her projects – which are many indeed: an "international quarterly journal focused on issues of humanity" which she and her partners, The Africore Group, are publishing and which is due for international distribution this year; a CD compilation linked to her radio show which aims to facilitate daily devotion and connection to the divine; her daily meditations and inspiration, also due out shortly; her long-term desire to work for the United Nations; her role as Goodwill Ambassador for Lifeline Southern Africa... Oh, and the "mentorship in a bottle" book Thamzin Media's bringing to SA soon – African American entertainment veteran Thembisa Mshaka's *Put Your Dreams First: Handle Your Entertainment Business* – to which Ngubeni contributed.

Closer to home, she also started the Thami Ngubeni Foundation towards the end of last year, which aims to improve the quality of people's lives "in a very practical way". Starting in Katlehong on Johannesburg's East Rand – "that's where I'm from – it's where my great-grandmother, uMam'Vundla lived, and my grandfather

and my mother. That's where my umbilical cord is buried" – the foundation is gearing up to address the rat problem in the area. "There are people in hospital having their feet nibbled by rats and little kids in shacks having their faces disfigured while they're sleeping. It's a huge problem," says Ngubeni.

Other social issues on her radar include

"the abhorrent violence against women by men" and the abuse by young mothers of the welfare system.

Also kicking off in 2010 is Ngubeni's *Life With Thami* column in DESTINY and her facilitation of discussions on www.destinyconnect.com and www.lifewiththami.com. "It's about us sharing insights and experiences," she says. "I guess the key message is that

you're never alone."

However, while in the eyes of the world Ngubeni paints with broad brush strokes, the woman herself considers herself to be an "extroverted introvert". Although she appreciates the attention of fans – both on the air and in supermarket queues – her private life is strictly off limits.

She's also a firm believer in the value of observation. "There's no way you can listen when you're always talking, so it's

good to just take a back seat and watch," she says. Yet that might be a difficult task for someone who's been on the go since her days as a presenter for Tele-School following high school. "I used to write all my own scripts, as well as scripts for the other presenters. I was also reading news on Metro FM. I've always worked," she says.

How does this dynamo ever find the time to switch off? "I don't necessarily see my work as work," she laughs. "Even before I was writing books for publishing, I was writing. So these are really my hobbies: finding out about people, reading, deciphering life, thinking and experiencing."

When she does wind down, you're likely to find her meditating, playing tennis, doing Bikram yoga, jogging, playing netball, spending time with her family or "just sitting and doing nothing".

And somehow it's not difficult to picture her stretched out on an inviting chaise-longue, reading Elizabeth Gilbert's inspirational *Eat, Pray, Love* and just, well, being Thami. **D**

ONLINE BONUS:

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View our exclusive behind-the-scenes interview with Thami Ngubeni on DESTINY TV.

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NGUBENI'S BUSINESS LESSONS

Know your boundaries. "It's important to know that there's a certain price you won't pay. You need to know your own breaking point."

Pay your dues. "Nowadays, people want it all – and they want it yesterday. But they're actually robbing themselves of the amazing jewels that lie along the path. Character's built when one is overcoming obstacles, when one's broke and struggling to pay one's staff. Those challenges help shape one's vision."

Pick your projects. "There are just 24 hours in a day – so manage yourself within that time frame. That's one lesson I've yet to master myself!"

Keep a paper trail. "Agreements and terms of engagement must always be put down in black and white."

Build in some slack. "In your projections, always have room for movement because things don't always happen when you think they will, or cost what you envisaged."

Manage your risk. "Make sure your risks are calculated and consider your responsibilities."

Take it like a woman. "At some point you'll get ripped off: someone will steal your idea, pull the rug out from under your feet or stab you in the back. That's life. Learn the lesson – and move on."