



**POSITIVELY ALIVE**

## Speakers Profile – Dorian Basson

***Based in: Western Cape – Cape Town***

Background:

In 2005, as a 2nd year BCom (General) student at the University of the Western Cape, Dorian Basson had been awarded the Golden Key International Honour Society Award earlier that year. The award was in recognition of outstanding academic excellence. While walking home from university one afternoon in October 2005, he was dragged into the bushes close to his home and sexually assaulted by an unknown suspect, with a knife held to his throat. He suffered a mental breakdown that same evening and was hospitalised at Lentegeur Psychiatric Hospital for 2 months.



After being discharged following intense mental treatment and rehabilitation he discovered he was academically expelled from university as he was unable to write his final 2nd-year exams and failed the special exams the following year. Not able to focus and still haunted mentally by the trauma of the sexual assault, an attempt at completing his degree through UNISA, became a frustrating and fruitless exercise. On 05 December 2008, while sitting at the office at Fairheads Benefit Services, where he worked as a bookkeeper, a sudden urge prompted Dorian to go for a random and unplanned HIV test with the nursing sister at work. As the world had just commemorated World Aids Day, it was done in solidarity with WAD and all it presented. Dorian declined counseling boldly, stating he knew his status.

For 2 years after being diagnosed HIV positive Dorian took ARV medication in silence. The pressure of secrecy, coupled with a deep sense of shame, brought about his 2nd mental breakdown in April 2010. After 3 weeks of hospitalization at Groot Schuur Hospital, with the assistance of the medical team, he eventually disclosed his status to his family.

He founded the NPO, Red Ribbon Foundation in December 2014 following the overwhelming success of the HIV/AIDS awareness Ball he hosted with the assistance of the Fairheads Social Group, on 06 December 2014 at the River Club Ballroom. Faghmeda Miller, the 1st Muslim woman in South Africa to publicly disclose her HIV-positive status and 25-year long-term survivor, was the guest speaker at this event and her story was the reason the event was created. Dorian had heard Faghmeda tell her story during the Annual Rector's Christmas Concert at UWC in December 2013 and was deeply moved and inspired. He decided that very night, this inaugural HIV/AIDS Ball became known as the Red Ribbon Ball, a social calendar highlight and major fundraiser for the organisation and for the greater Cape Town Community that he would create a platform for an HIV positive individual to tell their story and be celebrated for their bravery and strength.

Dorian counsels and journeys with persons living with HIV, facilitates HIV/AIDS Education and Wellness Workshops and speaks at numerous events to break down the stigma which still surrounds this manageable chronic condition. A dynamic individual who can articulate through personal experience on matters affecting the broader South African society. Dorian advocates for LGBTIQA rights, highlights the importance of mental health, and promotes HIV/AIDS awareness through his social media and at keynote addresses.

Website/Magazine/Newspaper/TV Series Features include amongst others:

- Zenzele ART Adherence Documentary – May 2018
- Balance & Bounce HIV & Mental Health Interview with host Cindy Pivacic – Cape Town TV – Dec 2019
- Health4Men Website Feature
- Engage Mens Health Website Feature & Documentary
- Atlantic Seaboard Views Magazine Interview – Dec 2019
- People's Post Community Newspaper
- Plainsman Community Newspaper
- Tygerburger Community Newspaper
- Wat Is Waarheid? – Kyknet Episode 8 Nov 2021

To book, ***Dorian Basson as your motivational speaker contact:***

**Alan Brand**



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**POSITIVELY ALIVE <sup>CC</sup>**  
**Employee Wellness Consultant and Specialist Trainer**  
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