

Talking equality with Angel Campey

 By Leigh Andrews

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Girls are supposed to be polite, submissive and supportive, so why did Angel Campey ignore the rules and become a stand-up comedian? She explained exactly why at the equality-themed talk at the latest Creative Mornings Cape Town.



Session attendees on the Nasdak. Image © [Creative Mornings' CT Facebook page](#).

The latest #CreativeMorningsCT talk took place on the uppermost floor of the Media24/Naspers building, known as the 'Nasdak' (the "Naspers' *dak*", geddit), on Friday, 28 July. Once everyone had checked in and commented on the amazing view, stand-up comedian, TV writer and radio presenter Angel Campey spoke on the topic of equality. Yes, we got jokes, but we also got extremely helpful insights that had the audience nodding and staying to ask questions long after the official talk had ended.



#CreativeMorningsCT: "Block out all the outside noise, the naysayers, the dream-killers"

Juanita Pienaar 5 Jul 2017



There were so many female attendees at this talk that it may seem we've actually gone full circle on that aspect or equality, but it's definitely still an issue.

“ [@YesReallyAngel](#) talks about her name and growing up with it in [#SouthAfrica #ctcm pic.twitter.com/uAZYhNxOCb](#)— Nice Beard Studios (@nicebeardstudio) [July 28, 2017](#) ”

For example, Campey kicked off by explaining that Angel is really her name (Hence her Twitter handle, @YesReallyAngel) and joked that you can't be a doctor, lawyer or anything substantial with a name like that – it was either stand-up comedian or stripper.

“ A communist joke isn't funny unless everyone gets it. ”

Campey acknowledged the irony of a white South African tackling the topic of equality as we tend to shut it down and state that we're colour-blind, which is actually reductive and takes away from people's stories.

This ties into the reason Campey does comedy. Back in 2011, her roommate Siv Ngesi pointed out that she should take her funny insights from Twitter and her blog to the stage, and the rest is history – in addition to her local fan base, Campey has presented a TedX talk and headlines many of New York's top comedy clubs last year.

She likened this to Steven King's "theory of horror", in that the imagination makes the task much more terrifying than it is in reality. That's why performing stand-up comedy is generally not a bucket list item for most, but she pointed out that the audience usually wants you to succeed and doesn't walk around with a stash of rotten tomatoes to fling on stage. It's about stepping into your power and your truth, something we can all learn from.



Angel Campey.

The brain deals with trauma by breaking it down into humour, which is actually as completely subjective as music, and what we laugh at creates groups and a sense of community. Taking that further to her writing for ZANews, Campey explained it's satire that comforts the afflicted and attacks the comfortable.



ZANews' *Game of Thrones* parody is bang on the money

Stuart Thomas 17 Apr 2015



So comedy can hurt when misdirected but when done right, it serves as a tool for societal change and breaking taboos when aimed at aligning people in exciting new ways.

Becoming the Alpha (fe)male

Campey feels everyone needs to embrace their inner comedian. Women in particular feel it's a tired conversation for any female pioneer in the industry, as we've never been on the other side of the gender divide and can only speak of the female experience. In fact, Campey pointed out that humour is a sign of intellect.

“ @YesReallyAngel explains everything at @CapeTown_CM @creativemorning pic.twitter.com/djFVjqbilu— Tegan Phillips (@Unclippd) July 28, 2017 ”

It's something Campey has been interested in throughout her career. According to a Harvard study, those who [make jokes with their colleagues](#) and create a sense of camaraderie progress up the career ladder faster, but not to the extent of being the company clown.

Campey's not part of corporate SA though. While the comedy scene is largely male in South Africa and indeed Cape Town, Campey says it's gender neutral at heart and pulls together people from all aspects of the country. When everyone laughs together, we get each other, so comedians are 'accidental anthropologists' who watch the change in their own audience when they walk out after the show. We are able to laugh at ourselves, whether we're in Ga-Rankuwa or Bishopscourt. The crowd will quickly show them what they can and can't joke about and where the collective subconscious really is. "The equaliser of comedy and laughter is truly beautiful," says Campey, and makes her extremely hopeful for the future.

Campey is on Twitter as [@YesReallyAngel](#) and you can follow [@CapeTown_CM](#) for their latest updates. Themed talks are held monthly and free to attend.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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