Clever boy

“My parents didn’t have an opportunity to study. My father ended up being a spray painter. My mother did all kind of jobs to support the family. They were hard working people.” It was the time of Apartheid; races were strictly segregated. The Johnson family lived in the Cape Flats area. “There were lots of gangs, lots of crime.” Also, young Wayne was a gang member. “We were called the ‘Clever Boys’. But the things we did were not so clever. The leaders of our gang, two twin boys, were violently killed when they were fourteen years old. I was twelve, thirteen by then. Somehow, in my mind, I made a decision: this is not how I want to end up. I slowly withdrew.”

Seizing opportunities

As one of only a few children from his neighbourhood, young Wayne went to high school. He dreamt of travelling the world. His friends laughed at him, for the neighbourhood boys were destined to become shelf-stackers. Wayne had different ideas. “I was involved in student politics. We refused to write our final examination, because we wanted the government to change things.” Unsuccessfully: those who refused had to re-take the final year. Funnily enough, this turned out to be to Wayne’s advantage. That year he scored such high marks that he could go to university. For coloured people like him, there was one option: become a teacher. That did not matter to Wayne. He saw an opportunity to further develop, and he grabbed it, even though at that time he had no idea where it would lead to.

Dream becomes reality

He saved enough from his study grant to realise his dream after his studies. “I travelled to Israel, the UK, Europe, and Canada. That was a life changing experience. I wanted to become a diplomat. To give the world a better view of South Africa.”

Back to Cape Town

Things turned out differently. He got a teaching job at his old primary school and was promoted to headmaster. Apartheid had been abolished in the meantime and there were coloured, black but no white people in the school. The neighbourhood was still poor. As the headmaster he started up activities that were beneficial to the whole community: collection of food and blankets, development of a computer centre. One day he read an advertisement about the Nelson Mandela Scholarship, enabling ten students, each year, to go a do a Master’s abroad. This was his chance. He applied and was selected! Another dream came true. He was invited to the home of Nelson Mandela. It was a confirmation of his creed: “Anything is possible.”

Tell the world

After his studies he was offered a job with the Japanese educational organisation GEOS. “I had to recruit young people from all over the world to come to South Africa. My dream to tell the world about South Africa came true. In my own way I became a diplomat.”

Wayne is in Leeuwarden on a promotional tour for Stenden university Qatar. Wayne Johnson likes to take time to talk about how he grew up from being a (not so) clever boy in a rough neighbourhood of Cape Town to General Manager at Stenden and share how a solid educational background can make a difference. Not only for yourself, but also for those near you. With Wayne Johnson as a living example.
Time for a change
In 2006 the time had come to do something else. “My mother died the year before. My son was three years old. I wanted a change. I had travelled so much. Becoming General Manager at CHN (Stenden, ed.) in Port Alfred offered me the opportunity to be more with my family.” No less important was the fact that he could do something for the local population via the Stenden community projects. Wayne Johnson’s deals seamlessly matched those of Stenden. In three years he made the institute profitable outside the box

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Code of ethics
Two years later he took over the management of Stenden Qatar; for the site the year 2009 turned out to be an important year of important changes. “We have students from 44 nationalities, mostly Arab countries. I felt they weren’t proud that they were students there. There were limited activities, no strong student body. We implemented that. Collectively we made a code of ethics: this is how we do things here.” His approach works and now Wayne Johnson is facing a new challenge: recruit Western students for Qatar. It is a golden opportunity to become acquainted with the culture and religion of the region. An experience that can change your vision on the world forever.

Dream about the future
Via a roundabout way studying took Wayne Johnson to places he used to only dream about. It is a stark contrast with the many opportunities of the Western student of today. One thing, however, has remained the same: “I like to tell young people to dream about the future. Everyone must have a goal. Take your chance to get formal education to make your life even better. It doesn’t matter what background you have. Education can make the difference.”

Name: Wayne Johnson
Date of birth: June 13th, 1967
Place of birth: Cape Town
Education: elementary school, high school. Major history and psychology (University of the Western Cape, South Africa), Master International Affairs (University of East Anglia, Norwich, England)
Career: teacher (later headmaster) at elementary school. Cape Town, General Manager and Marketing Manager at GEOS, Cape Town; General Manager at Stenden South Africa, Port Alfred; President at Stenden university, Qatar.

Don’t talk about RESEARCH JUST DO IT!

Marinus Spreen, lector in Social Work and Arts Therapies

Thinking outside the box

How do you engineer cross-fertilization between students, lecturers and care institutions? How do you promote the further professionalization of the Social Work (SPH) and Creative Therapies (CT) programmes? On 3 June 2009, Marinus Spreen was inaugurated as lector Social Work and Arts Therapies. That move has put an ace in Stenden university’s hand.

Marinus Spreen is the head of research at Forensic Psychiatric Center Dr. S. van Mesdag in Groningen. The new Stenden university lector likes to make things clear: “We want to train students to become good professionals who are capable of thinking outside the box.” His mission is to further develop Stenden’s vision of care provision and to give it a clear place in education and research in the university of applied sciences. “We want to equip our students with the best research skills possible to avoid tunnel vision. They need to be able to evaluate their treatment strategies to the scientific foundation of the professional programmes, SpH and CT: This, in a nutshell is the purpose of the lectorate. Spreen:

“As head of research at Van Mesdag Clinic, Spreen developed an N=1 research method dedicated to social work. “Did a given treatment ultimately show any results? And if so, what were the results? Care institutions can scientifically test the results using the N=1 research method. This is done by using questionnaires for the patient’s family, friends and acquaintances. It is however an expensive approach. For that reason, it is important for the lectorate to create an alliance between the care institutions, programmes and students,” says Spreen. Completely in line with his credo, “Don’t talk about research, just do it”, Spreen argues that SPH and CT students should do at least one N=1 study during their study programmes. The lectorate therefore builds and maintains partnerships with many regional, national and international care institutions.

Don’t talk about research, just do it!

The lectorate strives to develop a research programme that will make it possible to test the results of the systematic approach in numbers.” The foundation for this approach is the so-called N=1 research method.

As a systematic approach to work is a central aspect of Stenden’s vision of care provision. This is how we distinguish ourselves from other universities of applied sciences. Our basic assumption is that the ‘system’, consisting of family and relatives around the patient, is as important as the patient himself or herself.

Expand the research skills of lecturers and students and contribute to the scientific foundation of the professional programmes, SPH and CT: This, in a nutshell is the purpose of the lectorate. Spreen:

“A systematic approach to work is a central aspect of Stenden’s vision of care provision. This is how we distinguish ourselves from other universities of applied sciences. Our basic assumption is that the ‘system’, consisting of family and relatives around the patient, is as important as the patient himself or herself. Essentially, an N=1 research study is one in which the data from a single participant (rather than a group) are the focus of the research design.

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