



**“For me, consistency isn’t so much about doing something every day, but more about keeping at it. If you keep falling off the wagon, but you always get back on - that’s all the consistency you need.”**

ZURAIDA JARDINE, P.36

ON THE COVER



COVER PHOTOGRAPH: GRAEME WYLLIE

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a camouflage crop top, olive green leggings, and white sneakers, is posing dynamically. She is holding a light blue jacket over her shoulder and has one leg raised. The background is plain white.

ZUR AIDA  
JARDINE:

**Yamkela Mdaka sits down with TV and radio personality Zuraída Jardine for a chat about reinvention, starting full-time studies at 40, her love for alternative healing and her mission to normalise mental health**

LIVING  
LIFE ON HER  
OWN TERMS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GRAEME WYLLIE  
STYLING BY KARIN ORZOL



Top and leggings set (R799), Shop.TShape Gymwear.co.za; sports bra (R1 790), AlchemyShop.co.za; bag (R799), Guess.co.za

**OPPOSITE:** Top (R480), TigerLillyDancewear.co.za; leggings (R3 590), AlchemyShop.co.za; jacket (R799), Zara.com/za; adidas trainers (R1 099), Sportsmans Warehouse.co.za



Top (R495), Tatums  
Wardrobe.com;  
tights (R649),  
SweatGearSA.co.za;  
hoodie (R750),  
TigerLillyDancewear.  
co.za; cap (R149),  
CottonOn.com/ZA

**In front of the camera, Zuraida Jardine is completely at ease; she's moving effortlessly, with little direction needed, and she delivers awe-inspiring shots with every flash. It's immediately obvious that she's no stranger to this life. But life in the public eye has taken a backseat since she started studying full-time at the age of 40. Today, Zuraida is not only a force in media, she's become a powerhouse health academic and her journey is far from over.**

#### IT'S THURSDAY MORNING

and the media personality is getting her make-up done for the first session of the shoot. I hear a bit of the conversation she's having with the make-up artist, who's pouring her heart out. Zuraida is fully engaged; she's asking questions, listening and offering advice as though she were speaking to her sister. Anyone who walked into the conversation wouldn't believe that they had just met.

This is why I'm not surprised that when I begin my interview with Zuraida, she starts by asking me about my life. "You're more than just a person writing my cover story, you're a human being that I'm sharing space with," she says. "I want to know who you are, where you're from and your story – for you to experience me fully, I also need to do the same." Her approachable and easy-going demeanour allows me to open up easily before eventually turning the focus back to her.

#### SCHOOLIN' LIFE

If you haven't seen much of Zuraida in the public eye over the past few years, it's because she recently started full-time academic studies. She kicked it off with a degree in psychology and went on to do her honours. Now, she's busy with her master's in critical diversity studies and plans to do her PhD as soon as she's done. Going back to full-time study in your 40s is an intimidating thought for anyone, but for Zuraida, it wasn't a difficult decision; it was inspired.

"I started working when I was 13 years old and I never stopped," she tells me. "I didn't come from a family that could afford to send me to university. Even though I was fortunate enough to get into broadcasting and have a successful career, I worked for a really long time." At the height of her career – after she had just won *Strictly Come Dancing* and had

become the first woman to host a daytime show on 5FM – Zuraida and her husband, Josh Lindberg, moved to the USA, partly because she was burnt out and needed some time out. "I wanted a break because I'd never allowed myself to just be someone with little to no responsibility," she says, as she relaxes into the couch outside the studio.

The couple spent five years in the States and her decision to go back to school was influenced by the people she encountered there. "One of the things I learnt when I lived in America, especially Los Angeles, is that people don't worry much about age – if someone decides that they want to change their career, they do it," she says. "I find that sometimes when we live in smaller countries, we tend to judge others and ourselves more. Living there just gave me the desire and motivation to do what I wanted to do."

When her mother passed away while she was pregnant with her son, the couple decided it was time to move back home. "Family took on a whole new meaning for me and I wanted to come back and be in a space where I had a support structure," she says.

COVER STAR

Top (R695) and  
bottoms (R395),  
both [TatumsWardrobe.com](http://TatumsWardrobe.com);  
jacket (R349)  
and foot wraps  
(R79), both  
[MRPSport.com](http://MRPSport.com)



## MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Zuraida has always had a heart for mental health and her psychology studies, coupled with the critical diversity work she's doing for her master's degree, have elevated her passion for the subject and further equipped her to speak on it as an expert. She admits that her first introduction to therapy was when she met her husband, who happens to be white. "It was so interesting to me at the time because I come from a community of colour where we don't speak about feeling low or depressed or mental health in general," she says. "My husband grew up in a home where those discussions were had, and they were normal - that sparked something in me." More than anything, that's her mission today: to normalise issues related to mental health in coloured communities, communities of colour and everywhere else.

Judgementalism is part of the reason that these conversations can be so difficult, and why mental health is still so stigmatised,

### "WHEN WE FEEL JUDGED BY OTHERS, WE BECOME VERSIONS OF OURSELVES THAT WE THINK THE PERSON IN FRONT OF US WANTS TO SEE."

but Zuraida gives the concept a different spin. Instead of telling people not to be judgemental, she believes that we should stop *feeling judged*, whether we're experiencing judgement or not. "When we feel judged by others, we become versions of ourselves that we think the person in front of us wants to see. And you know what? That's exhausting," she says. "How exhausting; to live your life putting on different masks all the time to try to fit into everyone's vision of what you assume they think you should be."

### A HOLISTIC VIEW

A holistic outlook on health and wellness has been the order of the day for the past couple of years and while Zuraida subscribes to this, it's not in the obvious way you might think. She's recently completed a course in functional medicine, she's finished a foundational course in breathwork therapy and is currently busy with an advanced course in the discipline. Why? She believes that part of having a holistic approach to health, particularly as a health

practitioner, is being able to incorporate alternative methods of healing with the bio-medical approach we're all familiar with. "My thesis at the moment also looks at licensed healthcare professionals who are now using alternative or complementary healing methods together with the bio-medical model," she says.

This is something that she does in her health coaching practice, which she started a few months ago. "For me, this is about meeting someone where they're at. If I understand the bio-medical model and I understand what's complementary in terms of healing from a traditional or alternative perspective, then I'm able to speak to and treat you as a full human being, instead of telling you what you need when I don't even know the intersections of your life."

### MINDFULNESS

Through her study of functional medicine, Zuraida got to see another side of health that hadn't been top of mind before: the ability of humans to heal themselves through nutrition and exercise. This has had a major impact on her own

## LESSONS FROM ZURAIDA'S ACADEMIC JOURNEY

#### AGE SHOULD NEVER STOP YOU

"What you want to do in your 20s might not be what you want to do in your 40s. I could decide in my 60s, if I'm blessed to still be alive, that I want to be a ballerina. I believe that we've got to live our lives deliberately and with an ever-evolving purpose."

#### YOU CAN LEARN FROM ANYONE

"I was 40 years old in my first year and a girl that I had become really close to was 18 - fresh out of matric. I can't even begin to tell you how much I learnt from her and still do today."

#### TIME IS VALUABLE

"Time took on a completely new meaning for me when I started studying because it was no longer only leisure. I realised that it's important for us to walk away from people feeling energised and if we don't, then we need to re-evaluate the relationship and the time given to it."

relationship with food – not so much about what she should and should not be eating, but more about how important it is to place value on food, to use positive language when speaking about food and to see food as medicine.

She describes herself as a mindful eater – maintaining an in-the-moment awareness of food when she consumes it and observing, rather than judging, how the food makes her feel. “I don’t like phrases like ‘guilty pleasure’ and ‘cheat day’ because of the negative connotations they carry,” she explains. “If you feel like having a pizza or pasta today – have it guiltlessly, celebrate how it makes you feel; I promise you will enjoy it 100 times more.” Coming from a family of incredible cooks, including her parents, Zuraida learnt to cook from the age of 13. “Sadness, happiness, milestones – all of these are celebrated with food and that’s why I’m so adamant about looking at food as pleasure and not as something one should feel guilty about or hate themselves for.”

### STAYING IN SHAPE

As for her approach to fitness, Zuraida has had a gym membership since she was 16 and exercise has always been a big part of her life. Even though that’s the case, she admits that she’s

not pedantic about it and she loves everything from SWEAT 1000 to hiking to Pilates and yoga. The latter two, however, are top of her list. “What I love about these two disciples, in particular, is that they both take me into a meditative space,” she says. “I find that when I do yoga and Pilates, I’m not able to think about anything else except to be present. This is because the moves and poses require me to access my breath – so it’s virtually impossible for my mind to be distracted.”

She learnt early on in life that going a day, a week or a month without exercising was never a reason for her to feel disappointed in herself or something to beat herself up about. “I became mindful of what I was saying to myself because that ultimately resulted in how I felt about myself,” Zuraida says. “For me, consistency isn’t so much about doing something every day, but more about keeping at it. If you keep falling off the wagon, but you always get back on – that’s all the consistency you need.”

### CONSCIOUSNESS IS EVERYTHING

From relationships, exercise and food to mental health, self-love and academics – Zuraida’s entire philosophy is founded on the idea of consciousness and non-judgement. And that’s where her magic lies. Her personhood today has not

## Zuraida’s Feel-Good Food: Curry and Rice

“When I’m feeling low, I often find myself turning to the things that we used to eat regularly in our home when I was growing up. That’s why curry and rice will always make me feel better when I’m not in a good space.”



**“EVERYTHING I’VE DONE AND EVERYTHING I’M DOING IS IN LINE WITH MY PURPOSE.”**

only been shaped by her adversities, but from having been “othered”. And her self-imposed social undertaking is to deconstruct societal norms that have made people feel inferior, substandard or “not normal” – because all this has done is fuel hate and foster inauthentic living. “I know that if I were on my deathbed, I would want to know that I lived purposefully and that I’ve positively impacted lives – that’s it,” she says.

For now, she’s focusing on completing her master’s studies, eventually doing her PhD and building her holistic health empire. While her media career might have taken a backseat for now, it’s not something she will ever leave behind. “Everything I’ve done and everything I’m doing is in line with my purpose,” she says. “Broadcasting runs through my blood and it always will.”





## ZURAIDA'S ADVICE FOR SWITCHING CAREERS

- REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE NOT STUCK WHERE YOU ARE, EVEN IF THAT'S WHAT IT FEELS LIKE.

- EVERYTHING YOU LOVE AND ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT IS WORTH EXPLORING.

- WHEN YOU'RE ABLE TO CHANGE THE NARRATIVE OF YOUR LIFE, DO THAT AND WATCH HOW IT INSPIRES THOSE AROUND YOU.

- 24 HOURS IS ACTUALLY A LOT OF TIME. IF YOU MANAGE IT WELL, YOU CAN DO MORE THAN YOU REALISE YOU'RE ABLE TO.

- ALWAYS MAKE SURE THAT LIFE ISN'T HAPPENING TO YOU, BUT THAT YOU'RE LIVING PURPOSEFULLY AND INTENTIONALLY.

Catsuit (R1 550),  
NuMeFashion.co.za