



Amelia Beattie: CEO of Liberty Two Degrees

Asset unwraps...

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Amelia Beattie:

Chief Executive of Liberty Two Degrees

You were born in Reitz in the Free State and educated in the relatively remote town of Graaff-Reinet in the Eastern Cape. Now you live in the busy metropolis which is Johannesburg. Are you one for the city lights or the platteland skies?

Change comes easily for me – I generally don't limit myself to a particular environment because change can happen at any point. It's fairly easy for me to uproot and plant myself elsewhere and be happy with it.

I have lived, worked and studied on farms, in towns and cities across the country –

after school, I went to the University of Stellenbosch, my first job in property was in Nelspruit, I've lived in Cape Town for 12 years, and I currently reside in Johannesburg where I've lived for the past 12 years.

Tell us about your journey from Graaff-Reinet to Sandton.

I did a BCom at Stellenbosch – and I loved it. In 1999, I started working in Nelspruit as a Financial Controller at Riverside Mall. This was a hands-on opportunity to learn all about the disciplines of retail management which I believe firmly cemented and prepared me for the growth that was to come in my career.



Graaff-Reinet in the Eastern Cape



I am so grateful for the many beautiful people and experiences in my life.

I have encountered many challenges of course (that is how we learn), but they were all balanced by amazing growth and opportunities.

Sandton City Mall and Tower Exteriors

- The act of maintaining an equilibrium in life is no easy task when the life around you goes on at a fast pace. One of my personal challenges was entering menopause in the best years of my career, which took its toll on my overall wellbeing. This is why I'm now seeking to educate more people in the corporate space to instil understanding of menopause and the effects it has on women in the workplace. Menopause is a deeply human issue rather than just a women's issue.

And the most memorable highlights?

I am so grateful for the many beautiful people and experiences in my life. I've worked very hard, had to travel a lot and missed many of my girl's milestones and precious moments – looking back, knowing what I know today, I can see that was not really necessary as I still would have kept and excelled in my roles – it is that knowledge I am now able to pass on to others. Seeing my 3 daughters thrive in life and transform to being the best versions of themselves is a blessing.

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In 2000, I moved to Old Mutual Property's Head Office in Cape Town, initially in a Financial Management role. I then became a Regional Manager and finally was appointed as Chief Operating Officer, a position I held until the end of 2011. I developed a passion for everything property, and was privileged to also work in India, and other parts of the African continent as well as Mauritius.

In 2012, our family relocated to Johannesburg where I joined STANLIB Asset Management to set up the direct property franchise in SA as well as the rest of Africa. In 2016, as CEO of Liberty Two Degrees, I led its listing on the JSE. As you will know, in 2023, after seven years of operating in the listed property space, L2D's minorities were bought out by the Liberty Group.

What were some of the challenges you encountered along the way?

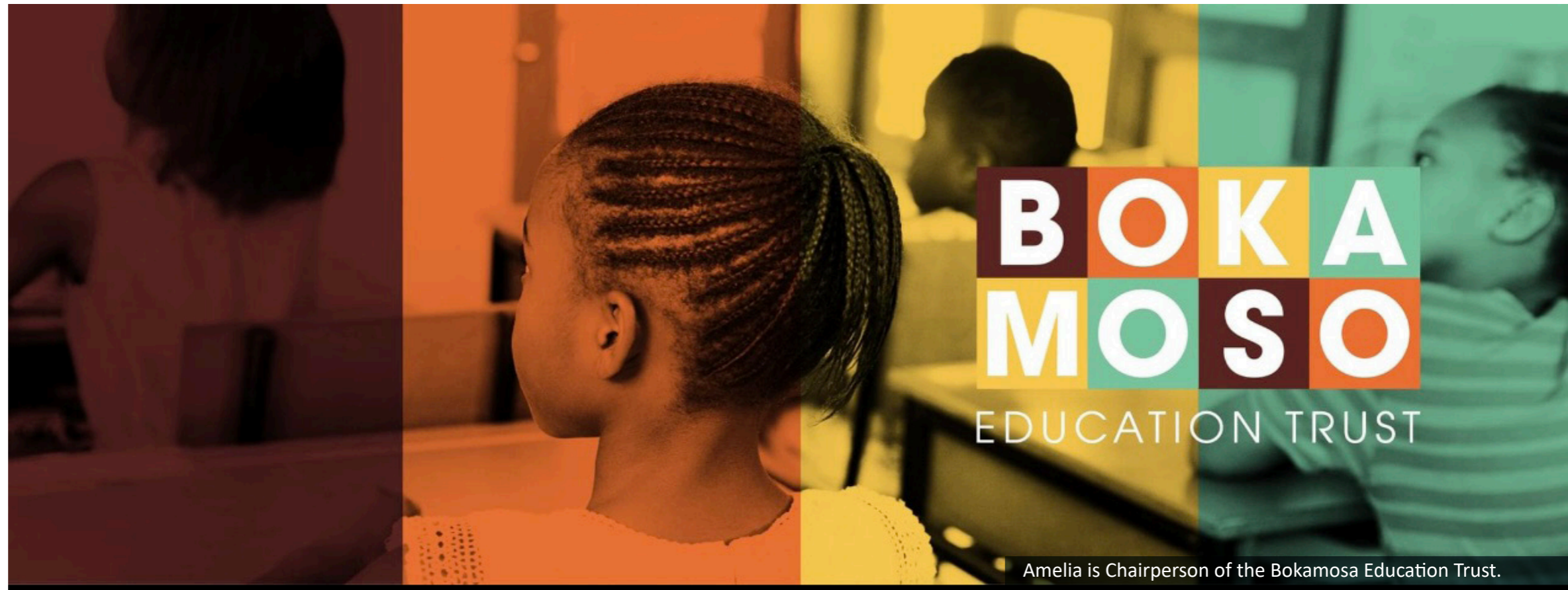
I have encountered many challenges of course (that is how we learn), but they were all balanced by amazing growth and opportunities.

- The act of balancing being a mother and having a career is a challenging journey, but I have raised strong, independent women who play their rightful part in society.
- Leading through Covid was one of the toughest seasons for the industry, with many affected during this time. But, this was probably the best learning experience in leadership ever and touched the hearts of people at their most vulnerable moments.



Nelson Mandela Square in Sandton, Johannesburg

The Bokamoso Education Trust's primary vision is to provide the necessary financial support for each child's education.



Amelia is Chairperson of the Bokamoso Education Trust.

The listing of L2D was a great highlight for me. Being able to run a business with the calibre of assets in our portfolio such as the iconic Sandton City is a memorable highlight. L2D was also acknowledged in the Sunday Times Top Companies list, an event that acknowledges listed companies that have earned the highest returns for their shareholders over the last five years.

I am also so grateful for the people I work with, whom I have been entrusted to lead. They inspire me, they challenge me and they grow me, and I love them.



Ian Watt

Did you encounter any outstanding mentors or role models on your journey and if so, what did they contribute to you as a person and as a business leader?

I have been blessed with so many mentors in my career and life, and will name but a few.

- Most of the things I know about retail today, I learned from **Ian Watt** and **Brent Wiltshire** and today I can still call them friends.
- **David Munro** taught me to be bold in my thinking and how I could use that with my kind-heartedness. David remains a mentor and good friend.
- I had the privilege to have **Serake Mongwe** as my reverse-mentor and how he helped me in growing my knowledge of how to lead many generations has been invaluable.
- **Indra Nooyi**, the former CEO of Pepsico, is a role model I continue to be inspired by – a formidable businesswoman with such grace.

- My dearest friend, the late **Ilze Alberts**, who taught me many, many life lessons but mostly how to always look for the balance in everything.

L2D manages property assets of over R25 billion as part of the Standard Bank Group following the buyout of the minorities by Liberty in 2023. How do you cope with the weight of responsibility attached to your role as CEO?

My role is a great privilege, I love what I do and that is how I cope. I pick the best people to surround me. I also work hard to see the balance in everything – for every challenge, there is equal and opposite opportunity, just be open to see it.

Here are the leadership guiding principles that I live by:

- Gratitude is the most important ingredient of business success;

- Care for people in a way that they are able to grow – it pays back in exponential ways.
- Don't waste time and energy on those that criticise your journey – hear it, use it adjust it if you have to and move on.
- Surround yourself with people better, smarter and more efficient than you and let them do what they are great at.
- Spend more time thinking about what you want, don't just jump into it – and communicate your thoughts clearly and early on.
- Connect with those on the same journey as you.
- Find the one person that believes in you and makes you believe in yourself.
- Manage your stakeholders, without fail and with great care – it is the most valuable skill to have.

unwrapped

In a world that often glorifies power, success and fame, it is easy to overlook the profound wisdom that resides within each and every one of us.

- Do small things to create wonder for those who look for your inspiration.
- A Lindt chocolate ball just about solves any problem.
- And last but never the least – Never, ever, ever give up!

You are the newly appointed chairman of the Bokamoso Education Trust. What are the aims of the Trust and how successful has it been in achieving them?

The Bokamoso Education Trust's primary vision is to provide the necessary financial support for each child's education (Grade 000 to 12) and facilitates the opportunity for donors to take an active and personal role in the child's development through mentorship. It is very close to my heart and a very special programme to be involved in.

The transformation from a single act of goodwill to providing educational support to more than eighty children serves as our inspiration to continue making a positive impact on the lives of even more children, ensuring they receive a quality education for a brighter future.

You've recently curated and created a book called *Lead with Heart*,

which you describe as a celebration of extraordinary wisdom. What motivated you to write it?

In a world that often glorifies power, success and fame, it is easy to overlook the profound wisdom that resides within each and every one of us. We are surrounded by extraordinary leaders, not just in boardrooms and political offices, but in our communities, our families and within ourselves. *Lead with Heart* is a testament to this truth – a celebration of the remarkable wisdom that exists in ordinary people.

The inspiration for this book came from observing the incredible depths of wisdom exhibited by these individuals. It is a wisdom born out of love, compassion, and a genuine desire to make a positive difference in the world. These leaders have taught me that true leadership is not about titles or accolades, but about the courage to follow one's heart, to stand up for what is right, and to inspire others to do the same.

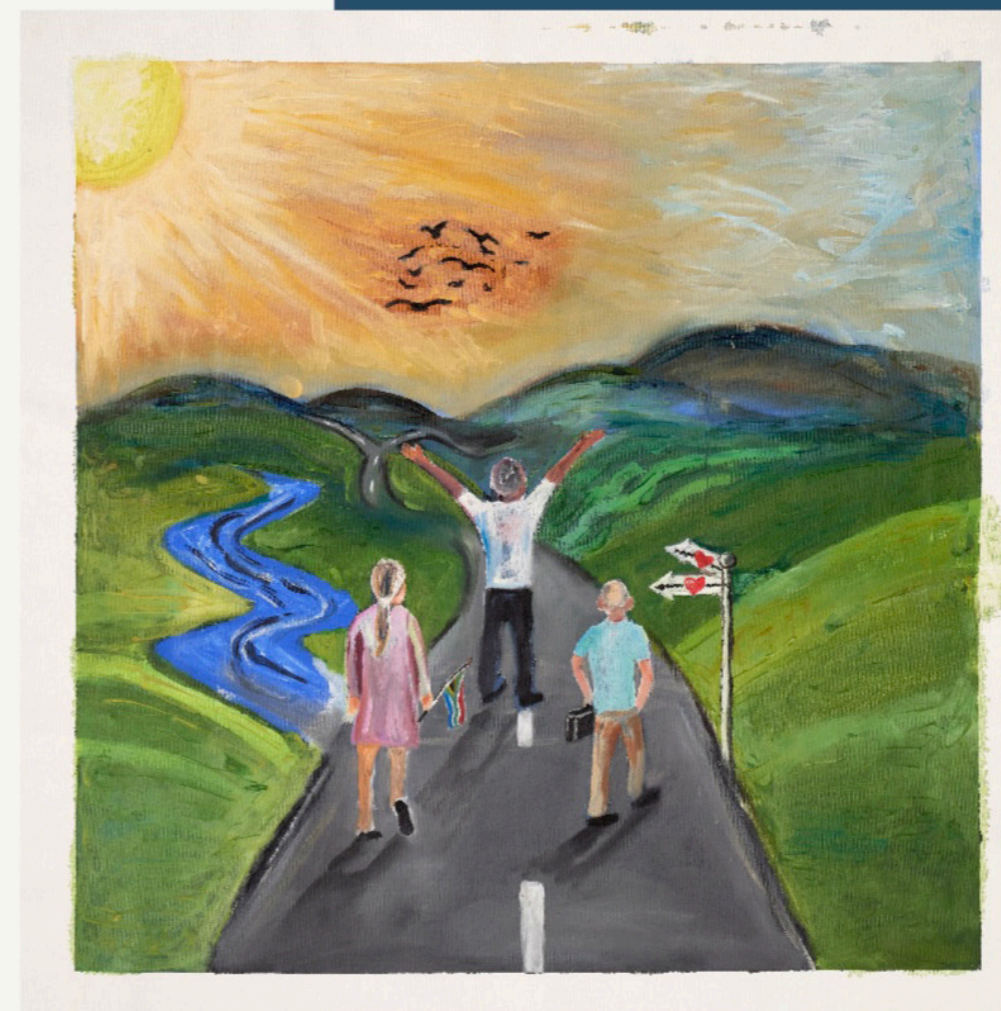
If you had to extract one extraordinary item of wisdom to share with Asset readers, what would it be?

Kindness is your superpower; sprinkle it generously. 🙌

Click to view book

Lead with Heart

A celebration of extraordinary wisdom



Amelia Beattie
2024

Amelia Beattie's recently released book