

THE COMPANY WE KEEP



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Executive Chairman & Head of Board
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Member

WHERE WERE YOU BORN, AND WHERE DO YOU LIVE NOW?

I was born in Soweto, Johannesburg, and I live in Morningside, Sandton.

WHAT DID YOU STUDY AND WHY?

Despite being born in South Africa I did all my schooling in the neighbouring Kingdom of Lesotho (at a convent boarding school) and went on to do a BSc degree in environmental science at the university in Maseru. It was my parent's way of successfully circumventing the apartheid education system that was predicated on sub-standard education for black children.

FIRST JOB?

Testing soil samples in a geomorphological lab.

FIRST CAR?

A cream Nissan Langly

MY CURRENT CAR...

Mercedes E230

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST SURPRISE ABOUT YOUR JOB?

How much I love it; and how much I enjoy meeting new people despite being somewhat introverted

BIGGEST RISK YOU EVER TOOK?

Joining SPI. I was apprehensive at first, but it has been the best ride of my career. When I left the corporate world after 28 years, I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew what I didn't want, which was to go back into corporate. I turned down eight corporate opportunities before taking a bet on SPI.

WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER ON A BAD DAY?

An interview with a talented person or an inspiring leader.

I HAVE LEARNED TO COME TO TERMS WITH...

getting older. I have fallen absolutely in love with turning 60 this year – my best age ever! Less emotional baggage, decluttering, wiser, and a renewed appreciation of life. It's liberating and wonderful.

WHAT'S THE THING THAT PEOPLE ARE MOST SURPRISED TO LEARN ABOUT YOU?

I'm an introvert who needs a lot of time alone to recharge - and I summited Mount Kilimanjaro with my mother– it's a surprise because I am not particularly sporty.



IN THE LAST MONTH, WHAT IS THE MOST INTERESTING CONVERSATION YOU HAVE HAD?

With my brother after he read our mother's autobiography, written just for her family. We were both struck by aspects of her that we never really knew – seeing her as a 'person' rather than our mother. I expect to have similar conversations with my sister and all 11 of my mother's grandchildren.

LAST (OR MOST LOVED) HOLIDAY?

My last holiday was at a resort on the Indian Ocean Island of Mauritius in December. Very hot, very humid. My ideal holiday though would be along a quiet river where I can connect with nature and rest, take walks, read, and rest some more – and eat wholesome, homemade simple food. I live in hope.

BEST BOOK YOU'VE READ IN THE PAST YEAR?

Walter Isaacson's best-selling biography of Elon Musk. A riveting glimpse into an extraordinary but frankly scary mind.

YOUR BINGE-WATCH SERIES?

Young Sheldon – the insightful series featuring a brilliant child protégée navigating a world that is as puzzling to him, as he is to others. It tackles the topic of neurodivergence with empathy and humour and makes you realise that normal is really all relative.

BEST GADGET YOU OWN?

My laptop, although my smartphone is a close second. I am learning to detach from working long hours, though – my goal for 2024.

HOW DO YOU RELAX AND UNWIND?

Reading and spending time with my five-and-a-half-year-old grandson, Neo, who rolls his eyes at adults who don't understand 'the basics'. Afternoon naps are a luxury I wish I could enjoy more often

CHARITY/ CAUSE CLOSEST TO YOUR HEART?

Anything that helps children to get ahead in an increasingly hostile world. It's a cliché but our future really does depend on them.

I HAVE A COLLECTION OF...

...fancy frames for prescription lenses. After COVID, I stopped buying shoes and started buying spectacles. Other than that, I try to be a minimalist. Decluttering is the operative word for me this year!

IN MY FRIDGE YOU WILL ALWAYS FIND...

oat milk, coconut yoghurt, butter, full cream milk, eggs, meat, vegetables, and home pickled chillies