



Research Philosophy: Authenticity, Respect and an Opened Heart

My research interest is “Linking Africa and It’s Diaspora,” which I work hard to do. As a researcher, I enjoy designing information into stories that are palatable when presented in different formats. Producing good stories out of raw facts will engage audiences on many levels, especially emotionally, because emotion drives interest, interest drives thought, and thought drives action.

My research philosophy focuses on finding real stories and re-presenting them from fresh perspectives. We often work with human subjects, and must not forget about their wellbeing long after the project is over for the researcher. When conducting such research, which is often the case when we work in media, I am mindful that it takes bravery for people to open their hearts and share their deepest feelings. They are opening their hearts to me and giving me their trust, which I must handle with respect and care while making every effort keep the authenticity of their message. Therefore, respect from me as a researcher is vital.

Research by scientists from three universities in Finland: Aalto University; University of Turku; and University of Tampere¹ found that although the brain has been known to influence feelings and emotions, people across cultures were found to *feel* strong emotions in the area around the chest. So, we find that emotions move the body as much as the brain moves the emotions.

Another practice that my research utilizes beyond authenticity, respect and opening the heart I being a good listener. Being a good listener is a major part of human research. I try to hear the words that are both spoken and unspoken and can be found in the twitching of the eye, the wrinkling of the brow and a slight smile at the corner of the lips. Listening helps me to understand the context and emotions that drive laws, business, and other socio-economic systems about which we produce media. Listening is research.

A well-researched, well-planned and aesthetically told stories, such as my award-winning documentary, *Botswana: An African Jewel*² are the ones that receive awards such as the *Morgan State University African Heritage Award*, due to the facts surrounding the establishment of an authenticity African country that is doing remarkably well, despite pressure from the western to stop it in the early years.

The foundation of good research, in my philosophy, goes beyond the technical skills, but requires some soft skills such as authenticity in respect and an opened heart. And I try not to forget to listen.

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¹ <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/2/646.full.pdf>

² <https://youtu.be/46Yk7kn6qmM>