

Parking Mad

By Stuart White
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Have you ever noticed that the staff at Primi Piatti all have the words 'Work Is Love Made Visible' emblazoned on their uniforms? This being Valentine's weekend I thought the notion was worth consideration, though I'm not suggesting you take it too literally. Buying your beloved a new vacuum cleaner or socket and screwdriver set and urging them to spend the day playing with their new toys is probably not the romantic gesture they were expecting and is liable to bring your relationship to an abrupt and bitter end.

What I mean is the concept that carrying out your daily tasks to the best of your ability should be regarded as an expression of love, of pride, even of passion, whatever it is we're doing. Take parking, for example. I have this fixation with getting it right. It's not totally over the top but I do really feel uncomfortable if my car isn't parked neatly within the lines painted on the concrete. I get even more anxious when I see others who appear to have abandoned their vehicles in a sloppy, slapdash manner – usually at a 45 degree angle to the bay.

If I had the brute strength I would pick up the vehicle and sit the car neatly within the markers. It can be a nightmare for me when parking at Riverwalk (the assembly place for rogue parkers) for this very reason. When one person comes along and parks at an angle out of alignment and then everyone else follows suit my stress levels are off the scale! I, on the other hand, obstinately park straight, even next to an angled parker, making it difficult for me to get out of my door and them to open theirs. I'm making a point. My aim is to facilitate the exposure of the poor parkers as sub-standard drivers and second-class citizens, hoping that others will see my perfect placement amidst the row of higgledy-piggledy parkers and clearly make the unfavourable contrast, as if the failure to park properly embodies the most heinous crime imaginable, and whose perpetrators should feel consumed with immeasurable guilt and shame.

It's a point of honour with me . When I park badly I am compelled to correct the mistake because somewhere in my psyche I believe that the way I park reflects the way I am. There could be many reasons – fear of what people might think of my parking, the need to conform i.e. park within the designated lines, a need to form perfect patterns and a whole bunch of other possible neuroses So much so that I was worried that there might be a sign of a slight obsessive-compulsive disorder in there somewhere and I'd better come clean. But when I owned up about my fixation recently to work colleagues we concluded that the underlying motive behind my parking fetish was pride in performance, a need to publicly demonstrate my small-space manoeuvring skills and prove conclusively that I'm better at it than the rest.

We all have these little idiosyncrasies - tiny individual traits that define us - the way we do something differently from other people. The way we park may only be one small manifestation of our make-up but it's a significant one because it tells us that pride in our input is missing. It's a factor that's missing a lot in Botswana. Pride is the satisfaction you feel from your achievements, spurred on by a refusal to fall below your standards. It's about respect for your personal performance. You only need to observe the behaviour of many motorists in the country to see how an "I don't care" attitude manifests itself. They take no pride in what they do and how they do it, nor do they care who sees their sloppiness.

Combi drivers are prime examples. Driving is their profession, their means of making a living yet they are demonstrably slapdash in the way they perform and they get away with it. They are above the law, able to use the left hand sidewalk and kerb as their own personal highway, ignoring road signs and other drivers. Where is the pride in that? And where is the pride from the traffic police who turn a blind eye to their flagrant flaunting of the traffic laws that the rest of us have to follow? Pride comes into play when you serve customers satisfactorily, hand in a well-produced report for work on or before time, complete an arduous homework assignment, and steadfastly adhere to social norms and values.

All round it feels like there are too many people getting away with sloppy performance whether it's parking pathetically, skipping red robots or just not doing their job properly, regardless of the consequences. If we want to make a difference, Botswana needs to find ways of developing and fostering a culture of passion and pride. Then we will start to have more success as a nation. Silly as it may sound if we don't care about our attitude and behaviours in the little things (parking, road signs, service levels etc) we won't care about the bigger things (the economy, the future, global warming). Pride is about enlightenment. When people love and believe in what they do and deeply care about how every detail is addressed, great results can be achieved. If our passion and pride is properly directed by our purpose, then it's the making of a great country. But, it has to be passion, purpose and pride at all levels.

Passion fuels the courage it takes to be a great business leader and stand up against conventional wisdom. When you're passionate about creating the results you want to achieve, it gives you the courage to be different and imbues you with the power to overcome your fears and use those emotions to your advantage. Pride in what you do and who you are makes you stand-up tall, unafraid, totally confident and unstoppable. No matter what your business is, nor what your life is like, if you live it with pride and confidence, you're already a winner. Purpose is what gets you out of bed each morning, what fuels your Passion and Pride. Knowing why you do what you do brings into the open your life's purpose and your driving force.

I think that's what the Primi slogan means. It's only when you admit to loving something that you can become passionate about it and begin to take pride in carrying out to the best of your abilities. Suddenly I feel a lot less obsessive-compulsive about my parking fetish, just proud and passionate about my driving skills and leading by example. Take that thought to work with you tomorrow but take my advice and be a bit more materialistic with your love made visible today. [Tweet this article...](#)

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