

Growing up I always wanted to be a mentor but I thought in order to be a mentor I have to be mentored first. Coincidentally when I was reading the newspaper I saw an article about 18twenty8 and I decided to apply. After a few months, I was told that my application was successful.

I remember attending an 18twenty8 brunch for the first time and that day changed my life forever. I was emotional as I related my story and how much I wanted to go back to university to study and there was a lady who took special interest in me and offered to send me to university. That lady, Dr Tshepo Motsepe-Ramaphosa, fondly known as Aunty Tshepo was the answer to my prayers.

Before applying to 18twenty8 I was going through so much, the challenges were overwhelming and I usually refer to this time of my life as the pruning season which is not the nicest of seasons but the fruits are endless blessings. This is the season that made me the strong young lady that I am, fearless, bold, humble and definitely blessed. This season was just a preparation for the endless blessings that God had for me.

In the year 2012 I went to back to university and it was the most wonderful feeling ever and the past three years have been filled with many emotions, the best moments, the worst and the most amazing. My first year was a bit challenging as I was away from home and I had to adjust but my results at the end of the year were way better than I had expected.

I always tell my peers that Varsity is the most important time of one's life because this is the time that you get to understand who you are and what you want out of your life. During this time I spent quality time with myself and I got to understand myself better which made me a better person than I was. I met friends who became my brothers and sisters. The highlight was when I was selected to be a part of **Golden Key** which recognises the Top 15% academic achievers within the whole school, my hard work really paid off.

Applying at 18twenty8 all I wanted was a Big Sister but I received more than just a Big Sister. I received an opportunity to be educated - I received a gift that can never be taken away from me. The support that both 18twenty8 and Aunty Tshepo gave me was amazing and even during difficult times they kept me going.

I believe that being a part of this organisation was the fruit that came out of the pruning season. I like the organisations slogan that says "empowering young women through education" because I am one of the young women that has been empowered through education and more.

I am fierce because the seminars we had also touched on personal development which I personally believe is the most important aspect of one's life especially in this ever changing world. I remember at another brunch event there was a speaker Femi Adebajji, who spoke about the influential woman who will be a blessing to many and I remember thinking this man is talking about me. Now that I have discovered my purpose I know that I am a change agent and a blessing to many.

Thanks to 18twenty8 and Dr Tshepo Motsepe-Ramaphosa for believing in me.