

# Watch: Thandie Dowery shares inspiration behind jewellery brand Nomi Handmade

Local designer Thandie Dowery credits her mother as the driving force that inspired her to launch her successful jewellery brand Nomi Handmade in 2015.



Thandie Dowery, founder, Nomi Handmade. Source: Supplied

The South African brand specialises in striking ready-to-wear jewellery made using boldly coloured shweshwe fabric, rope and other textured materials.

Dowery reveals how she built her business, sharing that although she followed her dream, it was primarily because of the encouragement from her mother. "I started this to celebrate my mother, Nomgcobo, who also inspired the name of my business. She was a significant influence on me and continues to be one. She also taught me to work hard and smart and make something from very little," the entrepreneur says.

She adds, "Society gears us towards entering the workforce, not pursuing our passion. So to be able to listen to the voice inside you, follow your heart, and break away from the path most trodden takes a lot of guts. Many might not believe in you, and some might outright try to deter you. You just need to believe that you are capable, prepare yourself, and show up in passion as best as possible."

The designer says she's grateful to her mother for instilling this wisdom in her.



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## Multi-cultural brand

Dowery's journey as a jewellery designer started when she tried her hand at sewing shweshwe material. "I had leftover material from a previous textile project I'd attempted and I knew I couldn't waste it. But being a minimalist at heart, I would never wear such bold prints. And so I thought, why not accessorise with this? I played around with some rope and fabric,

and I made my first pieces after much trial and error."

She recalls her friends literally taking the pieces off her body to try on. "That's when I knew I might be onto something," she says.

Nomi Handmade takes pride in being a multi-cultural brand with roots in Sotho culture and a South African-American designer working behind the scenes. Nomi also means 'delightful' in Hebrew, a name Dowery's mother Nomgcobo took on after putting down roots in New York City and finding support amongst the Jewish community there.

Hoping to show how she lives this ethos and why doing what you love is crucial for both happiness and success, Dowery invited workwear company Sweet-Orr for an insider's look into her world as a part of the brand's #LoveWhatYouDo video campaign series.

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