

# where there is a will...

## The story of Nosisi

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Based on a  
true story

8142



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**MOTHERWELL COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE, MOTHERWELL NU4 IN PORT ELIZABETH  
NELSON MANDELA BAY - 3 FEBRUARY 2014**

Dear.....

We have never met each other but I would like to write this letter to you because I know how it feels to have TB. I too had to take the TB treatment for six months and I am now completely healed.

In this book I'll tell you my own story. I felt just like you. I was afraid that I will be pushed away. There are many people who believe that we can infect them. That is not true. If we take our pills it kills the germs before they can get to other people. This is true even if you have HIV with your TB.

I am so glad that I tested for HIV and continued with my TB treatment. The worst time was after the first two months of treatment. I felt so much better and then I started to think that I do not have to take treatment anymore. It was a blessing that I could be cared for by a DOT supporter near my home. She was very good to me, I could talk to her about my problems and I could trust her completely. The clinic trained her well. The daily record of treatment helped me to check how soon the treatment would finish. Talk to the sister at the clinic or to the DOT supporter when you feel like it. Do not keep your problems to yourself.

I hope these six months can pass soon. Do not stop until you have finished the treatment. The risk is too great that your TB could become worse. I hope and pray that it will all go well for you!

With many greetings

*Noxisi*

RESEARCH OUTPUTS  
8142

## TO ALL TB SUFFERERS

This picture book is based on a true story.

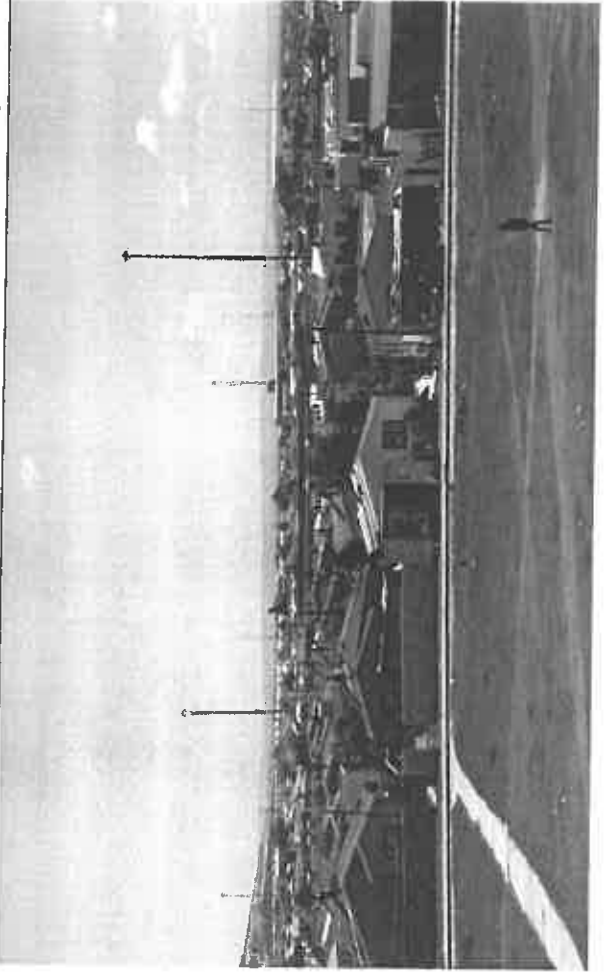
Paid lay actors were used throughout this novella. No assumption should be made about the health status of all persons portrayed in this novella. The TB nurses portrayed are actually based at the health facility concerned. All actors are thanked for their diligent participation.

Any resemblance to actual TB patients is purely coincidental.

This is Nosisi with her four young children...



They live in the Motherwell NU4 area of Port Elizabeth in Nelson Mandela Bay.



Nosisi has become very depressed...

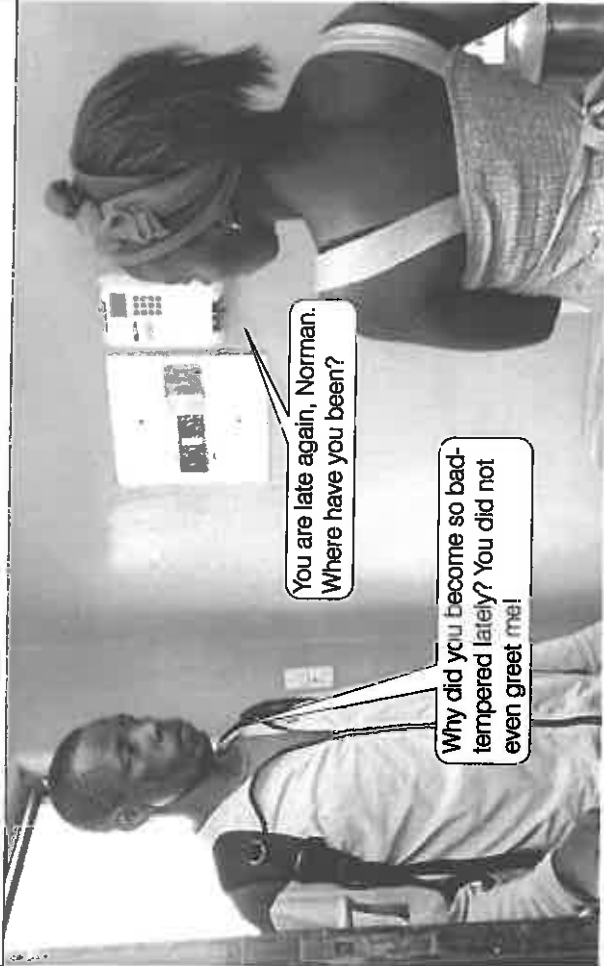
She has had a nagging cough that will just not go away and now she feels life is getting too much for her.



She is impatient with her husband...

You are late again, Norman. Where have you been?

Why did you become so bad-tempered lately? You did not even greet me!



She is impatient with the children...

Nomawethu! Gcobani! You are making a terrible noise! Stop it now! Nomhle! Makhaya! All of you! Go and play outside!



These kids in this small house make me crazy.. they fight all day, they mess in the house. I do not have the strength to handle it all!

So what do you expect me to do? I work all day!



Later, when they were calmer, Norman started listening to his wife...



I have no more energy. I'm so tired that I am unable to do the things I could easily do before. I just cannot get rid of this annoying cough. I'm exhausted!

Just look at how much weight I lost...



My goodness, and I did not even notice!

Later than night...



Wake up, Nosisi! You are tossing and turning and I cannot sleep.

I cannot sleep because I'm sweating and it's not even a warm night! What is making me sweat like this?

Nosisi was thinking all night about what might be wrong with her ...



I remember Vuyokazi's mother also became so thin and weak, she had TB. I can surely not have TB? Also, my Uncle Mandla... he became thin and weak, but he had both TB and HIV! I cough so much, just like them ... maybe I should go to the Motherwell clinic so that they can examine me there, just to be sure.

Nosisi decided to rather go to the clinic to find out what was making her feel so bad.



You say you have already used medicine for the cough. It sounds like you may have TB. Let me examine you and then we do a sputum test to see if you have TB. We can also do a quick HIV test, if you agree. Do I have your permission to do these two tests? These tests will not take long.



Sister Bhala, I do not know what's wrong with me. I feel so tired and weak. I sweat so much at night that I cannot sleep properly. And this annoying cough that will just not go away makes me so tired that I am losing my appetite and my weight. I am also very worried that this may be HIV!



After taking the HIV test, Nosisi anxiously awaits the result of the test...







Let's go outside into the fresh air so that you can cough some sputum into the bottle for your TB test.



Well, your HIV test is negative, so keep it that way, OK? And now your sputum sample is ready for TB testing at the laboratory. Please come back tomorrow to get your TB results, will you Nosisi?



Remember to take a deep breath and cough as hard as possible to loosen the phlegm in your throat. That's it, thanks Nosisi!

**But a week passes by before they speak to each other again, when Sister Bhala goes to look for Nosisi and finds her at her sister's house.**



Sister Bhala, nice to see you. What brings you here?

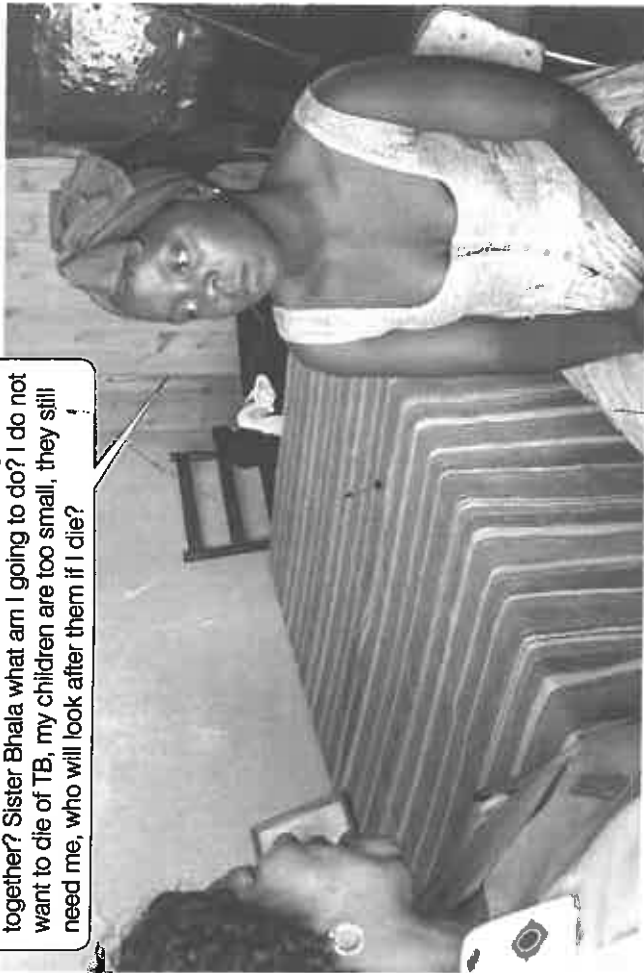
Nosisi, you did not come back to the clinic for your results. That's why I came looking for you. What happened?



I do not always have taxi fare to get to the clinic! Besides, I thought that since I do not have HIV, I can't also have TB, not so? So, my sister and I went to a traditional healer to be cured of this tired feeling. That's why I did not come to the clinic.

Nosisi, your TB result is positive, so you have TB. We must start your TB treatment immediately! Many people consult traditional healers Nosisi. You will need all the help you can get to complete the TB treatment. Many traditional healers encourage people to take their TB medication.

I have TB? But I don't have HIV? Don't these go together? Sister Bhala what am I going to do? I do not want to die of TB, my children are too small, they still need me, who will look after them if I die?



The next day Nosisi meets Nozuko, her trained treatment supporter...

I'm happy to meet you Nozuko. I am glad that Sister Bhala suggested that I take my TB treatment at home with your support.



Yes, I will be happy to support you to complete your treatment. In fact, as part of a special project I will need to take a photo of you taking TB treatment each day.



TB is curable Nosisi, even people with HIV have been cured of their TB because they complete their treatment. You need not die! To cure TB you need to take the full six months of treatment, or your TB could become much worse. I will send Nozuko, a trained treatment supporter, to your home tomorrow. She can assist you to take your daily medication at home! That should make it easier for you, not so Nosisi?

Back home, Nosisi is still shocked and very scared. She wonders how she'll manage... her cousin, Gloria also had TB. Gloria prayed and completed her treatment. Her priest also encouraged her to complete the TB treatment.

So Nosisi also prays to God for strength and guidance...



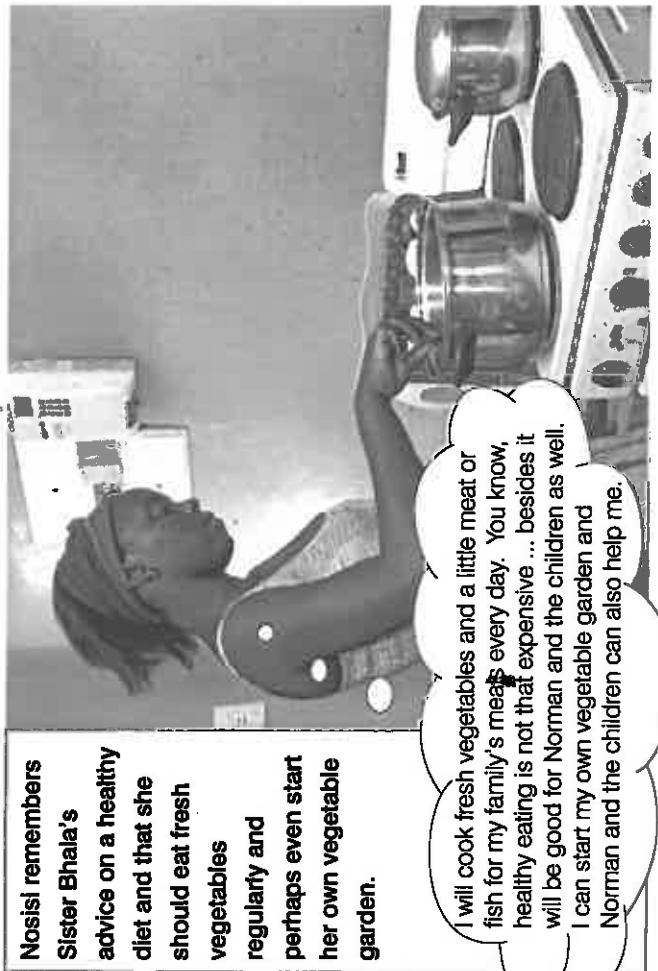


After the prayer she felt better. She is now determined to get treatment and get better.



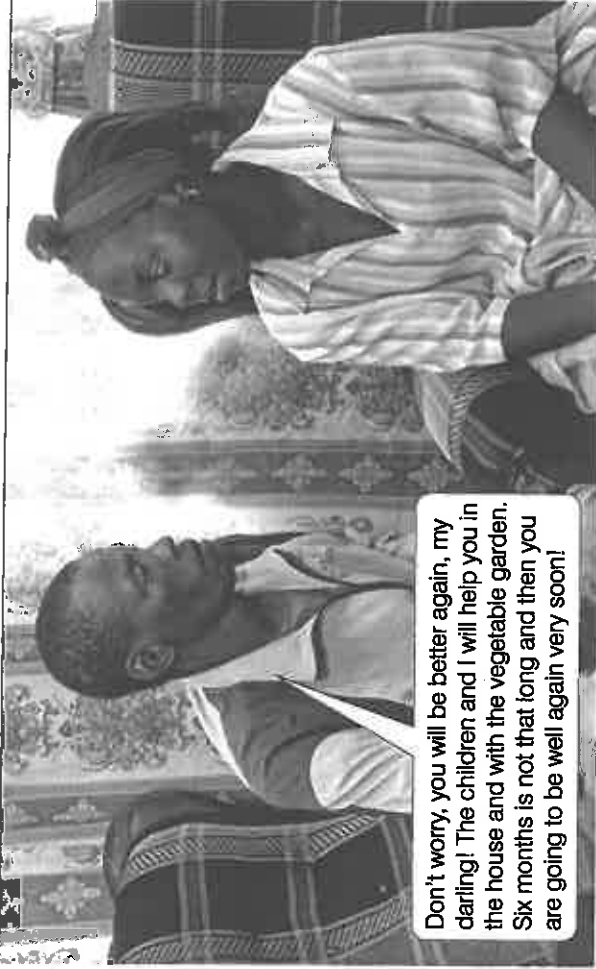
I trust Sister Bhala, she allows me to talk about my fears and reassure me. I'll take the clinic's treatment and I'm glad that Nozuko will be my DOT Supporter to help me take my treatment at home.

Nosisi remembers Sister Bhala's advice on a healthy diet and that she should eat fresh vegetables regularly and perhaps even start her own vegetable garden.



I will cook fresh vegetables and a little meat or fish for my family's meals every day. You know, healthy eating is not that expensive ... besides it will be good for Norman and the children as well. I can start my own vegetable garden and Norman and the children can also help me.

When Norman got home, Nosisi told him everything...



Don't worry, you will be better again, my darling! The children and I will help you in the house and with the vegetable garden. Six months is not that long and then you are going to be well again very soon!



Nosisi was very happy that Norman will support her. Norman reminded Nosisi of his cousin, Velle, who also had TB and started treatment at Motherwell clinic. When Velle moved to a job at a bank in East London the clinic arranged to make his treatment available through a treatment supporter at an East London clinic. He completed his TB treatment there and was cured.

The next day Nosisi told her neighbour Betty that she has TB and will have to take treatment every day for six months. Betty's response really shocked her!



Who did you anger to get this TB, Nosisi? I don't want my family and my unborn baby to get TB. Please stay away from us! And don't you believe in our cultural ways? Go to a traditional healer rather! Why believe in this medication?

At the clinic the next day Nosisi tells Sister Bhala about her neighbour's reaction.



Sister Bhala, is this TB a curse? And can I really cause TB in other people? Will my own family and friends now also get TB from me?

TB is a disease, Nosisi. It is really a pity that people react in this way. That is called "stigma". TB is curable and as long as you take the pills every day, you cannot give anyone TB. The pills kill the germs before it can get to other people. And I have taught you how to cough into your elbow, that is just good manners. Since no one in your family has any TB symptoms, and you are on treatment, they can no longer get TB from you.

Back home Nosisi calls Betty and reassures her neighbour after her visit to Sister Bhala at the clinic...



TB is not a curse Betty and you should not be afraid of being infected by me now that I have started my TB treatment. Sister Bhala says that the pills kill the TB germs before they can spread.

Wow, Nosisi! I am learning so much from you. I did not know that even people with HIV can be cured of TB! So they only need to take TB treatment every day? No, my friend, I will try to support you where I can. I am so sorry about my reaction, I was ignorant of these things.

Nosisi is happy that Betty will help her. She leaves her to buy some fresh vegetables.



It seems to me that everyone is watching me. Does anyone know that I have TB? Do they think that I also have HIV? I feel so ashamed. I have to get better. If they know I have TB and see me get cured, that will be a good thing. Sister Bhala says that everyone can be cured of TB, so long as they take their medication.

**Two months later... after giving sputum at the clinic for her second TB test...**

Nozuko and Sister Bhala said I must go to the clinic tomorrow for my two-month sputum test result. I'm feeling much better now; I am sure I no longer need more pills or even my sputum test result! Nomhie, let us all visit Auntie Gloria tomorrow instead.



Mom, you know that Auntie Nozuko said that you must complete the treatment if you want to get better. You told everyone that you need to take these pills for six months. Please don't stop your TB treatment now!

**Nosisi is so proud of Nomhie for caring, so she goes to the clinic where she gets good news...**



Nosisi, you were smart to take your pills every day for the first two months. I saw the DOT Supporter's report of the photos that were taken when you took treatment. The outcome of your second sputum test is negative! It shows that you are getting better, but you must still keep taking your pills in order for you to be healed completely, even if you do feel better now.



Yes Sister Bhala, I want to be cured of TB for the sake of my family. Having Nozuko coming to the house has helped me greatly.

From now on, you will drink fewer pills. You can still take them from Nozuko.

**In the following months Nosisi continued to take her pills every day. Her children insisted that she gets a lot of rest and helped her with the work at home.**



Three months later...

I'm so glad I did not have to go all the way to the clinic every day and stand in a long queue. It was so much easier to take the pills. I'm glad I did not give up! Thank you for your help Nozuko!



Well Nosisi! Now there's only one month's treatment and a final sputum test to go! Can you believe we have come this far already?

One month later...

Nosisi visits the clinic again the day after her final sputum test at Motherwell Clinic.



Congratulations, Nosisi! The outcome of your final sputum test shows that you do not have TB. This is your last treatment. You are cured of TB!!

Nosisi is very excited and heartily shares her good news with her husband...

Norman, I'm healthy! Sister Bhala says my lungs are completely clean. I'm done with the pills because I am cured of TB!!



Great! Let's celebrate and have a braai. You invite Sister Bhala and Nozuko; in fact everyone who helped you to be cured of TB! I will start the fire outside, you prepare some snacks.

Nosisi also invited Betty, who helped with the children when she had to rest or felt unwell. Nosisi was glad she started with Sister Bhala and kept up her TB treatment with Nozuko's help. She appreciated the family and friends who helped her. Being cured of TB is just great!



## HERE IS YOUR TREATMENT SUPPORT CALENDAR

Write down the date you **started** with your treatment, also write the day you think you will **finish** the treatment.

Put crosses over a finished week. This will help you to monitor your progress and it also makes time to go by unnoticed.

Keep it like that!! You **will** get better.

I started treatment on (date): \_\_\_\_\_

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
WEEK 9	WEEK 10	WEEK 12	WEEK 12
WEEK 13	WEEK 14	WEEK 15	WEEK 16
WEEK 17	WEEK 18	WEEK 19	WEEK 20
WEEK 21	WEEK 22	WEEK 23	WEEK 24
WEEK 25	WEEK 26	WEEK 27	WEEK 28
WEEK 29	WEEK 30	WEEK 31	WEEK 32

I finish treatment on: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This educational booklet/novella is based on a true story similar to that of most TB patients. The persons depicted in this photo-novella are lay-actors whose demographic characteristics are broadly representative of the communities they reside in. No assumption or inference of their actual health status should be made based on their appearance in this story.

<b>LAY ACTORS:</b>	Nosisi:	Nomawethu Ziki
	Norman:	Mthetheleli Thole
	Sister Bhala:	As herself
	Betty:	Nombulelo Mnikina
	Nozuko:	Vuyokazi Nkone
	Nomawethu:	Hlurmelo Ngetu
	Gcobani:	Musa Willie
	Nomhle:	Ayabulela Boo!
	Makhaya:	Sinazo Mashiya

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