

## **A year at Granate – my Hero’s Journey**

Brian Mgwili: Graduate

### **The 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2020 marked a year since I started as an intern at Granate Asset Management**

Boy oh boy, it has been quite the year to remember! I still recall how nervous I was when I was given my first task by Paul. I was so intimidated! I have always wanted to be part of an investment team. However, thinking back to my first day at Granate, I can say that I knew close to nothing about investing. A year later and I can happily say that I have gained tremendous skills and knowledge in asset management, both about our business and about the industry. I believed then and still do now that my purpose is to learn as much as I can about this industry and then pay it forward to my community by relaying what I have learned to them. I would love to contribute towards a greater investment culture within South Africa by helping my people understand the industry and their finances better.

### **Self-reflection is important when working towards personal growth**

Now more than ever, I am reminded of the Hero’s Journey. The Hero’s Journey, coined by an academic called Joseph Campbell in the 1940s/50s, refers to a range of tales in which a character ventures out to get what they need, faces struggles, and ultimately triumphs over adversity. This journey can be broken down into three basic parts – Separation, Initiation and Return. The hero is separated from their village/community/family and whether they like it or not, their adventure starts. The hero then faces struggles, gets help from a guide/guides and overcomes these struggles. After triumphing, the hero returns to their village/community/family and shares all that he/she has accumulated during the journey. There is a lot more detail to these three parts but to try to make a point, I will relate my experience at Granate to these components of the Hero’s Journey.

### **Separation and Initiation**

For me, the Separation was leaving my peers at TSIBA Education (From Tertiary) and starting a new adventure (To the Workplace) with the team at Granate. My guides (Granateam) during the Initiation part of my journey have been great. I am fortunate enough to be part of many facets of the business, and my teammates have been more than willing to share their wisdom and skills with me. It has been a tough journey and I still face struggles to this day. The investment industry is quite complex and there are a lot of nuances that you need to understand. However, I can count on the Granateam to guide me along the way.

### **The start of a Return**

I am still in the Initiation part of my journey, but slowly returning to my people. As a testament to this, I can now understand and explain why it is important for my siblings, my friends and for me to save up for retirement through a retirement annuity (as an example). A year ago, this would not have been possible. Through Granate, I am now empowered to do this. To the next person, this may not be important or even valuable, but to one of my buddies/siblings, this is life changing. This is what investing means to me – having the power to change people’s lives by simply knowing. A lot of people in our country are old and poor because they did not know, or did not have access to this vital information. My Hero’s Journey is centred on this.

### **The journey continues**

I chose to use the Hero's Journey as an analogy because it shows the development of unconscious processes that are the sources of our wellbeing. It can give us clues to areas that are under-developed, the way we interpret the world around us, and the way we react to it. The Hero's Journey in which you are the hero never ends; it only changes, restarts and you encounter new gifts to share. It applies to so many stages of our lives, including starting a new job. I am very excited to see what the next year has in store for me in this industry and the Granateam. My journey has just begun!

Brian joined Granate as an intern in July 2019 and is currently completing our graduate programme. His previous work experience includes a 12-month practical course with AVENG Grinaker-LTA, working as a night supervisor at the Ecotel Southgate Inn, and holiday work in the client servicing department at Investec Asset Management. In addition, he founded a start-up called Eighty Getty, which organised events aimed at showcasing young talent.

Brian holds a BBA from the Tsiba Business School in Cape Town and a Higher Certificate in Business Administration from the Tsiba Business School in Knysna.

