

My
Opinion
A Collection Of Inspiration

By

Isaac A. Oyeniya

Published in 2019

ISBN: 978-978-973-865-6

Copyright © Isaac A. Oyeniya 2019

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author.

Cover design @ Rex Peters Visuals 08166499465.

Printed in Nigeria by
Dee Young Printing Press, Kaduna
Tel: 08034649445

Reviews



Isaac captures our beliefs, way of life, traditional norms and sometimes the ridiculous side of being raised in Nigeria by Nigerian Parents not excluding our general state of mind as a people.

- Tamar Y. Lekwot

My opinion is a collection of true life stories from day to day happenings. The book my opinion is filled with life transforming messages that will help you focus in life and become the best that God has designed for you.

- Austin A. Ochoche

My opinion advises us about our day to day life by telling us short stories that are nationally relatable. It is a welcomed first book by the author.

- Klinton G. Iwara

In thinly veiled memoirs, Isaac vividly captures realistic moments from the mundane to extraordinary moments of everyday life and weaves them into inspiring tales that are life changing.

- Zainab A. Bala

Dedication



Dedicated to the loving memory of a dear friend, Temitope Ademiluka who went to be with the Lord in her prime

Foreword



Many books have been written explicating how humans can gain skill in living. Of course, most of these books combine the authors' powers of observation, intellect, thought, knowledge and experience. Furthermore, these books usually teach practical moral principles for behaviour and prompt the reader to investigate rationally into problems associated with human existence. Mr. Isaac A. Oyeniya, who is a committed Christian and a good citizen of Nigeria, has also decided to pen down something in this direction. He has written a book titled, *My Opinion: A Collection of Inspiration*. The book was written out of his wealth of experiences as a Christian and a leader.

The book is a collection of proverbs, thoughts, words of advice, rules for meaningful living, wisdom of experiences, practical moral principles and solutions to problems associated with human existence. In the book, the author admonishes the readers to always reflect on their past, plan for their future, and be visionary. They must be focused, write down their visions and pursue their dreams until they become reality.

They should aspire to discover themselves because they are created to be unique. Their uniqueness must be maintained as they live in the world. For this to be possible, they must work consciously on themselves, develop themselves and be exposed. Consequently, they will live moderately and be models.

Furthermore, the author highlights some good qualities that the readers should embrace. Some of these qualities are hard work, sincerity, honesty and righteousness. These qualities will help them to be in good relationship with everyone. The author cautions the readers to use their words wisely, to expand their knowledge, to be specific in whatever they do, to be watchful lest they fall away from their vision and purpose, to pray for Nigeria, and to train up their male children as they do their female children. These are few among many rules for living and practical moral principles that the author discusses in the book. The author concludes by emphasizing that God must be acknowledged as the source of wisdom needed to live meaningfully and fulfilled in this world. All these thoughts make the book to be inspirational, educative, instructional, practical, reflective and motivational. In fact, the book is enriching and edifying.

I, therefore, recommend the book to everyone: old and young, men and women, leaders and followers because the principles highlighted in it will help them gain skill in living and get solutions to problems associated with human existence. I pray that as you read this book, may God quicken your mind to comprehend the principles stated in it and cause you to live meaningfully and fulfilled in this world.

Rev. Babatunde Ogunlana, Ph.D.

Deputy President Admin, Baptist Theological Seminary,
Kaduna.

Introduction



The first time I had the thought to write a book, I laughed it off because I felt it was meant for a specific set of people. But that thought is now a reality that you have in your hands today.

The saying, “little drops of water makes a mighty ocean” is a true reflection of the composition of this book. A little thought today, at night, in the bus, on the road, in the market and everywhere else you can possibly think of. They kept coming and I did not trivialize them, I put pen to paper.

This is not a “how to” book. It is a collection of personal experiences, the power of imagination (we all do) and some of them are fictitious. I have written and compiled the book for a very long time but kept wondering if it was worth publishing. I tell you, “It is better done than perfect”.

“The first day I met Alhaji Aliko Dangote (Africa’s

richest man) in person, I was elated and you know like the common thing to do in our generation, I took pictures. The things we talked about, my purpose of visit and the deal we struck was awesome. I couldn't help but take note of the palatial office in which I was received, its elegance and splendour”.

In this book, you will read about a lot of things that are familiar to you and you will smile, things that are peculiar to you and you will nod in agreement, things that you do not fully agree with: you must not take in any section of this book *hook, line, sinker, fisherman, boat and net*, it is okay to disagree with some views and you can also be indifferent to some. You will come across things that will motivate you, open your understanding, rouse your faith, douse your fears, enlighten and educate you. This book is for everyone, at least a portion of it.

Dare to dream, it is a free but powerful gift which everyone possesses including you. Do not say I cannot for there is power in your tongue and our lives move in the direction of our confession. “There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding. Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgement.”

Some identities and locations have been shielded in this book while others carry their real names. This is deliberate and I take full responsibility for that.

Thank you for letting me pour my mind to you.

Contents



1. Dedication.....	v
2. Foreword.....	vii
3. Introduction.....	ix
4. January Rush.....	1
5. The Most Intelligent Man.....	3
6. The Male Child Education.....	5
7. Unrelated Relatives.....	9
8. Like Citizens, Like Leaders.....	11
9. General Hospital.....	13
10. Awoof.....	17
11. Words.....	21
12. What Can You Do?	25
13. “one Corner Guru”.....	29
14. I Want To Become Nothing.....	33
15. By All Means.....	37
16. Unrighteousness.....	41

17. Diversity.....	45
18. Efura.....	47
19. Traveling.....	51
20. Saint Look.....	55
21. Names And Nomenclatures.....	59
22. Love Wantintin.....	61
23. Classroom Crush.....	65
24. Pregnancy.....	69
25. Baa Shiga.....	71
26. Three Months of Play, Three Weeks of Work..	73
27. Were.....	77
28. Iyawo (pronounced E-yawo).....	79
29. Shebi I Told You?	83
30. Dangote.....	85
31. Sixteen Is Greater Than Nineteen.....	89
32. Consistency.....	93
33. Arewa Girl.....	97
34. Temitope Ademiluka.....	101
35. Budget Padding.....	105
36. Are You Like Most People?.....	109
37. Are You Your Type's Type?.....	113
38. Are You Doing Enough?.....	117
39. The Last Scene.....	119
40. Conclusion.....	123

January Rush



The month of January is a very fast paced month, things happen on cue. For a lot of us who have been around for quite some decades, the events in this month need not pose a shock to us. But on the contrary, the month seems to dawn on us as if we have no prior information that the month will come after the holidays.

A lot of us fall victim to this rush year in year out. We do not learn from the previous year's mistakes. And like the popular adage, "when you continue to do the same thing the same way, you get the same result".

Only a foolish man will want to agree otherwise. A lot of people are dazed by the reality that dawn on them after the previous year's Christmas holiday. The reason is that they have made unreasonable and in some cases unthinkable decisions. You know you have school fees, house rent, and numerous utility bills to pay in January, so why

spend without caution at last year's festivities. You end up putting yourself under avoidable pressures.

Someone puts it this way, "You borrow the money you don't have to buy what you don't need to satisfy people that don't like you". That is a waste of resources. You might even say, "I did not borrow". Oh well, the money was withdrawn from your children's education fund. That is a misplaced priority. Quit trying to please people, don't spend money, travel home, and buy a car to impress anyone. You will come back to a failed business because you withdrew both your profit and capital to make the trip. And like our first inclination is in this part of the world, we blame it on our "village people". There is no village voodoo against you; you have simply violated nature's principle. "You cannot eat your cake and have it".

So, have you fallen a victim again? Stop and have a rethink. Stop going through this vicious circle, it will only bring the same result as always. If you don't want to be in another "January rush" come next year, start making plans now, get your priorities right, draw up a scale of preference, and have a feasible budget. You are not in competition with anyone.

Remember, every January rush begins with a December recklessness.

The Most Intelligent Man



I was talking with a young man recently on a variety of interest, then from our discussion I got to know that he is into music and he raps. So, let me call him a rapper.

As we got talking, he said “I am the most intelligent Rapper in the world”. It was as if I did not hear him clearly, that statement sent a resounding effect to my spine. He looked at me and repeated himself. We later talked about a lot of things in attempt to prove his statement.

I once heard of a very intelligent man, he was very versatile. He had mastery on anything he finds himself doing. So, he was alleged to be the most intelligent man of his time. This man worked almost all the time of the day, he is either solving a mathematical equation or trying to invent something. As was recorded, he was still working in his laboratory even when he had lost the use of his hands due to paralysis. He invented a device

for himself. This device enabled him take note, solved problems and his assistant would later develop it. So, he called himself the most intelligent man. He simply tried to know everything he was capable of knowing.

There is an adage in Yoruba; “What you call your trade is what others will help you call it”. That is why the young man in the opening paragraph called himself the “most intelligent” rapper. It is not pride, it is just the way he sees himself. He sees nobody as his competitor but himself. He believes if he can convince his inner self to see himself as such, he can conquer the world.

So, when someone like Frank Edwards calls himself a “rich boy”, do not be judgemental about that. It is him who knows the reason he has declared himself thus. Your responsibility is to believe him if at all, or better still declare yourself as you will like to be addressed. Call forth those things that are not as though they were. You can wake up and look yourself in the mirror and say to yourself: I am rich, I am the most intelligent student, I am kind, I am honest, I am righteous, I am justified, I am a peace maker, etc. If you can tell yourself enough, you can be it.

People might say that you are weird, you've lost your mind, but who cares? It is you who knows what you declare. You are not in competition with anyone.

The Male Child Education



For as long as we can all remember, there has been an advocacy for the girl child in one form or the other all over the world. From education, equal participation in politics, sports, legislation, military, civil service, gender equality, to campaign against rape, just to mention but a few.

It is a very good thing for any society that intends to prosper in all facets. The nations, communities and region who have embraced it have been reaping the rewards and others who haven't fully embraced it cannot compare their strides with the former on this issue. There has been this injustice to the feminine gender from inception and so to help them meet up to their social responsibilities and put an end to discrimination, a lot of these advocacies are inevitable. To these successes we owe a lot of gratitude.

Now, the crux of this chapter is on the opposite gender. If you are very observant of the happenings

in our society lately you will be able to relate with some of these things.

During my service year (NYSC), I was posted to teach in a secondary school. It was a government Day school; it has a fair share of female students. Surprisingly, the female students were doing better than their male counterparts. I got talking with some of my colleagues and they all observed the same thing. Oh, it is a good development, the society at large wants our female children to do well, and who wouldn't rejoice when they are excelling especially in science subjects?

The trend in our society now is this; the majority of the male students are doing badly while their female counterparts are doing excellently well (my observations though). On the average, most parents ask their female children: “how was your day? Did you learn something new today? Hope no male teacher stared at you seductively?” Unfortunately, no such questions to the male child.

Then after school, the female child is monitored so that she wouldn't sneak out. Of course her next outing is when going to school again the next day. The male child on the other hand is now “a boss” in the house. He leaves the house at will; Mummy can no longer curtail him until the “big boss- the Dad” returns. Some male children are given unbridled liberty, they have no courtesy, it's their type that calls a lady “siiiiiiiiiii” on the road instead of walking up to her to simply ask what her name is.

They can sing the latest pop song verbatim but ask them where is Timbuktu located in Africa? They will ask you if that is a new dance like “Skelewu” or a new drink like “radlar”. They know all the “Daddy Yo” lyrics and how to combine dress for the latest party in town, but ask them to recite the first twenty elements; you will have instant headache.

Do you know the funniest thing?

These girls that we have taken time to groom and are proud of will be wooed by these boys that we have neglected and get married to them in some cases. This is what we call work done equals zero in my field of study.

I support equal attention, grooming, and education!!!

Unrelated Relatives



In this part of the world, everybody is family. A time, you are amazed at the distance and you will end up finding out that you are actually not related, at all! This unnecessary attachment has caused a lot of people some unnecessary commitment and unexpected expenses.

Ever heard of the word “Owambe”? Yes, the regular coming together of people to party or celebrate one thing or the other. You dare not say you are actually wedded in this part of the world without throwing a talk of the town party. It is this consideration that made some persons see Nigerians as the happiest people on earth. You must invite Iya-Risi, Iya-Bisi, Iya-Chidimma, IyaSule, and all the Iyas around you. It has become a compulsory thing because you yourself had benefitted from the largesse of some of their parties in the past. So, your own party cannot be an exception. Also, a large percentage of the attendees at most of our Nigerian parties are the

“MogboMoya- I hear, I branch”. Their ears are always close to the ground to know where next it is happening.

In the part of the country that I hail from, every man as old as your Dad is also your Dad, every woman as old as your mother is also your mother. Everybody with grey hair is automatically your granny. So, as a child while growing up, we had hundreds of “unrelated relatives”. If you ask your mum who is this person? You will hear: call her grandma, call him grandpa, call the other person mummy, daddy, aunty, uncle, etc. This was seen as a sign of respect, you know South Western Nigerians are synonymous with respect (kneeling to thank an ATM is not a problem). This long list of your unrelated relatives comprises the bulk of your wedding invitation, house warming, birthday party, etc.

I am in no way disputing the place of relatives in our lives; everyone will need them at one point in time. What I am trying to say is that we all must be cautious enough. Parents, please define your relationships with anyone around you to your children. This will avoid some unnecessary commitment and pressure on their life, family, career, marriage and finance.

Like Citizens, Like Leaders



When you take a poll among young people about their views, interests, and possible solutions to the many evils bedevilling our nation, majority of them tilt to a particular direction. And you are quick to ask, does it mean they all think alike?

The phrase “I go cut my share” will not be strange to most of us. That seems to be the position of majority of us about leadership positions. A lot of us desire lofty positions in the civil service, military, law, education, music, etc. The sad thing is this; we do not have a perfect example to emulate.

The rot in our politics is not peculiar to it alone, it abounds in all sectors. So, when you hear some young people say:“I go cut my share”, do not be surprised, that is what he/she have heard from those ahead of them, their parents inclusive. Most of our leaders, in whatever sector, are a reflection of the majority of our populace. After all, they did not fall from the sky; they came out from among

us. Our politicians, especially our representative are a true reflection of the types of people in our various constituencies, with only a few exceptions. The youth on the other hand who have been part of the politicking, either as thugs or voters have experience many failed promises and the only thing they use to console themselves is to say, wait till I get there, "I go cut my share". They have never seen a better example. The only examples are the ones we are seeing now.

People don't get to the houses of assembly, government houses or any privileged positions and become corrupt overnight. They never had values of integrity. The positions they are in now just show cases their true selves. So, much more than a Messiah figure we do place our politicians, we can start by been more considerate in our own little spheres, rule with integrity, the fear of God and brotherly values. Righteousness exalts a nation.

Former President of America Barrak Obama once said: "Africa does not need strong individuals, but strong institutions". When we have strong and functioning institutions, anyone can run them and they will succeed. We have laid down rules, let us work by them, and let us uphold the rule of law above any sentiment.

Be the leader you want to see. The truth is, out of the abundance of our citizens comes our leaders, either good or bad.

General Hospital



A couple of years ago, I visited a general hospital. That first visit was followed by a lot of many other visits. I had to be given an appointment, I saw a general practitioner, made complains to her and the next visit was to see another doctor, a specialist. When you visit any general hospital or a medical centre across the nation, I guess that is the usual routine you have to go through.

This chapter is about a habit that has become offensive, though it might have an iota of truth or might not be intended to cause harm initially; it turns out to be a general tendency of measurement to most of us. You hear people say things like; “Igbo girls like money”, “Yoruba girls are dirty”, “all men are wicked”, “short people have anger issues”, etc. To start with, in my University days, I met a friend, an Igbo lady-Amaka (not real name). The kind of kindness she showed me was out of this

world, and with the many fallacies we all grew up with about a particular tribe, section or religion in this nation, I was sceptical about her act of kindness. We became good friends, and I do use to tell her that she was the beginning of my love for the Igbo nation. A single act of kindness.

Our society is filled with various lies than truth. I have also at one time overheard a lady say: “my father will never allow me marry a Yoruba man”. When I probed further, she said her father once had a bad encounter with a Yoruba man while growing up, so he vowed he wasn't going to marry off his daughter to any Yoruba man. This is one of the numerous examples of untrue and unnecessary generalization about us. A sad side to these stories is that they are one sided, selfish, and borne out of hatred. They are not just untrue but total deception.

Back to my hospital experience, no Doctor will approach different patients the same way even if they have the same ailment, no way!

That is the problem with a lot of these one sided stories, you always treat the next person you meet with the attitude of the last person you met as long as they are tribesmen. You will definitely get what you are expecting, a rude attitude. And oh, the person will add to the number of your polls. And you will conclude that all the people from that particular tribe are bad.

Treat people right, smile to them, tell them “thank you”, and help open doors, let the elderly sit first irrespective of what they look like. They will respond positively, that is the way we humans are wired. And yes, stop asking people what tribe are they from when you are meeting them for the first time. It is a bad habit; it gives a bad light of you. I have met people from Potiskum to Port Harcourt, from Buruku to Badagry, from Nembe to Ningi, from Tafa to Tureta, from Onitsha to Ogoni Land and you know what? They are wonderful, loving and receptive people. There are good people from every tribe and likewise bad people.

Awoof



Many Nigerians who lives in the South would have heard of this story one way or the other. When we were much younger, you heard of how Northern Nigeria is the best place to serve as a youth corp member (NYSC). Because of this, a lot of corp members look forward to been posted to the North, just any State. The reasons for this according to the myth was that there is plenty food in the North, when you go to the market, the things you will be given as *jara* (gifts) will be more than the things you had plan to buy, the people are loving and standard of living is relatively cheap. While some of the things above could be true, many of them were over hyped.

The reason a lot businesses fail is because we put the horse before the cart. Check out the numerous “Mama Put” businesses and the ones that are similar to them all over Nigeria, you will notice that most of them close shop just a few months after

take-off. Majority of us have anti-business attitude which is a bane to individual or family prosperity. A lot of our middle class mothers have done a couple of businesses in their lifetime, they end up packing up.

I once heard a story over the radio where a woman who sells bean cake (Kosai or Akara) always invites anyone she knows who passes by to “cimana” (Please eat). One of the presenters said she had to change route because she had the understanding of what that action meant to the woman's business- collapse. And she wouldn't want to be part of that. She said the free bean cake was not peculiar to her alone, anyone the woman recognizes was given that treatment to “Cimana” (Please eat). These include: neighbours, *Zumunta mata* (women choir) members, relatives, etc. If these numbers of people are been offered free bean cakes on a daily basis, what will be left of the business?

From the illustration in the first paragraph, a lot of business owners and patrons are culprit to this. You start a small business or open a shop, instead of allowing it to flourish, many business owners give out what we call “dash or tasting” in our popular parlance. What an aberration? From giving dash and tasting, you end up sharing the business capital too. Check out the many businesses that went down the drain, they have this in common. Also, some of us who are relatives of business owners don't help matters; we

contribute to the collapse of a lot of businesses. Why ask for dash or tasting from a new business? There are no family in business. Remember, “businesses flourish when family and friends pay their bills”.

Awoof dey run belle.

Words



There is a Hausa proverb translated as; “the place someone goes to sing and was given money as appreciation, somebody else will go there to sing and will be beaten blue-black”.

One thing I want us to consider is the possible content of both singers in the proverb above. The truth is they both sang, but can we think further by asking what was the content of both songs? Also, the situation at which both of them sang will ultimately determine the result they get.

The words of our mouth are powerful. Yes, as powerful as giving life or taking it. Most people are in detention today because there was an accusation against them, which is the words of somebody sending them to prison, ultimately denying them freedom. The words we speak require the same effort whether they are positive or negative. So, why not direct your energy in the right direction?

For those of us that have attended a wedding party before, you would have observed the tactics the musician or the anchor of the program use to get money out of the guest. They will sing their praise, call them names that they are not, eulogize them with their ancestral and genealogy name if possible. What is the result? The “Oga, Madam, Alhaji, Chief, Governor, MD or CEO” will begin to spray cash on the musician. Actually, that is the goal of the musician.

“My music cannot come and waste, biko”.

Furthermore, for those of us that are familiar with Northern Nigerian politics (so it is all around the country), there are these praise singers we call “En Mola” (praise singers). They go like this: “*Rankadade, Mai martaba, Allah yajazamani, tusanka turare talakawa, etc*” (hailing a king or royal). No king, governor, senator, house of representative member or anyone that will hear these words and not motion for his ADC to bring a pack of cash to give to the “En Mola”. That is how powerful the words of our mouth could be. But, how many of us are using it positively to create our world?

On the other hand, wars of any magnitude were ignited by war of words. A word wrongly spoken can result to a grenade been fired, and the result is war, retaliation, destruction, loss of lives and belongings. Check it, a common factor among wars of centuries ago and our present times are

wrongly spoken words, confrontations, accusations and counter-accusations. The result is a full blown war.

Decide to use your words positively; it takes almost the same effort to say their opposites. Say thank you on reflex, bless people with gentle words like: God bless you, you are looking good today, and I like your new hairstyle, you are looking healthy today, etc. Words like God bless Nigeria, God bless the President, God bless our leaders, God bless our land should form part of your regular vocabularies. This will portray you in good light and tell that you are positive and optimistic about life.

What can you Do?



This is kind of a million Naira question. What will come to the mind of anyone asked on impulse might be blank and the person will appear clueless. But this is no joke? Now, to the reader, what can you do? You should sincerely answer that question for yourself. Have you?

If you are able to answer in a matter of seconds, it means you have done well to be able to give a sincere or concise answer in that short interval of time. For those who could not really give an answer till now, or you couldn't just think of anything right now, do not worry, you are not in this alone.

Now, that question can look simple to some persons and sound herculean to a lot of other persons. What can you do? To some, it might sound like trying to solve a Schrodinger equation while to some it might come as easy as breathing. However, this question should be effortless to anyone. Yes, anyone. The reason it sounds like a

difficult one is that we do not even understand the question in the first place. So we give a wrong or a difficult answer to this “perceived” difficult question.

Recently, I was discussing with a senior colleague, much elderly than I am. I will like to relate some of the things we discussed. He started by asking how has life been? I am thriving, I replied. He then told me one thing that resonates in my ears till today that I am writing this piece. That was the story of the interview that got him the job he is doing presently.

His narration:

“I woke up to attend that interview like every other one that I have attended in the past, I was optimistic like always. I waited for my turn, and I was called in. I had a lot of experience with interview etiquette since I had attended like a dozen in the past; I was also able to compose myself. After the very many questions and presentations, one of the interviewers asked me, “What can you do?” I did not think of anything else, I was a science student after all. I can sing was my response to him. That answer took us through a whole round of other questions relevant to my “I can sing” reply with the obvious fact that my result is telling that I am a science graduate. I will forever be grateful to those interviewers, they gave me the job, and today I am the face of the media of the

company. I am a science graduate but I am now in charge of advertising, public relations, online promotions, etc. That is what I can do.”

The story above gave me a lot of insight, it is not what our certificates can do, it is what we can do. So, for those who could not answer the question in the first paragraph, what can you do now? It must not be a big thing; it is you that made it look big. Everybody can do something, which is the way God Almighty has created we humans. The reason some people don't maximize their potentials is because they despise their own gifting, they follow after other peoples' gifting, they think it is more “lucrative” than their own. The result is: they do not get to the peak of the “lucrative” potentials they ran after, and their own God-given gifting is unused. What a waste!

“One Corner Guru”



In my undergraduate days I was part of my School's debate team, and we did a lot of travelling- I love that part. People like Bashar, Jedidah and Zainab were part of my school's team (Kebbi State University). We met guys like Samuel & Ojekunle (Babcock University guys), Agbojo Mayowa and Bolaji (University of Abuja guys) and Fatima (the leader of the Al-hikma University team), to mention but a few. David Efosa, a friend from Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma came around. We got to meet each other after the debate competition was over. We shared the same hotel with these guys mentioned above, we talked about everything possible, and you know as undergraduates, we were full of dreams, business ideas, and even possible ways to run this country (we can do all things mehn!). We talked about everything.

Now to the peak of the gist. We were talking about all round knowledge and the need to know a little

about almost anything possible. Like someone said: “You must not know everything about something, but try to know something about everything”.

Suddenly, one of the guys challenged a lady that he can mention up to ten (10) brands of sanitary pads if the girl would do something else- I can't remember that now. To the amazement of all of us seated, this young man began to count the brands of sanitary pads he knows; the girls had to stop him and accepted that he won the challenge. Are you for real? A guy knows almost ten brands of sanitary pads when an average Nigerian girl knows only Always Ultra? I was flabbergasted. The guy got me interested in the gist and we talked till the early hours of the next day. He said: “I mustn't use a sanitary pad to know how many brands there are in the market. I do not have any excuse not to know”.

You do not have to be a “One corner guru”- someone that has only information or knowledge about their field of study, expertise, region of residence or continent alone. You don't have any excuse to have a blind spot in the present century. The world is so interconnected that information is only a click away. Expand your reservoir of knowledge. Remember that saying; no knowledge is a waste? It is as true!

A lot of times, you cannot help but be irritated by some people's attitude and response to life. You hear excuses like: “I am not a science student”, “that is none of my business”, “leave that matter to the lawyers”, “I don't know and I don't want to

know”, “if I begin to read novels, I will sleep” (source of knowledge is now your sleeping tablet abi? Issokay!). The data you spend on surfing the net can also be used to get more knowledge. Add value to yourself. Be like a salt anywhere you enter- adding taste, be indispensable, and be relevant. You can't wish for it, you work for it.

I Want to Become Nothing



While we were growing up as kids, you hear every child saying what they want to become later in life. You hardly hear a child saying I want to become “nothing”. Funny enough, those desires and aspirations change as we grow older. A boy once told me: “I want to become a doctor”, I met the same boy recently and he said he wants to become a lawyer. You can imagine the disparity, from Science to Arts. Many things could have informed his decision. Anyways, I call that the “fantasy” stage. At a very young age like that, he can dream of anything, but must be quick to peg his decision as he is gradually approaching the age of responsibility.

Have you ever heard a child say "I want to become nothing" when they grow up? No way!

They are full of dreams and plans, and rarely are they mediocre aspirations. They want to be Presidents, Doctors, Astronauts, Scientists and so on. They

are on the right track and have the right mind set. “If you need to, bring yourself back to when you had high achievements as a goal. Not everyone can be world champion at something, but you can be the best you can be. That is the first step- and a daily responsibility”. The statement of United States President, Donald J. Trump in his book “Think like a Champion”.

Unfortunately, many of those very ambitious young boys and girls have become adults and surprisingly they are “nothing”. A lot of all those ambitions were said because others were talking. Some people were just wishing they would become something in life without any effort other than wishing. You cannot wish for success, you work for success. Most of the kids that end up becoming “nothing” did nothing in their attempt to become something. If you want to become a doctor for instance, you can't achieve that goal by sitting at home after secondary school, you can't wish for admission into a university, you can't wish to have a good grade to see you through medical school, you can't wish to be a good specialist at whatever specialty you want to choose- NO! You work at it; you put in effort, knowledge, resilience, perseverance, hard work, skill, dedication, etc. You do whatever it takes, whatever is required in your field of desire, you follow the rules and you cannot be denied an exceptional result. So, get up. Charge yourself up, bring that dream you once had, get focused again. You can achieve that thing you were once passionate about. So, do not fret, do

not give, work at it, pursue it.

If you ask majority of the adult you see around you that have become "nothing", they were also wishing to become something at a point in time, but you know what? They did nothing about their desires to become something, so, they end up becoming "nothing". Become that blessing to your family, become that dream/special spouse, become that wonderful colleague, siblings, teacher, cleric, doctor, designer, developer and the list is endless as long as you do not become "nothing".

It is noble to desire or aspire to become something in life; it is nobler and indeed rewarding to pursue it to fruition.

By all Means



When I was in elementary school, I read a story from one of the textbooks we were using then. I don't know how many people also read or even remember that story today. The story was about how orderly, sincere, hardworking and honest our society was at the time. It was a story anyone in the present will be proud to share in order to pass the lessons and virtues to the next generations.

The story was how our early parents- mostly peasants made trade. I read that they would go to the markets or any designated selling points to display their wares, and then they would tag each item with their prices and leave for home. They would leave their wares unattended, unchecked and unmonitored. The most interesting part is that they would return in the evening to where they had displayed their wares and meet their wares intact.

Any customer who likes and wants to buy a particular item would pick it up and drop the exact amount that was on the tag. The owners will meet the complete money for everything that was picked and the remaining unpicked items, all intact.

Have you heard of this story before?

Well, it's a fantastic one and wonderful at the same time. That was how our society was. People were sincere even when no one is watching.

Fast forward to this present age, we are experiencing quite the opposite. Even in big malls where there are CCTV cameras everywhere, some people still manage to steal from these malls. Then, you can imagine what will happen if these malls are unmanned? Your guess is as good as mine. Wickedness is now the order of the day, we want to get rich by all means, achieve our goals by all means, get promotion by all means, etc. Things like killing, kidnapping, money ritual, slandering, jealousy, backbiting, smuggling, etc were not part of us, and they are aberrations. We are saying our politicians have failed us, but, the hands of we the populace are not clean either.

I was listening to a song titled; **“Make Dem Know”** by Spokesman, a Kaduna based artiste and was moved to share the first verse with you.

**“Before beforena together we dey carry leg
Long before we know clothes
When men dey carry leafs
Every journey, every visit
Men dey carry gift
Every greeting wey we carry must carry peace
Boys dey roll together for the same hood
Anytime we enter class, na for the same school
One house to the next dey like the same room
Any small celebration omo we exchange food
But bad belle enter, carry bad blood
Carry hand shake us, but dey carry time bomb
One man against another, brother how come?
Person fit kill another person still dey thank God
Omo which level, this kind life?
Oboy see devil dey give high five
To some men wey no want make we dey progress
But no stopping any man wey Papa God don bless”.**

It shows that we are considerate people, we just stopped being who we are and we are embracing who God did not create us to be.

Unrighteousness



As a man when I go to the market to get an item, I go straight to the seller pick up the item, get a fair bargain and I'm out of the market. Some people on the other hand can spend the whole day in the market just to pick up the exact quantity of item I picked up in less than an hour. The reason is what I personally call “unrighteousness”.

Unrighteousness from the buyer and the seller.

Those of us that are very familiar with market bargain, it can be a whole lot of headache. When you go to a shop for instance to buy an item, the seller will tell you it will go for N10, 000 “jale” (last price), some will even swear with everything “swearable”. Most men for instance wouldn't want to drag much with the seller; they will just say Oga,

“Make I pay N9, 000 abeg”.

The seller will reply, “Oga, na my cost price be that, just bring N9, 500 make we no drag too much”.

The man being very considerate will pay instantly and leave the market in 30 minutes. When he gets home, the man will almost vow not to buy anything for the home by himself because of the reaction of his wife and in some cases daughters. You will hear statements like: “Hey darling, that man has cheated you, it's even a fake item not the original; if I go to the market by myself I can get the original one for N3000 from my customer, etc”. And the man will be discouraged from buying anything next time.

Surprisingly, after a few weeks, that same item could be purchased by the wife or a neighbour's wife now for just N4000. Then the wife's assumption is likely to be true after all. Now when most women go to the market, they are so familiar with the market nooks and crannies, they will start from retail shops, to wholesale shops just to get the perfect bargain. Now, after knowing the possible range the item can go for, they will finally settle for a shop to buy.

“Oga, how much be this item?”.

Madam, na N10, 000.

You know women; they have answers on their fingers tips. “No be only N10, 000 na One million, Ole (thief)! To cut long story short, she ends up buying that same item for N2810, after spending the whole day anyway. Good bargaining power you might say.

My take on the things that goes on in the market is “unrighteousness” on the part of all of us; the buyers and sellers alike. As a buyer, when you know you can sell an item for N2, 000 why say it is N10, 000. It means you will end up cheating anyone who cannot bargain very low with you. I pray for a day that you will meet with a principality like your type who will start pricing it from N5, 00 you will know there is difference between six and half a dozen.

The reason customers will give you such a low pricing is because they know the sellers are not truthful. One of my cousins will say: “don't pity these market people o, if not, they will cheat you”. But, I have worked with a software phone repairer before, he will tell his customers: “I will flash your phone for N1000”. That is the same thing he will tell anyone the 1001 times family or no family. With time, people came to know him with that ideology of saying the exact price the first time you ask for any item. That reputation stuck with him and anyone coming to the shop knows he tells you the amount he can fix a phone on the first bargain.

Our society is bedeviled with a lot of unrighteousness on our path. And this is not peculiar to any sector or region, it's like a gross darkness over our land. Think for instance how contracts are awarded in government's ministries, departments and agencies. The actual person to execute the contract get like 20% of the total money because the money went through many

hands who inflated the prices for their selfish interest.

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is the reproach of any nation.

Diversity



Once upon a time during my high school days, an incident happened in our class and the response I remembered giving to our class monitor was: “I wish everyone is like me, this world will be so sweet”. She gave a sarcastic smile and said: “No way”.

I have gone past many years of experience meeting and interacting with people with wonderful personalities from the day the statement above was made and I can categorically say that it was made out of naivety. If everyone is like me, talking like me, writing, and doing everything like me, life will be boring, predictable and one-directional. Then who will be doing the other things that I cannot do? Who will read this which I have written? Who will complement other areas which I am not very aware of?

So, diversity is the flavour of life. That is why we have a lot of food to choose from, a variety of movie,

different genre of music, different settlement to live in, and different persons in our places of work, worship and market. Just imagine if we only have a single weather, a single type of music, a single brand of car, a single style of clothes, a single house pattern, etc. Thanks to God who loads us with daily blessings by not giving us a “single” type of blessing. Imagine if we have only one race in the world- say: all humans are black for instance. Just imagine, we would not know that some people can be white, red and coloured. These plenty varieties and diversities are the things that have added flavour to life. You cannot just have enough of life, it is so vast and abundant, that's the way God has given it to us- in diverse ways.

Thank God for many different foods, many different courses to study in school (imagine if all of us studied medicine, who will be receiving the treatment and therapy?), many different vocation to choose from, many different environment to live in, many different hobbies to indulge, many different cars to pick from, many different television stations to watch, many different phones to use, many options of radio stations to listen to, many vacation locations, and variety of people to choose a spouse from.

Éfura



Efura is a Yoruba word for: “take heed, be proactive or be at alert”. When you hear this word, especially from an elderly person you will be pricked in your heart and whether or not you have had any inclination of doing wrong prior to that statement, you will immediately admit that all is not well. Like the popular adage: “What an old man sees while lying down on the mat, a young man cannot see even if he climbs an iroko tree”. So, the elders can be said to be the conscience of the society because they are there to guide, instruct and advice the younger generations from falling into the same pit they fell.

God has created us in such a way that whenever we are doing something wrong, our conscience is silently telling us “efura”. The consequences of every action does not just come upon us suddenly, we hear “efura” deep in our mind, but we hesitate and before we could say “Jack” it has happened.

Let's take for example a driver whose speedometer is reading 150km/h. On every standard road, the driver will come across road signs passing different warnings. Signs like: slow down, bump ahead, hospital ahead, market ahead, speed limit-90km/h, U-turn, bridge ahead, etc. All these signs are telling the driver “efura”. Some drivers will ignore every of these road signs and unfortunately when they are involved in an accident, we pity them, wish them quick recoveries and wish their souls rest in extreme case where they pass to the beyond. But, there was a warning, “efura”. Also, the inscription on every pack of cigarette is: “...Smokers are liable to die young”. That is another “efura”. Unfortunately, a lot of people just think that inscription was made to beautify the cigarette pack. When you go to very big industries or construction sites, one major thing they emphasize is safety- another form of "efura". Things like wear safety helmet, wear your seat belt, safety first, etc are boldly written to warn workers. Some veteran workers ignore some of these safety tips and have lost their lives in the process. You cannot be too familiar with a machine, they do not have emotions, and they are not humans.

When God is telling you "efura" through your conscience it is for your good. You do not know the next minute, but God knows the end from the beginning. Have you found yourself in a deep mess before and you begin to recall how you had a premonition to avoid that route, abandon that project or as simple as change that dress? That is

an "efura" from God that knows tomorrow. Learn to yield; it will save you from a lot of trouble.

Are you also ignoring the many "efura" on your journey in life? The junk food your nutritionist has asked you to stop eating, the unhealthy meal you love to consume, the unsafe places you like to hang around, etc. All these premonitions are pointing to a common factor, "efura". Just like a rain is announced by dark clouds or strong winds in some cases, so also a bad health, financial crisis, failed marriage, avoidable accident don't just happen. There were warning signals which a lot of persons ignore. EFURA- take heed lest you fall.

Traveling



There are some of us who look forward to traveling while some other persons dread it. I have had the opportunity to embark on a couple of traveling across Nigeria and I can say most of the interesting ones are those I went in a school/staff bus. It is a good feeling, no check point palaver, no area boys harassment, no fear of been attacked safe for the common discomfort on Nigeria roads-bad and deplorable state of the roads. I used to say traveling was one of my hobbies until a vehicle I once boarded broke down in the middle of nowhere and we had to sleep in the bush. Thank God for safety, but it was not a palatable experience.

In my younger days, I used to look forward to any opportunity to travel because I seldom do. Then, again as a young adult when I was able to decide to travel on my own without waiting for the end of the year “*Ile Odun*” traveling, I came to dislike traveling a bit because of some unpleasant experiences on a couple of them.

I have had the opportunity to visit all the geopolitical zones in Nigeria and spent at least a night there. One common eyesore is the state of our roads and the extortions at various check points. I was once asked to come down in the rain when I was staring at one of the uniform men at a particular check point.

He said: “Na you sabi look abi? I go show you pepper”.

Of course, we had to plead with him, myself and other passengers before he will show me pepper.

In my numerous traveling, one geopolitical zone which I have criss-crossed so well is the North West- maybe because I was born there and I also schooled there. Kaduna-Katsina-Zamfara-Sokoto-Kebbi. You see this route? I have been on it at any time of the day, going and coming from school. I know where to get easy buses when I don't want to use the conventional motor parks. I remember arriving Sokoto at 11pm once and I had to proceed to Kebbi State. I have 8am lecture the next day. I got to school that day around 1am. Remembering those experiences now, I just smile. One thing that stands out on this route that distinguished it from others I have plied in all the geopolitical zones of the country is the state of the road. From the junction of my house, Mando in Kaduna State to the gate of my school, Aliero in Kebbi State, the roads are tarred, intact, no bad portion and the best route I have traveled so far in Nigeria.

Above all, traveling gives first-hand information about a place and the inhabitants. It gives you knowledge and widens your horizons. It makes you know and encounter people outside your state and geopolitical zone. It helps to build a network of friends and potential business associates. One funny thing some parents use as excuse not to allow their children travel is: “the child has not gone to that state before, we have nobody there”. So, they either go with the child or the child miss the trip, even in the case of Post UTME or Admission. But, these same parents will not accompany their children to London.

“Abeg”, where is farther?

London or Lagos, Russia or Rivers, Jigawa or Jamaica, Cross River or Cyprus, Abeokuta or America. ”Or, have you heard anyone say I'm escorting my son to London before?”

That is the essence of NYSC; a lot of people have abused it, Parents and officials alike. I deliberately did NOT choose any North Eastern state to serve, but I was posted there to serve. I enjoyed my service year and now I am writing that I have been to all geopolitical zones and you are reading it. Thanks to NYSC.

You learn when you travel: new culture, new language, new food and you will respect other people's opinion when they speak because you have been to where they live and you know what is obtainable there.

Saint Look



When some people hear the word “movie” or “film” as we popularly call it here, their ears itches because of the great love they have for seeing movies. It is a good way to relax and also get acquainted with movies. The attitude of a lot of persons especially students makes it looks like a jobless hobby. Whether you deliberately create time to see a movie or not, that does not make you more serious or less serious about life. The truth is, you might be indulging in other things that might be taking away your precious time much more than seeing a movie does. So, the choice is that of an individual depending on his/her schedule and likeness. And like the biblical proverb, “there is time for everything under the sun”.

However, different things work for different people. Just like some persons will never be caught dead watching football, so also some persons will never be caught dead seeing a movie. That is the beauty

of life, we have choice and preferences. Some movie lovers are so good you will think they wrote the script together. I have a sibling like that. Just miss a 35 minutes episode, she will take the same amount of time if not more to tell you what you have missed, with all the actions, gestures and suspense, you will feel like you have seen the episode by yourself. Let me call them good observers and narrators. Some people on the other hand, the same 35 minutes episode, they will tell you all of it in 5 minutes; I wonder how they manage to do that. Let me call them good observers and bad narrators. Another category is those who will be seeing a movie together with you from the beginning and will still ask you “Is that Jack?” No, that's Rose. I call them those who watch the back of the screen. Then we have those who will see a movie from the time they started showing the production house name, the executive producers to the cast, and when you ask any character's name in the movie they will not be able to say a word. I call them “Saint Look”.

Seeing a movie is part of entertainment, relaxation and most importantly knowledge. Apart from the laughter, the intrigue, and the suspense, one thing we should be able to get from any movie we decide to see is knowledge. That way, you are on the safe side. I have a friend that does that. Any movie that Moses has decided to see, he will check out every information about the movie. From the location, producers, actors/actresses real names, their previous movies, cost of production, profit made,

duration, to the writer, such that when he is telling you anything about the movie, you will think he was part of the production crew and that is amazing! It is not about the number of movies you have seen that matters, but how many of them have you learnt from? Some people have seen over a hundred movies but cannot remember the story line of any of them. Then how do you remember what you have learnt?

Lastly, man was not created for movies, rather movies was created for the pleasure of man. So, be the ruler, control your appetite, and do not stay in front of a screen all day seeing a movie and the success story of some people. Yes, every movie produced is the success story of some persons. As much you love to see it, make effort to do something worthwhile with your own life too so that others may see, read, learn and be imparted.

Names and Nomenclatures



The way a person or a thing is identified is by its name. And no matter how strange or rare something is, there is always a name to call it especially in the subject of Biology where organisms can get their names from their family name.

A lot of us have a name that we go by in our inner circles or among family members. Some call it nickname, and others call it pet name. Among the youth, it is a common phenomenon to hear them answer a name aside from their birth names. Some of these names are given deliberately, others are jokingly and in both cases, the name stuck. I remember a friend getting his nickname from a drama he acted while in school, from that day on, he was called by the name of the drama character and a time you have to really ask what his real name was. Some people on the other hand form a new name from their birth names as abbreviation and it's still cool.

Another form of name giving comes from people spicing up their birth names to look trendy or short. For example: *Abiodun* can be called *Abbey*. Some people go overboard by spicing up their birth names too much. Your full name means well in your language, but when you add a fine tone to it, it might mean something else in another person's language, and in most cases they don't have palatable meanings. I think some ladies fall victim of this a lot.

Names are forms of identity, so don't lose your complete identity trying to answer what you were not christened. If some family members come looking for you in school or a new environment, will they be able to locate you?

You hear names like *Scorpion*, *Skippo*, *Baddo*, etc.

I was to transfer money to a lady recently, very good looking lady. I can't remember the nickname now, but it was fancy, in the likes of “Sharon Stone”. She gave me her account number only, as that was all I needed for mobile transfer. After seeing her names, I looked at her in the face again, and our eyes met.

I said: “you mean Rukayat Jelili is your name?” She said yes. I just smiled and said OK!

Love Wantintin



When the word love is mentioned, most often a times, it rings a bell in the mind of the listener or reader. To some people it is a memory to relish while to others it is a memory to dread. Some wish the feeling to never end while others pray never to be in that situation again. Whatever side you belong to is a productive of the previous relationship turned bad or good. And this is not a general rule for any other person you will meet. Miracles happen and people are very different.

An Ambassador is the one who represents a king at the court of another king. So, can I define a “relationship ambassador” as the one who represents an individual at the court of the partner?

The work of a relationship ambassador however ends when the partners have agreed to settle their differences and live in peace. This is what a lot of people do not know. A third party is only needed at

the beginning stage of a relationship or when they have little skirmishes. Once they are gone past that stage, relationship ambassador, please go away. Your job is done.

We have seen or heard at one point in time how lovers settle their differences and after a while the person that was mediating for them or the relationship ambassador as I will want to call it turns out to become a foe. In worst case scenario, the mediator is actually trying to pull the couple apart to end up with one of the partners.

One thing to note when two people are in a romantic relationship is this: “nobody is more important to them than themselves”. So, it does not matter how close you might claim to be to either of them, you can still turn out to be a foe. There is this word in our popular parlance, “*Mumu* button”. *Oga*, Madam, anyone that controls that button is the “boss”, just pray your son/daughter is not been controlled by the wrong hand. You see that “*mumu* button”; it is the reason why a lot of people ditch their families for lovers.

“The level of pressure applied on the button is directly proportional to the rate of speed of the lover”. (Isaac Newton's law of love).

Any advice from external sources will always fall on deaf ears. It is a good feeling anyways to be in loving and in safe hands. That feeling is indescribable. You feel like Jeff Bezos even when

you don't have a dime, you feel like Mayweather even when you don't have large muscles, you feel like Donald Trump even when nobody knows you on your street, you feel like Beyonce even when you don't have a Jay Z, you feel like Justin Bieber even when your voice sounds like a frog, you feel like Nicki Minaj even when your Instagram followers are just ten (10), you feel like Mikel Obi even when you play for Agege FC, you feel like the stars- on top of the world, and like the sun- far above principalities and power.

Classroom Crush



The word crush in this context is a feeling of likeness towards somebody which does not last for long in most cases. Likeness for someone exists in all spheres of life, from our homes, offices, workshops, schools to our clique of friends. Today, we will be looking at classroom crush. It occurs between the four walls of our academic environment. To be fond of someone or to have a likeness for someone is not the problem, the problem however is the person involved. Majority of us will frown at the concept when a minor or a school child is involved. We will say: the elderly person is taking advantage of the “minor” who in most cases don't have a say or lacks the courage to resist.

At one point in time, all of us have heard of one funny love story or the other. I call it funny because it is not the normal thing obtainable. Let me share a story. During my NYSC days, when I arrived at the school I was posted to serve, one

thing the Principal emphasized in his welcome address was the need for us to avoid any form of amorous relationship with the students as much as possible. He continued by saying a former female corp member in that community was impregnated by her student. We also had a case where a female student alleged that a male teacher was victimizing her because he had made advances at her which she turned down. He denied the allegation. Whether the allegation was true or not, disciplinary action was taken by the school authority. Furthermore, we have heard of cases where students drop “love letters” on their teachers' table, telling the teacher how they feel about him/her. Some of these situations have led to confrontations between parents and the school authorities in cases where these relationships between the student and staff actually materialize. The only relationship between a teacher and a student should be in the classroom.

All of these unhealthy relationships did not start overnight. They were conceived, nursed, strategized and ultimately executed. It might have started by passing a thought provoking comment or compliment. Teachers should avoid using endearments on their students as much as possible. Words like “My dear, you look beautiful/handsome, you look sexy today, fine girl/boy, etc” should not be used in the classroom. Some students who are very sensitive especially those that are in their teenage age will give a deep thought to it. They are at a stage in their lives that

words from others mean approval. Again, if these comments becomes frequent, the child becomes emotionally distraught and the academic performance which is the primary aim of coming to school begins to drop. You don't want to be the reason your student's performance drops.

Pregnancy



Pregnancy literary means the stage where a woman is carrying a foetus or an offspring of her kind in her womb for a particular period until delivery. A pregnant woman is in a class of her own, she is not like every other woman. Though, pregnancy differs for different women, and even for a particular woman. Every woman will tell you how their experience differ for different pregnancy they had. A particular pregnancy might be tough and another might be less stressful, irrespective of the number of times they have been pregnant before.

One thing again that is peculiar to pregnancy is the “unreasonable appetite”. Permit me to say most pregnant women are not “normal”. It is only a pregnant woman that will wake her husband up by 2am and request to eat “boli”- roasted plantain. If you are in the part of town that runs a 24 hours shop and you are lucky to get her what she demanded, she will manage to take a bite and ask for something else. She might request for a cup of

coffee with a honey flavour. God bless pregnant women who have supportive husbands. So, next time you see your male colleague whose wife is pregnant sleeping at work, do not be quick to judge him, he kept vigil with his pregnant wife. In short, “they” are pregnant. She just happens to be carrying the protruding stomach. Again, it is only a pregnant woman that will stick her nose in the bowl of the toilet, just to perceive the smell. Some women cannot eat their own food once they are pregnant, some cannot cook or perceive any aroma of food, and in some extreme cases, they develop a dislike for their husbands, the husband dare not attempt to come close to her, he will get a slap. God bless understanding husbands. It is not easy.

A lot of us young people especially are carrying one “pregnancy” or the other. You see things differently from others, you have a clear-cut idea of what you want in life, you have unusual appetite for excellence and success, you know you are a different breed and that you desire more out of life. The problem is that you have allowed other people's opinion to undermine your abilities- to abort your pregnancy. Get up, return to your vision-full self, return to your pregnancy stage and be tenacious until you deliver the “baby”. Just like a pregnant woman, your demands might seem “unreasonable, unconventional and unusual”, do not be discouraged, it is because you are meant for a different triumph.

Baa Shiga



“*Baa Shiga*” is a Hausa word translated as “No Entry”. If you are familiar with the northern Nigerian terrain, you would have come across this inscription on a hand-full of houses. It is a warning sign denying you access to any house you see “*Baa Shiga*” on. It is synonymous to the famous “Beware of dogs” warnings you see on some houses around town. So, in your own good, you don't venture to enter such houses alone without an escort.

However, the major difference between “*Baa Shiga*” and “Beware of dogs” is that “*Baa Shiga*” is a gender restriction. It is a warning to keep away the *non-mahram* (non-relatives or marriageable men) from the female folks. There was one of my colleagues as a corp member who entered a house that has the inscription “*Baa Shiga*”; he came out dazed because he entered without an insider as a guide or escort. I told him, “You are lucky you didn't come out with a black eye”. He said, they shouted on him and asked him to go out in haste.

So, when next you see your male colleague with a black eye at work, maybe the wife was trying to tell him “Baa Shiga” last night and he didn't listen.

The customs, norms and tradition across the country is different. So, when next you go to any part of the country, be careful enough to observe their way of life and ask questions. It will save you from harm's way.

Three Months of Play, Three Weeks of Work



When I was in the University, someone gave a description that has clung to my heart ever since. I have not forgotten, it is still fresh in my mind and I will relate it verbatim here. He said: “in this school, I know a student who does not read until he hears there is test tomorrow or examination time's table is out. All he is concerned about is to attend lectures, and he does that well. There is a second student who attends lectures and reads at almost any given opportunity, you always see him in class reading or in the library researching. Then, there is a third student who does not care about attending lectures, he does only occasionally. All he cares about is to read on his own, and he is good to go”. He concluded by saying, all the three students above are first class students in their various discipline.

The description above is true because all the three students understood their personalities. If the second and third student want to envy the first

student or try to live like him, they will fail, they will fall short of their potentials and we will be quick to say “they are dull or unintelligent” students. I bet to disagree that there is a dull or unintelligent student. People often say this to justify laziness, hide their weakness, and give excuse for their mental laziness attitude. Every student can do excellently well. However, you cannot do it on somebody else' terms and conditions. You are unique, you don't have your kind here on earth, you are different, you are the only one carrying the finger print you have, just you. So, do not treat or compare yourself to others, you are not “others”, you are “YOU”.

I remember my first year in the University when I was still trying to know myself and the best condition of study that suites me. I had a test to write, MTH101. Like the custom was then, we go to class in mass, read in mass, sleep in mass and return to the hostel in masses whether you have gained anything or not. As long as the leader or “spokesman” of the group says it is time to go, everybody automatically is ready to go. I still wonder how that works till today and I just smile whenever I remember. I kept vigil in class doing what we call overnight reading, just to read for the test. I returned to the hostel in the early hours of the day, took my bathe and went to the class area to take the test. I went blank in the test hall, I had to submit. When the test score came out, I scored “0.5” out of a possible 20 marks. By the grace of God, that was the first and last time I read at night

or did what we call TDB- till day break until I graduated. I withdrew from the masses; I began to read during the day. I go back to the hostel latest by 11pm that is when majority of students are just coming out to read. The result was jaw dropping. I did very well and graduated well without ever having to read into the early hours of the next day from the previous night. Different things work for different folks. Understand thyself.

A strange thing however is the attitude of most students to study. They want to play for three months (the duration of a semester) and work for three weeks (the duration for examinations). *Kolewerk!* Some people want prayers to do what study can do for them. Oh, you can watch movie very well, I know. You think it will always be like the case of Dr. Ben Carson, in his book gifted hands where he saw an exam question in his dream. That is an exceptional case, and they are seldom to come by. Remember, he vowed never to repeat that, never to be unprepared for an examination. You cannot replace the place of preparation. The promise of “I will bring all things to thy remembrance” is talking about the things you have read, the things you know. If you know nothing, what will be brought to your remembrance?

Were



What you are seeing is not an English word. I am referring to a Yoruba word, *Ẹ̀wẹ̀rẹ̀*. Can you translate it now? For those of you who do not speak Yoruba, let me say what it means. It is literarily translated as “Mad Man”. If you have a Yoruba friend who has not called you “*Ẹ̀wẹ̀rẹ̀*” before, it is either you are not very close or you are not peers. Most a times, they do not mean that you are actually mad or you need to be in a Psychiatric hospital, it is just one of the slangs of the street. It is very common especially among young people.

On a normal conversation, you will hear something like: “*Ẹ̀wẹ̀rẹ̀, bawoni?*” “Mad man, how are you?” The other person might kindly respond that he is fine or he will also take on his friend. It is synonymous to what the English people call capping- it is obtained from the word capitalization. Guys in close circle of friendship capitalize on the weakness or the non-eloquence of other members of the group. This table mostly

turns around as the guys that were termed weak turn out to become the king of capping or Yabbing as we call it in our popular parlance. The best “*yabber*” is the boss all things been equal, that is if it does result in physical brawl.

Furthermore, it is also like the Hausa word “*Shege*”. It literally means bastard. But you hear young people using it when they communicate. They do not actually mean that you are a bastard; it is just one of the street slangs in Northern Nigeria. You hear something like: “*Shege, yakake?*” “Bastard, how are you?” The other guy will most definitely reply with a high level of sarcasm and they are cool, good friends. If you have a Hausa friend and he has not used the word on you before, you are either not too close or your age bracket is too wide.

Different people, different age groups, different generations, different families have one or two slangs that are peculiar to them. You will never know the meaning unless you are told. I remember while we were growing up, there is a slang we used to call meat in our house. So, when Mum is with a visitor or someone that is not too close, instead of saying can I pick the meat? We will simply use the slang, and she will simply say yes or no.

Iyawo (Pronounced E-Yawo)



The word iyawo is a Yoruba name for bride. You often hear it when you are about to wed or when you are just wedded until a baby comes and they begin to call you by the baby's name- Mama Junior, Mama Bomboy, Mama Akpos, etc. It is a popular word especially among Yoruba speaking people of South West Nigeria. Other regions have their own variations. The family members and friends calls the bride-to-be “*iyawo-wa*” (our bride). The bride-to-be blushes and smiles while preparations are in top gear for the day of her wedding.

However, there are brides-to-be who have carried that name “*iyawo-wa*” for years, some for almost a decade. Ask questions. Do not be tied down by answering that name as if it is a traditional title. You know, some Yoruba words and spellings are very funny; you can have a single word with up to twenty meanings. For example: *ese* (thanks), *ese* (feet), *ese* (sin), *ese* (sieve it), *ese* (change it), *ese*

(but why?), etc. Though, they are differentiated by some signs or marks to change the tone, the spellings are the same. So, when next they call you *iyawo-wa*, and the status is not likely to change anytime soon, call your fiancé and his parent let them actually explain to you the true meaning of *iyawo-wa* (our bride). Is it what you are thinking or there is a meaning you do not know?

Now to a more hilarious side, for those of us that are familiar with the prefix- “e”. As in e-commerce, e-banking, e-wallet, etc. Where the “e” means electronic. Most of those who have answered the name *iyawo* (*e-yawo*) for close to a decade belong to this category.

Again, “*yawo*” is a Hausa word which means “strolling” or “hanging out”. So, to translate the word *iyawo* (*e-yawo*) means electronic strolling or hanging out. That is what a lot of relationship is all about these days- hanging out together on all social media you can afford. From Instagram, Facebook, Snap chat, to WhatsApp. The whole world knows you both together, they are already calling you *e-yawo*, that is exactly what you are doing- electronic hanging out. And he is posing a threat to potential suitors, blocking them from you like a Mount Zion that cannot be moved.

Sister, you better ask questions unless you are comfortable with the name *e-yawo*. They have been calling you “*iyawo-wa*” (*e-yawo-wa*) for years now, he is not saying anything about consolidating

those words and you are okay with the “yawo”. It's like your head is paining you? You better place your focus where focus is due. Unless you want to become “Lord of the rings”. So, Miss Sister, when people are calling you “*iyawo-wa*”, kindly ask your fiancé. He is the only one who knows the correct meaning. Maybe it is “*iyawo-wa*” (our bride) or “*e-yawo-wa*” (our electronic hang out).

Shebi I Told You?



That is a popular line in the Nigerian Pidgin English. It is a statement to mock or jibe at someone because of an earlier statement or threat of no good outcome. For example: when someone wants to start a business, let's say a poultry business. When you try to make consultations, get information and advices, you will hear a lot of them, and discouragement in most cases. After some years of running the business with no tangible success or peradventure the business fails, you will hear something like “*Shebi* I told you?” A time, this statement comes from supposed professionals, friends, experts, family members and close confidants. Their argument will always be in these lines: “I have being in your shoes before, I have done this business over and time again with the same result, you must be joking, that is unheard of, etc”.

A Yoruba proverb is translated as: “a war foretold does not kill a wise cripple”. Take note of the word

“wise”. When there is an announcement of war in a few days' time, a wise cripple will begin to move to the direction of safety immediately. He needs not compare himself with able-bodied men who can run to safety immediately the war starts. Because it will take a cripple a longer time, he must begin his journey to safety immediately. Unfortunately, most of us become unwise; we ignore warning signals in a gloomy relationship, shady business environment, unwholesome decisions, etc.

Shebi i told you not to marry *Lagbaja*, *Shebi* i told you not to do automobile business, *Shebi* I told you not to travel, *Shebi* I told you not to go out, and many other *Shebis*. We have made real the predictions, sentimental statements, and biases of these people through our own carelessness. We have elevated them to become an overnight “prophet” because we failed to do the necessary things. Who does things the way every other person does it and expect a different result? Some of those *Shebis* are borne out of jealousy and not sincerity or concern. “That your name is Godspower does not mean you should go urinate in the shrine of *Amadioha*, you will see godspower, they will show you pepper”. So, do not be careless, be a “wise cripple”, be bold, be positive, be hardworking, be sincere and be committed to all that your hands find to do. That is the only way to prove all these “*Shebi* prophets” who are waiting to ridicule you wrong.

Dangote



The first day that I had the opportunity to meet Alhaji Aliko Dangote- Africa's richest man, was a day to relish for the rest of my life. It was a dream come through. I was smiling and very excited all through. I was ushered into his office by someone; the office had a palatial look. The collection of art works on the wall, the polished mahogany table, and the state of the art equipment that graced every corner of the office is a testament to my present location. I tried to keep my calm as much as possible, but I was awed. He stood up to welcome me and motioned that I sit in the chair across his. I thought: “this is me sitting across the richest man in Africa”. That was the first time I am meeting him personally. Again, he was a complete gentleman, much more personable than the person we all see in the media. Appreciation goes to everyone that made this possible.

Time is precious, without wasting much of it he went straight to ask the reason for my visit.

Though he had been briefed by one of his aides as he admitted in the course of our conversation, he requested that I go over it myself. And that was what I did. Sir, I said with all of the confidence I could muster, I have a business proposal and I have spoken to other people and financial institutions about it just the way I am doing to you now. I will like your company- Dangote group to be our largest partner owing to your nationwide presence. The business is what I call “Twin Tower”.

The “twin” means we will be doing two things majorly- a restaurant and a shopping mall. I know there are numerous restaurants and shopping malls scattered across the country, but we hope to do it differently, we want a different result. It will be operated “247”, that is a twenty four hour a day-seven days a week operation. You can come in at any time of the day and get something to eat or you can drive down at 12midnight and get a surprise birthday gift for your loved ones. It is a grand plan, we plan to have a branch in every state capital and the federal capital territory (FCT) for a start, and that is where you come in, Sir. It will be another opportunity of employment for thousands of Nigerians and we will be meeting needs of people. It will also represent our local content advocacy and it will be a world class model with the best customer service experience. There will also be home delivery services and a customer can make an order of what they will like to eat five minutes to arrival and be sure to have their meal ready on arrival. I went through many other details with

him- all thanks to his time. Some of which are registration, legal advice, consultations, property acquisition, mode of operation, expectations, etc. He sighed, and said: "it is a nice idea; we just need to bring in others to make it an across-the-nation appeal. He promised to look into it and immediately called someone to get the proposal and the slide I had brought with me. That first visit was to be followed by many others with him and many other partners. During these processes, we had to contact and visit a lot of persons: professionals, artisans, traders, drivers, farmers, etc to inquire one thing from them or to employ their services in advance. They will be part of the operation chain from start to finish. They all obliged.

After two years of many works and preparations, I was invited by the Dangote group and the news was: "with the number of those that have shown interest and ourselves as a major partner, we are ready to be part of this project", thank You Mr. Isaac. My joy knows no bound at that pronouncement. It means we will soon have a shop that never closes door dotting the major cities of Nigeria, a restaurant that you can find something to eat at any time of the day, a "twin" business arena that never say goodnight. Everyone in attendance was happy and the ovation was massive. In the midst of the applause and cheering, I heard my alarm, its 5:00am. Oh, I have been dreaming. Stand up, pray and get ready for work young man.

May DANGOTE see this- my Opinion!

Sixteen is Greater than Nineteen



For those of us who are familiar with basic arithmetic, you will know that the above statement is false. How can sixteen be greater than nineteen? It is mathematically impossible.

The scenario above is what our nation Nigeria has become. From the North, East, West to the South. We celebrate falsehood, incompetence, corruption, nepotism, sectionalism and those who champion this course.

Sometimes ago in the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) during the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan that was what played out. There was an election and the result was that the winner is the person with 16 votes and the loser is the person with 19 votes. Typical of Nigeria right? Why was there an election if you already had a preferred candidate? The contest was between former Rivers State Governor, Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi and former

Governor of Plateau State, Senator David Jonah Jang. The latter became the Chairman of the governors' forum even though he had sixteen votes. That decision led to a fall out between President Jonathan and Governor Amaechi and the rest as they say is history. The argument of many Southerners then was why will Amaechi “betray” his brother? He should have understood and play along. In an election that he won? His defection with other governors (the G5) was the beginning of the calamity that later befell the then ruling party- PDP

Furthermore, early in 2018, former President Olusegun Obasanjo wrote an open letter to President Muhammdu Buhari. The reaction of many of Buhari's goons was not palatable at all. They called Obasanjo all sorts of names on social media. These were the same people who called Obasanjo a “saint” when he wrote a similar letter to former President Goodluck Jonathan in 2015 prior to the elections. So, we hail criticisms when targeted at others and we wail when targeted at our brothers or kinsmen, is sixteen not greater than nineteen?

The rate of intolerance in the country is alarming, and funny enough it is coming from supposedly educated folks. When you go through some comment on social media, you will agree that we are sitting on a time bomb waiting to explode. We can tolerate “our own people”, when they do wrong we cover them, when they steal we say it is not

“corruption”, when they heat up the polity to ignite violence we hail them. We never see anything wrong in their decision, we give them a blind following, “*hook, line, sinker, fisherman, boat and net*”. We call them “*maiadalci, odogwu, Oshoko, etc*”. But as soon as they are not “our people” or kinsmen, we see everything wrong with their decisions, nothing they ever say is right, we just shut them out and black list all of their ideas. We call them “*arne, oloshi, mayaudari, oloriburuku, etc*”. See, nobody cares what section of the country you are from, if you can deliver and make the lives of Nigerians better, I am your fan. Not just reading to us statistics and figures that does not have any direct impact on the man on the street.

Let us be objective in our criticisms, do not fabricate lies against a government (Past, Present and Future) just because the President is not from your language, region, geopolitical zone or religion. Remember, what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Be sincere with every countryman. Instead of complaining, pray. God bless the President, God bless Nigeria, God bless our Governors, and Nigeria shall prosper. These are some words of optimism and prayers that we can declare every morning. “Decree a thing and it shall be established”. When we are positive enough and when we say positive things about our country enough, we begin to see positive changes. We begin to see the Nigeria of our dreams.

God bless Nigeria.

Consistency



During my secondary school days in Kawo, Kaduna State, there was a place majority of the students of my school (Fellowship Baptist High School Kaduna) visit after closing to buy “*Wara*”-Soya beans cake. Those of you who are familiar with the lifestyle in Northern Nigeria, you can testify to the fact that “*wara*” is one of the readily available snacks that you can feed on and it is relatively affordable. They come in different shapes, sizes and tastes. So we go to “*maiwara*” (soya beans cake seller) after closing whether you have money to buy or not, once you accompany someone there, you will get at least a bite. I remember how a lot of us will keep a part of our pocket money just to buy “*wara*” after closing. That “*wara*” is the best I have tasted.

Over a decade after finishing my secondary school, I was around the area and somebody said: “do you remember the *wara* we used to buy in those days? I said yes. He said: “they still operate”. I was

amazed. This “*mai Wara*” sells in front of their house, they are a large family. When one of the girls gets married, the next person in line takes over, the mothers do the making inside the house and the children do the frying and selling outside. So, it has become a family business. I met them frying that “*wara*” when I started secondary school, I did six years in secondary school and they were still frying; now it's over ten years that I left secondary school and they are still in the business. That is sixteen years, and I know the business predated my arrival in that school. For those of you around Kawo axis in Kaduna State, I am talking about the “*mai wara*” on Lafia Road. That “*wara*” is the best I have tasted. (I hope this “*mai wara*” will pay me for this publicity).

Now, the problem of many businesses in Nigeria is lack of consistency. A lot of businesses start and before people get to reckon with them, they either pack up or change location. One thing that I believed has helped the family of the “*mai wara*” above is their location. They are in their own house. So, asset acquisition is good for any business. Some people were able to stay 40years and above in their place of business because they own it, if they were renting it and the landlord notices that they are thriving, he will increase the rent astronomically or put up a similar business close to them and become a fierce competitor. Another thing is quality; the “*wara*” is the best I have tasted up till date. They maintained the quality from the days we used to buy each for N5

till now that it goes for N10.

In anything you do, business, career, family, relationship, etc, consistency is as good as doing it, when people know you enough they can recommend you to others without fail. This will lead to increased opportunity and you wouldn't have to pay for publicity, others will do it for you, just like I'm doing for this "*mai wara*". Be consistent! Be known for something, stay at it, do not quit, increase your skill at it, become an authority in it, offer top notch services, people cannot resist excellence.

Arewa Girl



*A*rewa means north. It is a Hausa word.

I met a lady, let me call her “*Arewa* girl” (not real name) as a teenager in secondary school. She was a very pretty and well behaved lady. We were class mates and we became good friends. Before we became friends however, we had a funny beginning.

I was sandwiched between two girls in my first year in secondary school by our form master. His explanation was that “I want you students to form positive relationship and learn from each other”. That was how I became “*Arewa* girl's” seat mate. It was a new class and we were all young lads with an obvious penchant to learn. I didn't like the fact that I was sitting in between two girls and we were always arguing about it. We all dread the reaction of our form master to this information. “*Arewa* girl” and I got into a heated argument one day and I

slapped her. She walked straight to the staff room to report me to our form master. Oh, I got the beating of my life that day and he made me apologized to her.

In our sophomore year, “*Arewa girl*” and I became very good friends and anytime we want to have a good laugh, we will talk about “the slap”. I will tease her that she cried and she will also tease me that I got whipped by our form master. This was the beginning of some sort of attachment. We became inseparable.

In our final year, we became so close it was obvious we were attracted to each other emotionally. And so it was. It was the days that we both had no phones, we communicated through our Parents' phone after school. One memorable event was after school exams when school activities were less serious; she wanted making her hair so she was to loose the present one. She asked her friends to help her, I volunteered and she agreed. Oh, that feeling was soothing. “This is me loosing the hair of the girl I love”. Time passed and even after secondary school we were “intact”.

A time of decision came. We had to tell ourselves the truth. It was obvious we both loved each other. We concluded: “in order not to get to the point of conflict with our parents and faith, let us call it quit”. And so our love story ended. You might think, without struggle? No, we didn't know better, we were just sincere and naïve young people. We

were good friends afterwards, she married recently and I attended her *Nikkah*.

In life, you have to let go a times for a greater good. Not because you are timid, rather on the contrary because you are strong. If we had continued, you might wake up one day and hear different headlines on national dailies: “Christian boy elope with Muslim girl, riot broke out as a boy was seen hobnobbing with a girl of another faith (I live in Kaduna and this was the cause of a major crisis that sacked a whole town), father disowns daughter for decision to marry a man of another faith, community braces for a showdown as young lovers dares family members to marry, etc”. What good will all these do? None!

That was the beginning of my natural attraction to *Arewa* ladies, the beautiful, elegant, intelligent and the brave among them. Like Tony Elumelu said about Nigerian and Senegalese jollof rice, don't ask me if they are the most beautiful ladies in Nigeria.

Temitope Ademiluka



My first real experience of pain of losing someone to death was with this lady. My grandfather died before my birth, so I can't really relate. My grandmother died in 2016, but I had met her just once, so I couldn't feel a deep pain of losing her.

Temitope was my friend from Secondary school days. We have a small circle of friends that made our friendship and meeting possible even after leaving secondary school. She was intelligent, lively and fun to be with. We both were known in each other homes and welcomed anytime.

Everyone got admission and we went to the University. It was a thing of joy and a sign of progress. We were all happy, everyone is moving forward. Since going to school, meeting physically became difficult. Our schools' calendars differ, so we rarely meet while on break.

The last time I saw her was in December 2015, she was already serving as I await my own mobilization for NYSC. It was good to see her after so many years. We had a lot to talk about- plans, marriage, challenges and victories of life so far. We parted and bade each other farewell.

On the 12th March, 2017 another friend from secondary school days called to break the news of Temitope Ademiluka's death.

“Hello, you hear say Tope don die?”

I was dumfounded, I asked, which Tope? I had to end the call; I don't want to hear bad news. Besides, it was a Sunday afternoon, I just got back from church and my faith has received a lifting. I quickly went to her Facebook wall, and behold, it was there. Friends were already mourning her passing. I still don't want to believe what I saw, I put a call through to another friend and the news was confirmed. Oh God, I said. I wept; it brought sorrow to my heart. The last time we spoke, she only hinted that she was ill but receiving treatment. I never knew that will be our last communication on this side of eternity. That was how Temmy as I fondly called her and saved her contact on my phone went to be with the Lord in her prime.

I was glad I spoke to her few months before she went incommunicado prior to her death. Do good to check on people as long as you have decided to

keep them as family and friends. Do not wait till you want a favour from them before calling or visiting. That might be the last time or the last impression you will create in their minds forever. You don't only lose people to death, some is relocation, so far apart you are not assured of ever meeting them again on this side of eternity. Value people!

Budget Padding



The democracy of Nigeria has been a very intriguing one since it began in 1999. And thankfully it has not been interrupted like the previous democratic dispensations in Nigeria. Also, for the first time in the history of Nigeria, children that were given birth to in the democratic era will be able to vote and participate in politics. This is a great feat. For a very long time, the things that happen in Nigeria's politics have been of interest to me. If you want to feel a variety of emotions, look for some video clips or statements of some prominent politicians, you will laugh, cry, grin, and feel pity for our country. May our leaders succeed!

One thing that has caught my own attention is the way new words, statements and phrases are produced occasionally in our political arena. Words like: “sixteen is greater than nineteen, stealing is not corruption, hullabaloo, laconic lacuna, budget padding, *boko haram* is

technically defeated and recently *za-oz* room” (You know right?).

Some of these vocabularies are not new to the English dictionary, we just find them suitable to address a particular situation we find ourselves, and when it is used by a prominent person, it becomes widespread and soon everyone is using such vocabularies.

It was in this present administration we started hearing the word “budget padding”. It was an attempt to describe the action of the National Assembly by increasing the proposed budget of the Nation that was submitted by the executive arm of government. This act was justified by the national assembly as vetting since they are not rubber stamp legislature. This act of increasing or reducing a proposed budget as the case may be is not a new thing I want to believe, but it became pronounced in this administration and so, “budget padding” became a famous phrase in Nigeria.

However, I will be talking about a variant version of budget padding. There is a trend going on recently especially among ladies. They have come up with the habit of increasing their physical appeal; they look more beautiful, more endowed, in some cases taller. But when you meet them in person they are the opposite of what they look like in their pictures. Some of these things are butt pads, push-up/padded bras, concealer, foundation, girdle (waist trainers), and in some cases surgery. Some

ladies look opposite of their real selves when they put on these enhancements.

The twist to this is that, a guy will see you with some of these budget padding and think that that is your real look and shape. You know men are first attracted by physical beauty before ever discerning the substance you are made of. An innocent brother will be thinking he has landed a big deal, he will even show you off to family and friends. He never gets to see you in the morning without those heavy make ups; he never gets to sleep with you (of course that is against his core values).

He marries you and when he was ready to enter “*za-oz*a room”, suddenly you is are looking different, no endowed breast, no round bosom, and pimple all over- fake everything. *Haba!* It is like ordering for iPhone 6 online and they deliver a toy phone to your doorstep (you too check it). This is the reason behind some marriage crisis- fake lives, infidelity (I am not justifying it though), unforgiveness, resentment, bitterness, and a lot of unrest today.

Ladies, nobody is saying you should not apply make ups, but please be modest and reasonable about it. You don't have to look like Kim Kardashian, just be yourself and not a fake version of yourself. Be simple. Some of the guys you are wearing the butt pads, push up bras, and the likes to impress will actually appreciate you the way you are.

Some guys like it simple and plain. Yes, look good, look attractive but not like a doll at the end. Be proud of your body- your upper and lower region alike. You did not create it, God did. So appreciate what you have, glorify God with your body. You don't have to look like a masquerade in the attempt to look. A colleague once told me how she nearly lost an eye while fixing lashes, that was the last time she attempted it. You don't have to get to that extent.

Much more than these physical enhancements, be of good virtue, add goodness to virtue, add patience to goodness, add kindness to patience and add charity to kindness.

Beautiful people are good people.

And guys, be watchful of all these social media pictures, those are not their real faces. Budget padding is real.

Are you like Most people?



Plenty of us might not have had the opportunity to grow up in VGC, VI, Lekki, Ikoyi, Ungwan Rimi, GRA and other highbrow locations across the country. Some might not have schooled at Kings College, Queens College, Adesoye College, Loyola Jesuit College and other top colleges around the country, but these should not be your limitations if not people like Governor Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai, President Olusegun Obasanjo, President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammad Buhari will not be who they are today. They rose from obscurity to prominence.

The Bible says, "do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind". Take note of the word "renewing". It is a continuous effort, you don't stop doing it. Feed your mind with positive things that speak of where you want to see yourself. Listen to healthy music, read mind enriching books, attend challenging seminars and keep lifting companies. Don't be

around people that will always remind you of how inadequate you are. You ask some people how they are doing? They respond by saying "we are managing", no, don't be around such toxic people. You would have heard these lines, "if you hang around five millionaires, you will eventually turn out to be the sixth". No jokes!

Do not hang around the "*wahala dey*, I don die, *temi bami*, I don finish, I no get" kind of people. Even if you don't look like where you want to be today, keep saying it, keep declaring it, don't stop talking about it.

I went out for lunch with a lady recently and she said: "Isaac, keep your money. Let me give you a treat". She paid the bills. I was dumbfounded, I salute that effort no matter how small it looks. That's a life of abundance, that's how royals live, always watching out to give. Let me tell you something, when you see a prince or a princess, they might not have a dime on them, but with the way they carry themselves, you will be willing to do them favour, they don't beg, they attract goodness. See yourself as one.

Aunty, how are guys going to take you serious? Anytime you meet a new guy, it is that week that your cream, subscription, and house rent expires. That is the week your birthday "miraculously" falls. Stop playing a victim and living like a destitute. Stop that entitlement mentality. Who was paying your bills before meeting that guy? It is

a relationship for God sake and not a business empowerment.

Uncle, how is any girl going to take you serious? You can't even take her out for lunch, every time come to my house, fasting and prayer. Some will even say, "I will spend on you when we are married". Bros, a good Saturday can be perceived from Friday.

Please, nobody owe you anything. Stop feeling entitled. Stop asking people you perceive to be wealthy money on your first meeting. I learnt this the hard way. I remembered during my NYSC days, some colleagues and I were privileged to meet an honourable in the State house of assembly through his personal assistant (P.A). We just complained, told him a lot of ways we need help as corpors in that community, etc. After everything, he brought out fifty thousand naira (N50,000) and gave to us with a promise to see us soon. Men and brethren, that "soon" is still not here. Himself and his P.A stopped taking our calls.

Learn to be the giver, don't say what I have is small. Overtime, you will be used to saying "I don't have" on impulse even if you have. The word of God is mind blowing. "Blessed is the one that scatters because he will have abundance, he that gathers will always be in want". Is this logical? No! But that is the way of God, it looks foolish to the carnal mind. How can he ask us to scatter if we want to have more?

Lastly, "the life of a man does not consist in the abundance of things he owns". Do good. Be good. Give to people. Buy them lunch, if someone gives you lift daily to school or office, buy fuel for them a times, add to their money when going to the mechanic occasionally. When going around town with people and they pay your transport, volunteer to pay when returning. Stop showing everyone around that you are "smart".

Are You Your Type's Type?



As a very young adult, I used to fantasize about the type of ladies I want in my life and some popular people I saw on television screens were top on my list of crush. One of them was the petite pop musician Chidimma Ekile aka Ms. Kedike. I remembered boasting to my cousin with great believe how I was going to go do my NYSC in Lagos state, locate where Chidimma lives or works, walk up to her one day and tell her how much I love her. Men and brethren, I was posted to Taraba, yes Cameroon border. The crush thing was so serious, another one was Asa, the soul musician at a point. I had a lot of them and I know it is not peculiar to me as a youth.

A lot of us have fantasize about someone at one point in time due to somethings we like or admire about them.

I saw a video recently by Toke Makinwa and she asked a question: are you your type's type? This is

the truth of the matter. Somebody like me, I was crushing on Chidimma, but am I Chidimma's type? So, before you fall head over heels for someone, ask yourself: are you your type's type?

This is not an attempt to belittle yourself or an issue of low self-esteem but to be truthful. The stories of an Emir's son marrying a regular girl from Kawo is rare and cannot count as part of statistics. The trouble, the humiliation, the family feud between the in-laws is way too much in most cases.

Recently, Governors Ganduje and Ajimobi's children got married, no problem, no noise, no headache. Imagine if the Son had insisted that he wants to marry a regular girl, they will first ask who is her father, where does he works, where do they vacation, and so on. We have seen exception to this, but how often are they? How peaceful and easy did it come for the couple and their families? Is the marriage life not actually hijacked by one family because they actually paid for everything relating to the wedding and still sponsoring the marriage.

I was listening to a sermon one day and the preacher declared, "brothers behold your wives, sisters behold your husbands, stop going to look for in Sokoto what you have in your Shokoto".

I agree with him, you will give yourself headache if you are waiting for the likes of Emir Sanusi, Bill

Gates, Buhari, Tony Elumelu, El-Rufai, Sir Emeka Ofor, TY Danjuma, Otedola, Oyedepo, Gumi, Dangote's son or daughter to just drive past the street of Kawo, Badariya, Kunini, Bori, Hadeja, Jega, Tudun Wada, Ebute meta, Iweka, Bodija, 9th Mile, Wuse and see you and decide to marry you. This is not Nigerian film, this is reality.

I overheard a gist recently where a lady was lamenting that a Prophet once told her she will be married to a Prince, so, she has turned down many suitors who are not from royal families. It is becoming a concern now because she is aging.

Mr. Brother, are the likes of Shakira, Amber Rose, Kim, Cardi B, Rita Dominic, Genevieve and so on that you crush on your type?

Ms. Sister, are the likes of Anthony Joshua, Kanye West, Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar, Messi, Basket Mouth, AY, Davido, Ndidi, Pogba and so on that you crush on your type?

"Shoe get *im* size" no be insult ooo, if you reason am well.

Are you your type's type? A times it might not be only about social status. It might be beliefs, way of life, culture, geographical location, values, morals and the list is endless. You might not fall comfortably into their way of life.

Are you doing Enough?



A friend once sent me a note from a sermon in her church and one thing I learnt from it was the "is it my own" mentality.

This is a nonchalant attitude towards the things that does not belong to us. For example, when we want to change the bulb in a rented apartment we say: "is it my own"? So, we buy an inferior one. When we want to paint the house, we use an inferior quality of paint, when we drive other people's cars, we drive with reckless abandon. The conclusion is this, who will trust you with your own if you CANNOT be trusted with other people's properties and belongings?

Now, to the crux of this piece. Are you doing enough as an employee, a spouse, a colleague, a partner, a student, a business owner, and so on.

A lot of times, we have heard how people taunt a fellow employee saying, "na your papa company?"

This is as a result of this particular employee's dedication and commitment to work as if it was his/her own. But, when the time of reward or promotion comes, nobody will look at other employees but that particular one who stays extra time, put in more commitment and take the business as his or her own.

As a spouse in marriage or relationship, is your partner not wishing they are with someone else instead of you because you are not doing enough? Are you doing enough, are you reciprocating enough?

As a student, are you doing enough to make that class of degree you admire?

As a business owner, are you doing enough to become like the Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Aliko Dangote and the Adewale Aladejana of this world?

As a church member, instead of changing church every other month, why not do enough or do some of those things you admire in the churches you like around.

In your personal pursuit, vision and passion are you doing enough? It is not everyone with vision that live it out. That's why a times I don't even advice any lady to marry a man of vision. Yes! What is he doing in the direction of his vision? What is he doing presently? Is he making any significant progress towards his vision?

Generally, are you doing enough in everything you have chosen to pursue? Are you?

The Last Scene



When a movie is about to be produced, they shoot the last scene first. The reason is this, whatever the twist that the producer, director or the crew members will have to make; they already have a goal in mind- the last scene. They do this in order to know if they have arrived at the end of the movie when they get there. And that is the reason most movies thrillers contain a part from the last scene and when they want to show the movies, you see the end from the beginning. This will make you glued to your seat with rapt attention. Do you know why? You have seen the last scene; you want to know the details now.

Most of us have gone through one challenge or the other; some persevered while others gave up. The reason most people give up is that there is no “last scene” they are looking up to. There is no motivation or an expected end, they are working blindly, so when the pressure becomes too much, they give up. Someone said, “put a picture of what

you want in front of you”.

As a student get a wall paper of a graduating set of students, put it in a strategic position where you can see it anytime your eyes are opened.

As a pilot trainee get a frame of an airplane mid-air, this will inspire and motivate you.

As an architecture student, get a well-planned tower in front of your reading desk such that you see it more than you see your face in the mirror.

As an expectant mother, get the things the baby will need and be gender specific.

As a young man or woman waiting to be married, wake up every morning and say you are the best anybody will want to be with, be happy, celebrate with people when they are getting married, do not be bitter. This way, you are seeing yourself as a good partner and in no distant time, you will attract the person you are- your kind.

As a business man in one shop, put a frame of a very big plaza in that your shop, it will inspire you every morning that your business can also grow to be that big. It will motivate you to work hard and be diligent.

The reason is because it will remind you of the goal you are targeting, when challenges come, you will not give up half way, you have the last scene in front of you.

Many of us have heard that “the faintest pen is better than the sharpest brain”. But our mistake is that we trust our brain too well and we end up forgetting the things that were once motivations to us, because we refused to write them down. Write down those goals, the vision of your expected end, the mansion you have dreamed about, draw them or you can get a nice wall paper that depicts what you see, it will serve as motivation, you will not give up half way. Write out a plan for the day, for the week, for the month, if not, you will end up escorting friends to achieve their own plans. Write out a budget, it might not be perfect or thorough, but it will save you a lot of money.

“Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is witness to what's coming. It aches for the coming- it can hardly wait! And it doesn't lie. If it seems slow in coming- wait. It's on its way. It will come right on time”.

God respect the place of preparation. If you are not prepared for a movie, you would not know when you get to the last scene. Someone said, “Proper preparation plus prayer prevent poor performances” (7Ps). After all these, wait. Waiting is patience, it might not be easy, but it pays, plus since you already have the “last scene” written down, you will know whether you are there or not.

Conclusion



I want to appreciate the Almighty God for this great success. The ingenuity to put this book that you have in your hands now together is not by sheer human power and technical know-how alone. For by strength shall no man prevail. The Lord is my source of inspiration. In Him I live, I move and I have my being. I do not take this for granted. I celebrate the grace of God upon my life; he is the one that rules in the affairs of men, mine inclusive.

I could have ignored the prompting to put out a book like this, I could have given excuses on the way, I could have even decided to start on a speedy and joyous mood and abandon it half way. Thank you Lord for the wisdom, power, resources, courage, circumstances, friends and family that I needed to make this project a success.

To the immortal, invincible, the one only wise God I owe all the gratitude for this success.

