

## **I can't explain it, I just do ...**

Roughly, 4 or 5 years ago when the company I work for was going through a rough patch and it was advisable to seek alternative opportunities, I interviewed for the Good Food & Wine Show's Founder, for the position of her Personal Assistant. The role was very diverse and would require the successful candidate to be extremely involved in the co-ordination of all the shows country-wide. I could not contain my excitement at this opportunity!

The first interview with the boss lady herself, went exceptionally well, I could tell she was impressed and she invited me back for a second interview to meet with her 'second in commands'. I was so nervous about this second interview, that I worked myself up into quite a state and had to take calming tablets. Which made me feel a little out of sorts, even though they were ALL NATURAL – this feeling coupled with having to wait in reception for what felt like forever, only made the anxiety worse so when it was finally 'show time', I was a babbling idiot who failed to impress. The boss lady at one stage even said to me "what happened to the Tracey I met the other day?" :s Oh dear!

The one question they threw at me, which has stood out to me ever since, was "Why are you passionate about food?" – To which after a pause, I answered, that I can't explain it, I just am, that I couldn't put a finger on it ... I just loved and consumed everything to do with food. They were not happy with my answer and didn't understand why I couldn't summarize what it was exactly that I loved so dearly about food. That question has haunted me ever since and to this day, I still try to come up with an answer that would not only satisfy them but would satisfy myself. But all the 'appropriate' answers I conjure up just don't feel right! It's like saying "Why do you love him?" – you can list a few things sure, his personality, his smile ...but it doesn't totally capture the essence of why you love this person, does it? It's indescribable and that's how I feel about my relationship with food. **I can't explain it, I just do.**

So fast forward a few years to 2013 – there I am, back of house in one of the make shift kitchens working at the Good Food & Wine Show in Cape Town, for the 3 consecutive days, long hours, no pay, no glory, just hard work (don't get me wrong, I loved every second of it – it was my first taste of what a commercial kitchen could be like! and throw in the fact that some of the full time students who obviously didn't know me, were calling me Chef (based on how much older I was than them - Hee Hee) and who should enter the kitchen and ask me for some pieces of equipment, but the boss lady herself! As she stood there, sifting through pots and pans, I almost asked her if she remembered me (there did seem to be a hint of recognition but whether she placed me or not, I can't be sure ... me in my Michelin Man uniform and all), but I lost my nerve. I should have though, perhaps seeing me there, all those years later, actively pursuing my culinary dream, would have finally legitimized my answer to that haunted question all those years ago "I can't explain it, I just do".

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