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Being the architect of your own destiny

Sheri Brynard

Lettie Fouché School, SA

With this presentation, an Afrikaans speaking woman of 33 will inform the meeting in English or Afrikaans, how she grew up as a girl with Down syndrome in South Africa. She will explain, how her determination to make the best of her situation helped her to cope with her disability and how she, with the help of her parents, handled the preconceived ideas of the people of her time. She will illustrate, how a sense of humour and positive outlook on life helped her to achieve against all odds. She made the words and the philosophy of Nelson Mandela "you are the master of your destiny and you are the captain of your soul", her own life philosophy. She truly believes that one must never focus on what you don't have, but be proud of who you are. She strongly believes one must work hard to make the best of who you are. Sheri Brynard gives meaning to her life by trying to change people's perceptions about people with Down syndrome in South Africa and abroad. She also tries to help the so called normal people, who listen to her to focus on the positive things in their own lives. The central idea is that anyone has the potential to become a leader in the field where that person can make a difference, if you use every opportunity to the best of your ability. A legacy is cultivated by making the best of your situation, whatever it may be rising above your constraints by striving for excellence and working hard to realise your true potential. A leader inspires others to do the same and does not give up hope, ever. This is what Sheri Brynard did.

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