

## Overcoming fears and helping the EQ charity projects at the same time

As a psychologist and mental coach I always believed that one should give back to the community. Hence, our EQ Charitable Trust was funded three years ago. Running a private practice, offering emotional intelligence and leadership courses to companies, we believe that children should be taught those life changing emotional intelligence skills too to cope better and be helped to make the right choices to lead a more fulfilling life.

Our EQ Charitable Trust courses are based on Emotional Intelligence, also known as EQ, and has been developed by psychologists, counsellors and other experts from the field of psychology, using contemporary research, literature and practical experienced developed over years in practice and working with other Non-Profit Organization', community crisis centers, as well as in clinical hospital settings.

So many children and teenagers in South Africa have less than adequate social skills, suffer from anxiety, are the subjects of bullying and violence, cannot concentrate, have sleeping problems and even show depressive, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) symptoms. Children facing these challenges don't have the opportunity to develop the skills to cope well in life and often don't have role models. They tend to slip into negative behavior patterns, such as crime and violence. Especially in our country, we see an excessive amount of violent behavior due to a lack of emotional skills. This often is a result of many parents dying from exposure to of HIV and AIDS, divorcing and breaking up the family unit or simply as a result of not having the time and the funds to educate their children. Sadly, another factor is the repetition of learned behavior, as a result of having grown up in violent household themselves. It was the aforementioned factors, as well as the awareness of the dire need for emotional coping skills, that prompted us to formulate the courses. To date, we feel that that there are no other similar or sufficient programs available to the children of South Africa.

Rohan, from Detour has taken our EQ Trust under his wings, or should I say wheels, as he understands the importance of children learning EQ skills in SA. He believes that it is better to teach skills than just to hand out goods to enrich children's lives. Rohan has invited me to come along on a weekend to ride the "Bike and Battle" with many other executives to promote the EQ Trust. He knew that my bike handling skills aren't very good but didn't know that, due to a number of falls and bad experiences in races, I developed a fear of being on a mountain bike when having to go over boulders or approaching down-hills. We arrived on the Saturday evening, after the whole group has had two days of the tour already. Giving a speech to a group of guys after SA lost to Japan wasn't easy, but being put on a new bike and sent off to ride was even more nerve-racking. Early in on the Sunday morning I was put on a bigger bike than what I was used to, was still sending lots of prayers up into the sky, just to see that everyone had whizzed down the hill already, leaving me in a state to fear and shock.

I made my way down the hills slowly, using my breaks far more than I was supposed to and thought I should rather be in the car with Sarah who is one of the organizers. I managed the first down-hill and made it to the group who

waited patiently. Looking around, I saw that there were boulders wherever I looked. Rohan told me before that he is not a fan of roads and would choose his own route through the bush. Being a spinning instructor, I knew that my legs have the strength to keep up but looking at these boulders I felt my fear creeping up again. Knowing that this was all for a good cause, as part of the entry fees were donated to the EQ Charity projects, I put my head down and tried to keep up with the rest. As time went on, I got used to the bike and I even caught myself thinking that I enjoy the ride. The ride was very well organized and I was never alone, was surrounded by riders who had an encouraging word all the time and after a while I felt I could manage any path. Everyone was super supportive and I felt that I slowly but surely developed a different outlook to mountain biking and being in the bush. After a four hour ride, no falls on my side and a big smile on my face, we arrived at an amazing spot with a beautifully decorated tent with lots of treats to eat and drink. The whole ride was just amazing, the scenery was beautiful and the support and camaraderie was incredible.

I was pleasantly surprised to have overcome my fears and negative thoughts in a fairly short period of time-I even thought that I would do a tour like this any time again. Sometimes one has to be forced to overcome your fears and step out of your comfort zone to grow and develop. I am glad Rohan was persistent and I would recommend a tour with him to anyone- it is well worth it!

At the end of the ride the EQ Trust gained some supporters, such as Gerald de Kock, received a great donation for the children in underprivileged schools and I got rid of my fear to ride downhill on a mountain bike- what a win!