

# KEYNOTE TALKS AND FIRESIDE CHATS

## CULTIVATING FREEDOM AS AN ATTITUDE FOR RESILIENCE AND OWNERSHIP

Stephen McGown was abducted by Al Qaeda up in north Africa while riding a motorcycle from London down to South Africa in 2011. He was held for 5 years 8 months and released towards the end of 2017. He held the record for being the longest held surviving Al Qaeda Hostage in the world.

Since his release he has become a sort after Keynote speaker for corporates, forums and schools both locally and internationally. He wrote a book called "Six years with Al Qaeda" which won the South African book awards, adult non-fiction category and the book is subsequently being turned into an international movie.

### KEY THEMES

**Attitude  
Freedom  
Ownership**

### INTERACTIONS

**Keynote Talks  
Forums / Panel Discussions  
Fireside Q & As**

*"5 years 8 months is a long time. I believe that I'm like any other person. I'm no different. We all have problems and we shouldn't judge one another, as we have different coping mechanisms and breaking points."*

The over lying theme of his talk is the importance of Self-awareness and Self-ownership. He believes if you know who you are, your strengths, weaknesses and what defines you, there is literally nothing that can stop you having an exceptional and fulfilling life. He was kidnapped as a tourist without the skills to survive, all his learnings were self-taught through trial and error.

His keynote includes the importance of perseverance, maintaining a positive attitude, finding value in every day, the importance of teamwork, communication and simplicity.

*"If I was not going to be killed, then I needed to use this time productively and come back a better person. After all, the biggest tragedy would have been to have wasted my 5 years 8 months in the desert, to come back angry having learnt nothing. I had to make the most of my time!"*

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Freedom is an attitude

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