

Cents-less act faces big test in the real world

A South African has vowed to live without cash for five years. Crazy? Maybe. Inspired? Perhaps, writes **BIANCA COLEMAN**

THEY say that money, like oxygen, is only important if you don't have any. Money makes the world go around, but it can't buy you love, or happiness, and it is also apparently the root of all evil. In gloomy economic times when every trip to the supermarket or petrol station costs more than the one before, it seems we never have enough money.

We work simply to keep digits in our bank accounts, and try to save some for a rainy day. Like it or not, in a materialistic society in which we are judged not by our actions but by our possessions, money affects us all.

"Many people - including myself - have negative relationships with money," says Adin van Ryneveld, a qualified life coach.

"If it was otherwise, I would have had plenty of it."

While pondering these relationships and perceptions of money, and coupled with a desire to give a great deal of it away, Van Ryneveld decided to embark on an ambitious project in May this year - to live without money for five years.

"Anything is achievable in the short term; I want to make it a long-term goal," he says.

Perhaps one could live without money in a cave on Table Mountain, eating grass and stones, but this is not what Van

Ryneveld's project is about. He's still living in the real world.

"I'd like to get the message across that you don't need money to live your dream and create awesome stuff in this world. You don't have to say 'I would do that if only I had the money'."

As people climb mountains because they're there, Van Ryneveld ticks off his first reason for doing this as "to see if it is possible". So far, so good.

"I also think the way we relate to money needs to be challenged - what we do for it, how we react to it, how we use it to measure value."

The point of the exercise, he says, is to exchange goods and services in an old-fashioned barter system, sans cash. Van Ryneveld no longer handles money at all.

His needs are few and basic - shelter, food, petrol, internet and cellphone airtime, in that order. For shelter, Van Ryneveld is offering his services as a house-sitter, while food comes relatively easily, he says.

"Lots of people seem keen to feed me, or invite me to dinner. They don't want to see me starve."

Airtime has been the easiest to keep topped up, while petrol for the scooter has been the hardest by far.

"Especially since I'm not handling money at all so this means people need to meet me at the garage," says Van Ryneveld.

In exchange, Van Ryneveld offers his time, his services, and networking exposure. He has done garden work, handed out flyers, bartending, Facebook favours such as setting up groups and events, and life-coaching sessions.

"It's hard to find things to do for small amounts of remuneration, but I do what's needed. I sweep and mop at Word Of Art in exchange for the use of a digital camera to document my journey, for example."

Van Ryneveld's journey is being documented in a blog on www.adinvanryneveld.co.za, where he aims to take the project to its next level by showcasing the talents, skills and value of those who help him.

Should filthy lucre actually come into play, Van Ryneveld will use half of it to pay off his existing debt and the other half goes to a charity chosen by the benefactor.

"Since doing this, my ability to create and manifest stuff has skyrocketed.

"When you remove money you see the world in a different way. It's like I'm experiencing it afresh," he says.

Van Ryneveld chooses not to do anonymous favours but he is receptive to making as many new friends as possible; find him on Facebook, join his group, or e-mail adin@nu-ubuntu.co.za

See also www.ces.org.za, Community Exchange Service, where people trade skills.