

## Transcript of the individual interview with Bongani

### ***Question 1: What feelings do you have about yourself as a sexual person?***

**Bongani:** It's two fold. In a sense that, I, obviously being a human being you've got your human nature, attributes of biology and all of that and growing up obviously you're going to grow into an older person who grows and has to deal with those sort of issues, right? Um, but at the same time, I still sort of derive that sexuality, especially the identity part of it, from almost my environment, my society, you're almost socialised into the way that you're going to become and the way that you see yourself. So, as much as I knew that obviously I'm a sexual person, however there are a few, what can I call them, curve balls that just make it slightly challenging to think of how sexual you are and how do you fit with your sexuality, especially into the society that you come from. So, yeah, but obviously I'm very much aware of the sexuality part of my identity.

### ***Question 2: How does your disability impact on your masculinity within your culture?***

**Bongani:** Being a Zulu person there's the cultural aspect of myself, and then my being, if you like, that if you'd like to put it like that. Um, so (sighs), maybe just my own family because I don't have any sisters (laughs). I've got four brothers, right, so you get that quite a bit, that at some point you're going to have to get a girlfriend, you're going to have to get married, because that's what men do, right? And being the youngest member of the family, it also means that I have a responsibility of staying home and making sure that actually the person that I take, or the person that I get, is actually going to be the person who's going to be working the closest with my mother, right? Because in the traditional sense (laughs), I'm not supposed to leave home (laughs). But, at the same time I always have to think about, about how does she feel about that, because she might have very differing views with my mother, for instance, but there's still that cultural aspect that almost puts an expectation on her and upon myself of being, of staying at home and anything that could happen has to happen in that setting. So, I don't have, perhaps, the freedom of

just going away and just doing my own thing the way I would like to do it. So, it has those limitations, if you will, so I don't think I've gotten to a point where I can say I know exactly how I'm going to deal with it, especially how my mother's going to deal with it. But, most specifically, how my girlfriend is going to deal with it, you know? So I think those are terms I still need to, almost, need to negotiate and I hope they make more sense as I grow up.

***Question 3: What has your experience of dating and relationships been like?***

***Bongani:*** Having had to go to boarding school from a very, very young age, which is a special school as well, we are amongst each other, if you will. So, we didn't have a lot of time to go out into the world, be able to integrate to general society, if you will. So, as much as we had sexual feelings, if you will, because obviously there were females within the school, however the biggest challenge for us was how is the bigger general world going to receive us, are we going to be able to intergrate, are we going to be outcasts of some sorts and are we going to have to fight our way of belonging and finding some sort of space within that society? And it does become a challenge because as much as we might have a girlfriend within school, but you both have a disability, right? But outside you might find that that is not the, how can I say, the common factor and outside this is just someone who might be attracted, you know, to you perhaps as just a human being. However, in your mind you still got that whole issue of disability, so you sometimes end up not being sure of, is this relationship genuine? Is it out of pity? Is it out of some sort of duty, you know? So, those are the, the terms or the challenges one has to almost deal with psychologically. And maybe perhaps when I settle down, like you know, in an official sort of way I can almost say "Okay now maybe I dealt with it in a practical, good way", if you like.

***Question 4: How do you represent yourself on social media and dating sites?***

***Bongani:*** I haven't done a lot of it, perhaps due to, I don't know internal insecurities (laughs), if you will, I or just being a bit of a phobic of the cyber space and not really grasping what actually goes on there. From that point, and just in terms of perhaps

my conservative self, if you will, that is just slightly unsure, you know, what am I really trying to accomplish besides the fact that there might be a person you know, who might be in that space who does not have the insecurities that I have about it? So they might find, that, you know, it's practical, it makes sense, and it works, right? As for the social media part, I have a profile, just one to be honest, on Facebook, and there, as much as my disability is not in your face (laughs), in a sense that my chair is everywhere or my crutches or anything like that, however, the interaction that I have with the people around me, for instance if I take a photo obviously it's going to be clear that I'm sitting on, you know, I'm immobile, a chair and my friends are aware of that and... But it doesn't make those relationships, how can I say, unique in a bad way, they are unique in a very, very positive way in a sense that they receive me well, they understand the nature that I am as a person, as opposed to just a person with a disability, as much as that forms part of my identity but it doesn't have to be a regular feature in our daily exchanges, if you will. It's just a friendship just like any other, we disagree about things, sometimes I might get more friend requests than them (laughs), I might be speaking to more women (laughs), sometimes than they do! Anything can happen, 'cause, yeah, but, if I had to, like I'm trying to think of right now, like my profile picture is like half of my body so anybody that sees it, you're like okay maybe he has a nice face or whatever, so I can interact with them and then perhaps later I can introduce the issue of disability, and then I can hear what they have to say about it but from my recent experiences it hasn't really been much of an issue. I think maybe it's over shadowed by the good personality (laughs).

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