

# A Scalable and Sustainable Solution to Malnutrition



---

## Ye! Community Blog 2 - Ye! Coaching

The following article is the first draft of

“It is time to rethink how we share and consume our food.”  
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

**By: Benjamin Constable (CEO)**

**For: Ye! Community, August 2017**

---

**FreshBox (NPC) | [WWW.FRESHBOX.CO.ZA](http://WWW.FRESHBOX.CO.ZA)**

NPC: 2016/106286/08 | 4 Kayla Gardens, 19 Stella Grove, Glenwood 4001, Durban, South Africa | +27 73 406 0415

---

## Title BTD

Ye! Blog - Coaching

If you're building your passion project, you are going to feel anxiety.

Anxiety about your decisions, anxiety about the use of your time, and ultimately anxiety about the future of your passion project.

It felt naive to feel anxious about *my* life in South Africa. South Africa has one of the highest levels of inequality in the world, with about 55% of children belonging to households living under the ultra-poverty line of \$1.25 a day – that is about 10 million children who do not have access to nutritious food. They have something to feel anxious about.

But my passion project - FreshBox - was giving me enough anxiety. I had started FreshBox with the vision of sustainably and effectively helping these children at-risk of malnutrition.

If a child falls victim to malnutrition, it's over:

A malnourished child is 10 times as likely to die from an easily preventable or treatable disease as a well-nourished child; who completes nearly five more grades in school, and goes on to earn 21% more in wages and are more likely to have healthier families of their own.<sup>1</sup>

But I envisioned FreshBox as a solution to changing their future.

FreshBox is a South African non-profit company focused on sustainably increasing access to healthy food for nutritionally at-risk children. It sells "FreshBox Subscriptions" - weekly supplies of quality fruit and vegetables, retailed via an e-commerce platform - and for each one sold, we give another to a child in need. A sustainable solution to malnutrition!

But FreshBox was also a sustainable method to losing sleep.

FreshBox was growing well. We had 80 subscribers and were feeding over 100 children. But worries about customer complaints, employee's mistakes and funders takes on FreshBox were also feeding my anxiety. I needed an outside perspective.

Reaching out to Ye! I scrolled through the list of mentors, looking for someone with experience, someone who gets what was going on.

I landed on Yolanda Sing:

---

<sup>1</sup> DR M Chan (2017, March). Ten Years In Public Health 2007-2017. World Health Organization.

“A Senior Human Resource Executive who has worked extensively and internationally in 15 different countries. Yolanda is a professional coach who inspires people to connect with the latent leadership qualities within themselves.” and... she was South African - sounded promising.

Two emails later we had our first coaching session scheduled.

Just before the first skype call, I gave one more thought to what I was doing:

I spend my spare time playing professional basketball. The majority of my basketball coaches did more to increase my anxiety, than decrease. A coach to me was mostly someone that yells at me for missing dunks, not someone who digs deep into the psyche of an alternative business that's trying to rethink the food supply.

I wasn't really looking for someone to tell me what to do, or what I was doing wrong. I was looking for someone to empower me to more clearly understand what was happening to FreshBox. How did I fit into that picture? What could I control? what couldn't I? Someone to lead me to answers, not give me them. Definitely not someone to advise me on my jump shot.

Well, it was too late for that, skype was ringing, and Yolanda was on computer screen.

I don't remember specifics from that first call, but it certainly wasn't like a basketball session. Majority of basketball practice is spent with a coach shouting orders, players listening or being kicked out of the gym.

Yolanda let me do most of the talking, she mainly listened, with the occasionally pointed comment:

“We have over 60,000 thoughts a day, it's important to remember you can choose which thoughts to follow through.”

“I'm hearing a mix of excitement and anxiety.”

I do remember we agreed to three specific goals:

1. research if FreshBox needs a “push or pull strategy,”
2. write two sentences clarifying the values of FreshBox - what do we stand for? and
3. identify suburbs from most desirable to least for FreshBox to operate.

These goals became a fixture in our weekly sessions. They narrowed my focus to the most important and urgent matters facing FreshBox, and got rid of a little anxiety. We also agreed that I was here for “coaching not mentoring.” This was certainly deeper than basketball practice.

After a few more sessions of reflection and goal setting, FreshBox kept piling on customers, adding employees and upskilling staff.

I'm aware that humans are awful at recognising causation, but it seemed like our coaching sessions, were causing a reduction in my stress, increasing my focus, and ultimately, FreshBox was growing.

I had begun to understand what these anxieties actually represented. It began to dawn that these anxieties were a weakness when misunderstood, and hugely powerful when controlled.

When misunderstood, anxieties would control. They were a constant distraction and stress.

After each coaching session, I felt a stronger ability to step away, look and reality for what it was, and realise that anxiety was actually a guide to a problem that needed to be addressed, and most of the time it was either a five minute task to address it, or a thirty second thought process to throw it out as one of 60,000 thoughts we have each day,.

Strangely enough, Yolanda had never actually explicitly stated these ideas. She did however seem to understand exactly what I was saying.

Working with Yolanda made these anxieties not only manageable, but empowered me to understand them and turn them into strengths.

Prior to Yolanda's coaching, anxiety was a blindfold, now, it's a compass.