

Despondent slogans

By [Howard Feldman](#)

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Love or hate Donald Trumps, his Maga (Make America Great Again) campaign one that we remember. The slogan reflects strength, resolve and determination and talks to those who are dissatisfied with the state of their nation.



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Love or hate Barack Obama, we will still never forget his “Yes we can!” campaign that gave Americans a glimpse of a future that until then, they could only dream of. The use of ‘We’ in the statement created the impression of a shared vision, it served to narrow the distance between politician and voter and it empowered Americans with the belief that anything was possible.

George W Bush in 2004 promised “Yes! America Can,” and Bill Clinton’s “Don’t stop thinking about tomorrow!” asked them to think of their children, and the country adult Americans would be leaving for them.

The commonality in almost every one of these strategies, as well as other American Presidential campaigns, is that they talk of hope, of optimism and of empowerment. The gave Americans the words they could use to create a vision.

The contrast with South Africa 2019 is stark. Juxtapose these messages with those used in the 2019 in the elections and it is little wonder that many voters are at a loss as to which way to turn when confronted with a ballot paper. Without meaning to be rude (that might not strictly speaking be true), there are days, when given the campaigns that the South African

political parties are running, I believe that they all deserve to lose.



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We might have believed the ANC for a short while when they promised to become tough on corruption. We believed in President Ramaphosa until the party publicised their list that included court determined liars and others allegedly responsible for the unholy mess that we currently find ourselves in. With the precariously balanced ANC, as much as voters might want to believe that President Cyril Ramaphosa is true to his word (I certainly do), his choice of candidates make it abundantly clear that we can expect no such commitment from the party itself.

The largest disappointment for me is the DA. I am certain that there is hardly a political party in the history of elections who have had an easier opportunity. As the main opposition, they have been handed gift after gift after gift. Who would not relish the opportunity to run against a party that brought us loadshedding a few weeks before an election, as well as a State Capture enquiry that is taking place simultaneously with their campaigning. There can hardly be a bigger gift than that. And yet, instead of becoming the party that offers hope, positivity and a dream, they constantly remind us of the damage done by their opposition.



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"We Get it!" should be the voters' slogan right back at the DA. There is not a South African in the dark who is unaware that the ANC caused loadshedding, but keep reminding us that the ANC stands for A Night with Candles and instead of elevating the party, it does the opposite. Rather, with the knowledge of causation forefront in our minds, tell us that we have a future, that we are blessed to live in a magnificent country and that it is the DA who we need to vote for to ensure that this is realised.

"Vote for change." Is weak and sad and tired... and considering the economy, change is pretty much all we have in our pockets. Hardly something that most would want to vote for. Whoever came up with that slogan needs to receive a stern talking to.

The EFF, interestingly, does offer some hope but is selective to whom it offers it. Their racially based identity style politics speaks only to a few. "Man of soil" is a superb slogan for one man, Julius Malema, and evokes not only the focus on land reform but also that of a no-nonsense "salt of the earth" kind of a bloke. Unfortunately, much like Ramaphosa, Malema needs to be careful about the behaviour of his party members who will put paid to that image if he is not careful.



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It is astonishing that the South African political parties have not identified that South Africans crave hope as well as confidence in the future. It is remarkable that the campaign strategists don't seem to understand that there is a difference between an honest recognition of how bad the past 10 years have been and how we will move towards the future.

I firmly believe that whichever party has the ability to allow us to believe that they can "make South Africa great again," and

that “Yes, We can!” dream of a future for ourselves today and for our children “tomorrow” is the party that will not only capture the hearts of the people, but also the votes.

ABOUT HOWARD FELDMAN

Howard Feldman is one of SA's leading entrepreneurs and Head of Marketing & People at Synthesis. His experience is global and extensive, spanning more than 20 years of working as a businessman, philanthropist and social commentator. Feldman was the chairperson of the Board of the South African Jewish Report, the only weekly Jewish newspaper in Africa, and he is a global keynote speaker, business strategist, author and morning drive show host.

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