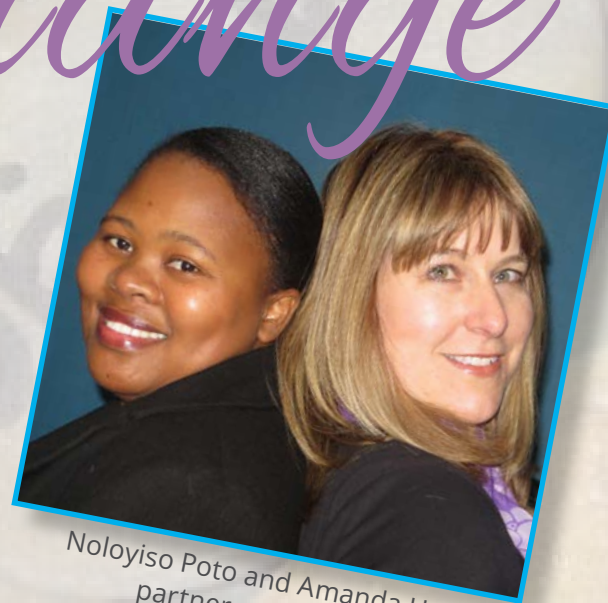


BEING A DRIVER of change

Transformation, culture, racism, growth, change... these words have become so discomforting in the workplace. They're uncomfortable words but they have a huge impact on small departments and can cripple big business.

Amanda Holt tells us why she started *Dialogue* and her role in leading positive change.



Noloyiso Poto and Amanda Holt: partners at Dialogue

As a woman, I'm aware of my role as a keeper and creator of culture, I facilitate future-healthy workplaces, fully conscious that this filters into all aspects of our lives. I believe women change culture and this passion is my business.

As an ex-teacher and lecturer, I'm inspired by learning and development, creativity and an urge to curate, teach and share. My business partner

Noloyiso Poto and I began dialogue communications training 16 years ago out of a passion for development and the idea that clear communication is fundamental to effectiveness. *Dialogue*, back in 2000, offered only business writing, presentation skills and interpersonal skills in organisations yet in the companies in which we worked, the ripple effect of the focus on

these core skills astounded us.

We soon discovered that 'soft skill' training was not soft or secondary at all. Over and over again we saw how these are essential skills – as necessary and influential as technical or hard skills. At the time, this was not as commonly understood as it is now, and we grew both personally and as a business as we developed our understanding of the

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effectiveness and value of what we do.

We became involved in communication at all levels and thrived on seeing the growth and change that takes place when one looks at things with new eyes and is prepared to risk and try new ways. Coming up against repeated obstacles and resistances to change, we found common patterns and began experimenting with what we called 'another way' of working with managers and their teams, or leaders and their organisations.

There's a necessary focus today on helping organisations to anticipate change – to be change ready. This requires an organisational mindset that embraces fear and failure by

working with and learning from change.

With disruption becoming a constant, one of the key skills now needed is the ability to be comfortable with discomfort, empowering people to ride the changing times with resilience and integrity. Rather than panicking, getting defensive or jumping to quick solutions to ease the pain of the chaos, we work with leaders to recognise the creativity and richness of this edge. We give them tools to use the unrest and conflict for something new and creative to emerge.

With 220 combined years of experience between all of us at *Dialogue*, we're all genuinely passionate about each other, our clients and our company!

I get enormous satisfaction and validation from the work we do. We have an expanding list of successful movers and shakers who, even years later, attribute their key paradigm shifts to their work with *Dialogue*.

My personal journey interweaves with *Dialogue's* and our clients. It sounds like such a cliché, but if you want to be a driver of change, you need to continuously change yourself. This simple truth is hard to do in practice. We all need to push the pause button, make time for introspection and experimenting, come to terms with fears, leave our old ways of doing and thinking and be open to new ideas.

As a woman entrepreneur I want to be creative, responsible and involved in leading positive change. I usually go to sleep at night with a head full of ideas and plans plus a glowing sense of satisfaction. I feel really privileged to be so involved in work that feels meaningful to me.

<http://www.dialogueworkshops.co.za/>



Workshops are creative spaces where everyone is challenged