

DEMARTINI'S DREAM HOW TO GET OFF THE STREETS



Human behaviour specialist, leadership and performance expert, author, business consultant and founder of Demartini Institute, John Demartini, a frequent visitor to South Africa, speaks to HOPETALK's Nia Magoulanti-McGregor about living on the streets – and getting off them.

Q What was it like to be on the streets?

As with all phases of life there are pains and pleasures. There were amazing experiences and challenges. Sometimes I was cold. Sometimes I was hungry. Sometimes I was scared. Sometimes there were conflicts. Sometimes I was sick. Sometimes my friends became enemies. Sometimes people tried to take advantage of me. Sometimes there were pressures to do things you didn't want to do. But, sometimes I met amazing people. Some of them were very generous and some had amazing stories. Sometimes I had spontaneous freedom to go where I wanted. Sometimes I got to stay with very interesting families and people. Sometimes I begged. Sometimes I met amazing mother figures. Sometimes I'd get beaten.

Q What turned things around?

One evening I met an amazing man named Paul C Bragg who lectured me for one hour and inspired me to believe, for the first time in my life, that I might be able to overcome

my learning problems and learn to read and some day become intelligent. That night I had an amazing visionary experience and I saw myself being intelligent, teaching and travelling the world, and with his mentorship, the trajectory of my life changed. This led me to the life I have today after an enormous amount of learning challenges and effort along the way.

Q What advice would you give to people on the streets?

Everyone has some service they can provide to the world. Discover what your most meaningful service is, and find somebody to whom you can be of service. At one point I barked like a dog and did dog tricks to earn money. At one point I helped clean garages. At another point I dish-washed in a restaurant. I cleaned toilets. I almost always found something I could do if I was really strapped. If not, I begged. Find something you can do that is meaningful, that serves, and concentrate on finding something that genuinely strives for responsible, accountable, productive, dignity producing

actions that make a difference. Keep a list of what you can be grateful for, because when you are grateful for what you have, you get more to be grateful for. Document your accomplishments each day. It raises your self-worth. Attempt to prioritise your actions each day and stick to the most important things.

Q Is there a motivational word of wisdom you can give to those sleeping on the streets tonight?

Say to yourself every day that no matter what I have done or not done, I am worthy of love. Make a list of the things you have contributed and accomplished and give yourself permission to do something extraordinary that makes a difference. It doesn't matter where you start or what you have been through, or are going through. What matters is that you have a dream and you are willing to do what it takes to fulfil it and care enough about humanity to find a way of serving.

SALVATION ARMY CALLING FOR COMPASSION

While there are people living on the streets in most major cities of the world, few of us feel comfortable with homeless people. Instead, we are rather good, from the safety of our vehicles, at staring straight through a homeless person as if he or she does not exist. Homelessness is a vexed issue in many societies.

We at The Salvation Army are part of the Christian Church. Through His life and ministry Jesus taught us to show compassion towards everyone, regardless of their background and status. We believe Jesus calls his Church to treat every person – including the homeless – with dignity and respect.

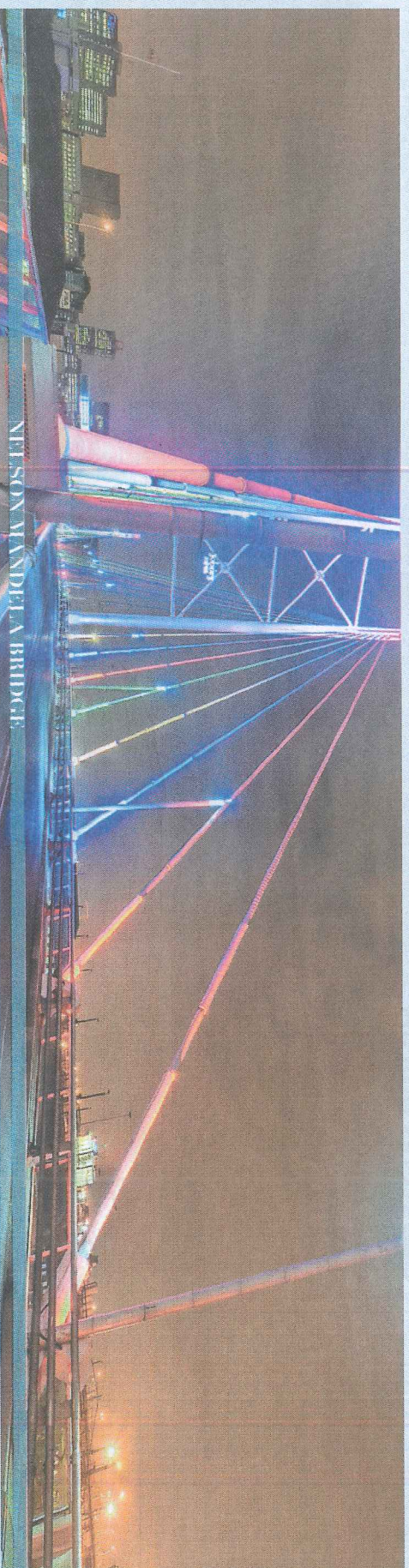
The reasons for homelessness are many and varied. In many cases, homelessness is an aspect of society that is beyond our ability as individuals, and even as organisations, to solve. However, it is within the capacity of everyone to show acts of kindness and mercy towards homeless people. Perhaps this involves getting involved in

an outreach that assists the homeless. Many churches offer soup kitchens for those living on the street, especially during winter. The Johannesburg outreach of The Salvation Army, for example, serves 10 000 cups of soup during winter to homeless people. It may encompass donating blankets or clothing to the homeless. Again, The Salvation Army distributes 8 000 blankets every winter to those in need. Public Relations Secretary, Major Carin Holmes, says if you would like to help The Salvation Army reach out to the homeless, one of the ways of doing so is to text the word "Homeless" to 42290, our SMS hotline. SMSes cost R30, most of which is received by our organisation.

"While such contributions do not in the long term solve the challenge of homelessness, they do indicate to people living in such dire circumstances that there are people who are willing to share whatever they have to assist," she says.



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ON THE 28TH OF JULY – the coldest night of the year – the Adams & Adams Chairman and COO will take part in the CEO SleepOut™ challenge. Leaders from every industry will sleep on the Nelson Mandela Bridge in an effort to raise funds and awareness around the plight of the homeless, and

those who do not have ready access to education in South Africa. Gérard du Plessis (Chairman) and Dave Forbes (COO) have risen to the challenge and are leading our firm's charge in raising money for the beneficiaries of the CEO SleepOut™. **CARE YOU JOIN US? Find more at www.adamsadams.com**