

# 14. Yet I rise

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Mthokozisi Radebe

## Who I am

I was born in Ntuzuma, Durban, South Africa and I am 27. During my school years, I discovered that I was attracted to boys and men, which was a major source of tension in a religious home. I tested HIV positive on World AIDS Day in 2000 and have been living with HIV for nine years. I moved to Johannesburg in 2001 to create a new life for myself. I became immersed in HIV and reproductive health research, while learning how to take better care of myself through living positively and taking ARVs. I have found love in my life and am currently studying towards an interior design diploma in Cape Town.

## Why I am telling my story

I've always wanted to document my life to share the importance of showing up in my life through taking responsibility for my feelings and actions. In spite of experiencing a lot of shame, rejection and abuse, I realised I still had the power to make choices in life. In expressing my gay sexuality, discovering my HIV status and in other situations, I chose to find the real me and to pave a future for myself through love and standing up for myself. I hope my story allows you the opportunity to reflect on your life and to have the courage to take charge of your own happiness.

