

'RIDICULOUS COURSES' * LE MONT-SAINT-MICHEL - THE MAGICAL ISLAND WITH OVER 3 MILLION YEARLY VISITS

| NOVEMBER * 2017 EDITION |

YOLAR

MAGAZINE

MORE THAN JUST
STORIES

THAT'S MY HERO

DOOR-STEPPED
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The beautiful image which adorns our front cover is one of the oldest castles in the world. Vanessa explores this ancient majestic beauty and what makes it tick.

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Nancy explains that our future is today not tomorrow. Youths are the holders of their own destiny. It is a must read.

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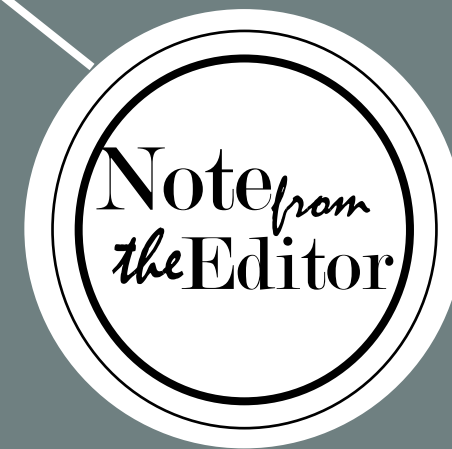
16 DOOR-STEPPED INTERVIEW

This is a thrilling story everyone has to read. Head over to page 16 and enjoy the rest.



This page:
Image: Bukunmi
Okukitibi

Design: Chukwuka
Chukwumerije



In our tour round the globe, we feature Le Mont-Saint-Michel on the Cover Page of this edition. It is described as “a magical island topped by a gravity-defying monastery”. It is one of France’s beauties and its endearing sight magnets tourists to its shores.

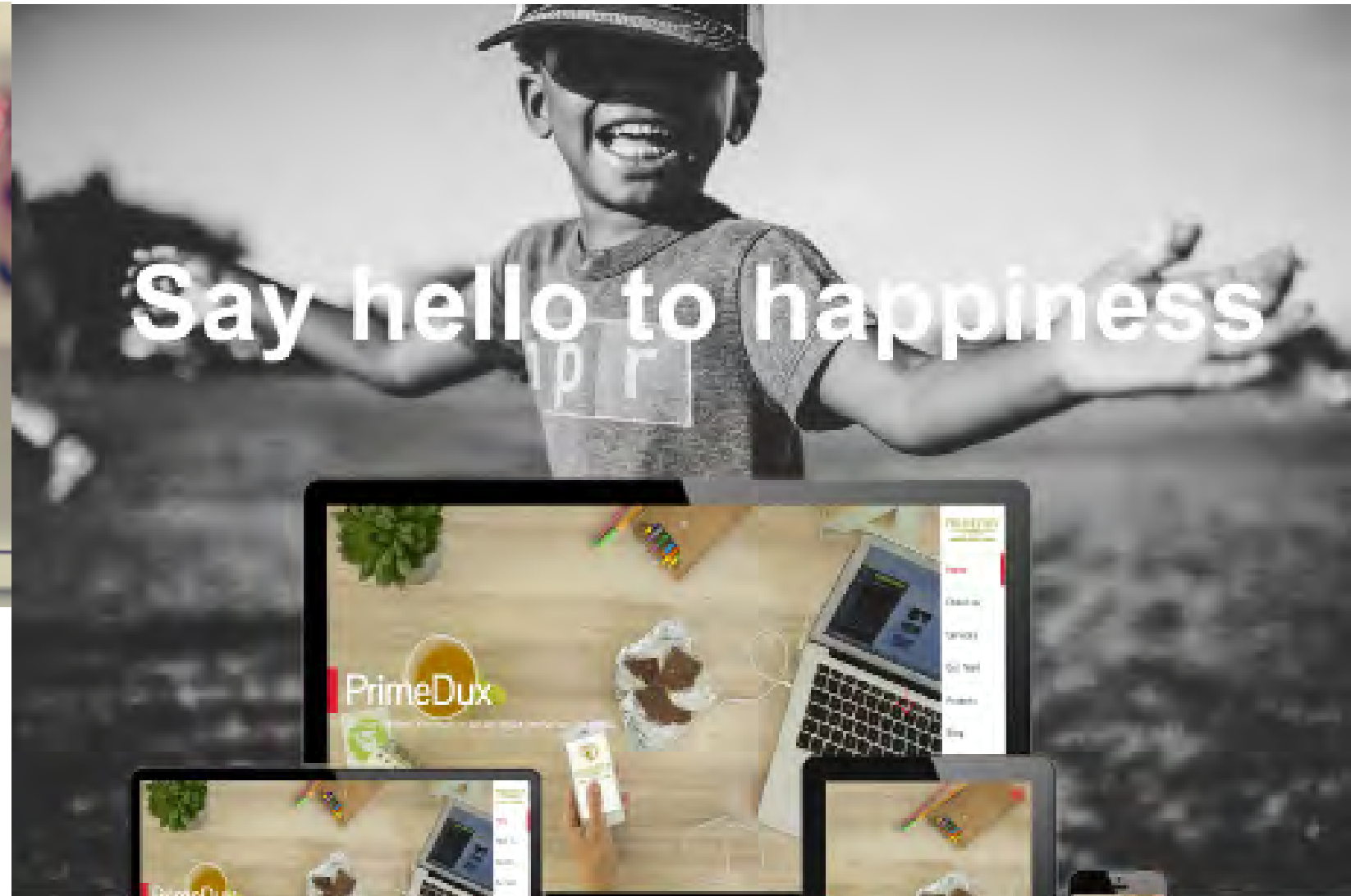
We are less than two months away from the yuletide season and while many make plans to cover a great distance to be with family, some can think of nothing but a time-out to shake off the year’s stress, have real fun and get ready for the new year. What we all have in common is “Plan”.

November happens to be the ‘TRAVEL’ month, so we guide you through your holiday plans. It is annoying to get to realize that you forgot to pick some items needed for your holiday. It becomes frustrating when you spend so much and have nothing to fall back on for the new month. How do we balance both?

Happy reading!

Nkechi Vanessa
Editor





THE SALT MAGIC

When salt is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind is “cooking”. No doubt salt has existed for ages and has been relegated to the kitchen to add more savor and taste to our meals, fish smell removal from hands, etc. But now salt had found its humble way to our wardrobe – Did I hear ‘how?’ Yes, the wardrobe. Research has shown that salt has unique properties that can help wade off bad smell more like a pixy dust just that it won’t transform anything but bring good smell to something we cherish the most – our shoes. We all have the problems of smelly shoes either with or without a sock and can be very embarrassing at times. Your shoe smells ‘PERIOD’ you owe no one an explanation. Biology explains that some people sweat more than others and other than sweating in open body regions, our feet sweat too which in turn leave the shoes to suffer. Do not be scared, “little miss white kitchen queen” is up to the rescue.

How to use the salt for your shoes:

Place an open jar of salt in your shoe rack and leave it for as long as you want – it works like magic. Your shoes are going to smell just as fine as you want.

For Immediate use – put little salt in a small cotton bag or use an old socks and place in both pair of shoe. Leave it overnight and enjoy a moist free day

You can also sprinkle a little salt in your shoes, leave it for few minutes and shake it off for faster results

NB – A few granules might be left behind and it will make you feel like you are walking on tiny pebbles all day.

Now go arm your wardrobe with this all seasoned armor.

JOSEPH PERE WARIBUGO

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'RIDICULOUS' COURSES

Honestly, I still don't get it. Really, I don't. I understand the fact that in the '80s and '90s, parents chose the future of their kids for them, especially fathers. But, I really don't understand why it still happens now.

I've met a lot of students, most of them in medical college, who when asked why they are studying the courses they study, their answer is always the same - that's what my parents wanted; and I always have a follow-up question I ask: "but what do you want?" Then I get so many answers. A lot of them sound 'ridiculous' - that is because that's what their parents would tell them:

"What? That's ridiculous! You want to become an architect? What's the difference between architects and draftsmen? In fact, draftsmen have taken over the business of drawing. That's a no-go area."

"What? You want to become a mechanical engineer? What's the difference between them and

mechanics? In fact, mechanics are even richer than they are."

"Don't ever mention that here again. Computer Science? In this house? You want to destroy your life eh? Computer operators even make more money than them."

"Now, I'm convinced your problem is really from the village. They are seriously projecting against you. You want to tell me you want to spend 4yrs in the university studying fashion designing? It's even better I send you to mama Nkechi's shop, it's cheaper there. She'll teach you tailoring very well."

"You know the situation in Nigeria very well. Civil engineers don't get work anymore. Illiterate contractors have taken over the business. you know how it goes - if you've got long legs, you get the job. Please, medicine is your sure bet."

"My son, please don't disgrace this family. There is Pharmacy and medicine,

please choose one. Your younger sister will do Law. Then Emma that will start primary 1 next month should start warming up, he's too rough, so, he'll do engineering."

And most times you don't have a choice because they are always ready to remind you that they're the ones paying your tuition fees. I've tried to analyze the reasons a lot of parents give, and I think they are quite reasonable. They want the best for their kids, and some certain courses would 'guarantee' a beautiful life after NYSC. They'll say that America is looking for more nurses and doctors, then they'll ask you, "don't you want to go to America?" And there is this very popular one they always say. They'll tell you, you are just starting life, so you don't know anything; they are older, wiser and they've got more experience; so, they are in the best position to tell you what to do with your life. Of course, the Igbo fathers would conclude their sermon with the popular proverb, "what an elderly man sees sitting, a child won't see, even if he climbs the highest mountains."

I really don't want to write a long piece here 'cause a lot of things are just flooding my mind - pleading that I consider them first. But I'll just say a thing or two more. There is a movie I love so much. I'm sure a lot of us have seen the movie, '3 Idiots'. There was something I learnt from Farhan, Raju, and Rancho. It was the word, 'passion'. Rancho will always say, "follow your heart, success will always pursue you." Rancho taught us that engineering isn't meant for everybody; it definitely wasn't meant for the more adventurous wildlife photographer, Farhan. Just like medicine isn't meant for

everyone. My aunt will always say, "Medicine is not just a profession, it's a calling."

I once heard or read (I'm not sure) a story about a medical doctor who was diagnosed with a terminal disease. So, he was told he had a couple of months to live. His doctor friend advised him to enjoy his last months on earth to the fullest. So, he was asked, "what is it that you've always wanted to do, but you couldn't do it?" The doctor didn't have to think twice, his answer was immediate. "Architecture. I've always wanted to be an architect."

"Alright. Please, start drawing." His doctor-friend advised.

So, he started architectural courses, and started drawing again. He had so much fun doing it that he even forgot he had a terminal disease. He outlived the months he was told he had to live. By the time he went for another test, the disease was gone.

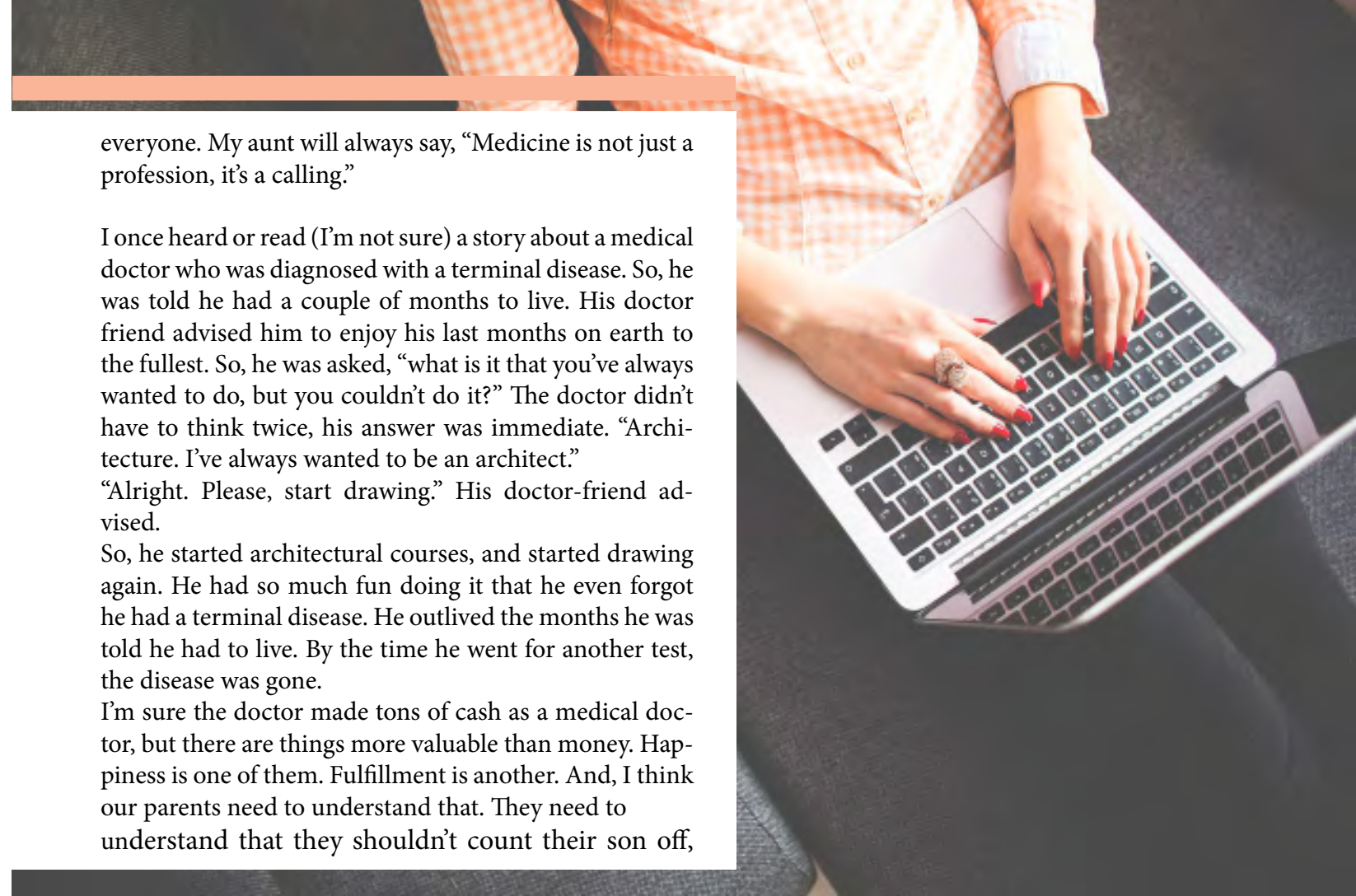
I'm sure the doctor made tons of cash as a medical doctor, but there are things more valuable than money. Happiness is one of them. Fulfillment is another. And, I think our parents need to understand that. They need to understand that they shouldn't count their son off,

because he's studying music; Ngozi shouldn't be neglected 'cause she'd studying Linguistics/Igbo; that Emeka who is studying botany needs to be treated with the same respect Chioma that is studying Law is getting; that John who is studying Fine Arts could draw and paint them out of poverty; that their kids shouldn't be made to feel inferior to their friends who are studying 'professional' courses.

Imagine if Mikel Obi was forced to do accountancy; or if Messi was told Medicine would 'secure' his future. Imagine if Ramsey Noah was forced to do Law or if Asa was told music is just for loafers, that pharmacy is 'safer'. A lot of fathers would watch Mikel Obi play, and silently wish he was their son; but how many of them would have the courage Mikel's dad had by buying him his first football boots?

Please, if you are a parent, and you are reading this, try and figure out your child's gift; then prayerfully guide him/her aright. I can agree perfectly that currently, the economic situation in Nigeria is bad and the unemployment rate is increasing in such an alarming rate, but don't forget that as Christians, we walk by faith, not by sight. God doesn't need to take excuse from the Nigerian government before He can position His child; and that 'light' (gift/talent) He has put into you will definitely shine if you let it.

Truly, Life can be fun - just find what you love doing, be the best at it, then people who are willing to pay heavily for your services will find you; ask Ronaldinho, he knows what I'm saying.



CHEAT WITH A FRIEND OR STRANGER - WHICH IS MORE PAINFUL?

Cheating in relationships is not strange at all and people have various defenses for doing so. Whether in marriages or informal relationships, when a partner cheats there is always a need for rethink if to go on or call it quit.

Though with Christ example, we are to forgive seventy times seven times in a day and obviously no one can offend us to that point if calculated. What about the part of forgive and forget? I feel this is relative and might not apply to cheating.

Now, cheating in a relationship that you have invested so much in is something no one wants to experience but what if it happens, what do you do? A recent survey carried out on which form of cheating is worse 60% voted cheating with a friend or close person to both parties, 20% voted cheating with a stranger and the rest 20% voted none.

Cheating with a friend – I can't say this is the worse form but it is not pleasant at all. Assuming the friend is more like a family member who visits often and knows the in and out of your relationship, eats in the same bowl with you and can even spend weekends in your

home or you even traveled and trusted your friend to handle your home and this said friend is the one hitting on your partner. Can you just forgive, forget and move on?

Cheating with a stranger – you don't know the individual in quote. Maybe he or she is a colleague at work, a gym partner, and course mate or met in a distant trip. Probably you stumbled on your partner's phone messages and you saw "Baby, let's meet tonight, want you in my arms, kisses", and your partner has been disguising such outings as vigils or late night work shift etc. Or maybe they have already done the deed and you saw "My love, your skills in bed was awesome last night, let's try another time". What explanation will make you trust your partner again? How can you face him or her again?

Never forget that people have reasons for their acts but whatever it is, cheating has no better name. It has more dangers than solutions

Ways to avoid cheating

Avoid unnecessary compliments from others especially those who are potential predators.

Never exchange too intimate and sensitive texts with such person.

Discuss advances from others with your partner.

Don't send out wrong ideas and signals.

Have a power of "NO". It saves explanations

Settle dispute in time with your partner.

If you want out, make it plain and simple.

If disturbance persist after 3 months, consult a specialist – GOD.

Be it cheating with a friend or a stranger, the end result is always destructive to both the cheater and cheated. Be wise.

JOSEPH PERE WARIBUGO



THE LEADERS OF ~~TOMORROW~~ TODAY

A popular Igbo adage says, “What an old man sees sitting down, a young man cannot see even if he climbs a tree”. I guess that is why we are most inclined to regard elders so reverentially that we quickly forget the place of the young. Perhaps that adage may be slightly faulty.

Sometimes we regard age as a standard of measuring wisdom and experience; other times we say it’s just a number. Which is it actually? An extra dose of our contradicting philosophies.

We say the youths are the leaders of tomorrow. Am afraid we are quickly throwing these words into our book of clichés and yet we refuse to embrace this truth. Not too long ago a life coach revealed his age which shocked most of us because we had always thought him to be older. The wisdom that

steams from that young man is epic. A few others didn’t take this quite well. Those who previously sang his praise began to hum a strange tune. He was suddenly too young to render counselling and motivational services. His once exceptional counsels which they had never detested now tasted sour in their mouth. Ironically, these are people who will enthusiastically chant “The youths are the leaders of tomorrow”, “Say no to Gerontocracy”, “I don’t mind dating a younger guy”.

I recently had a similar experience in my place of clinical training. A colleague and I were to conduct a mammography examination on a patient. However, this patient was unwilling to be attended to by youngies such as ourselves. She didn’t fail to hide her distaste at being attended to by supposedly young ‘amateurs’. Despite her irritable words, we tried our best to soothe her and render the services we are being trained for. On seeing how we had skilfully and tactfully attended to her, she began to beam with smiles and apologize for her earlier statement.

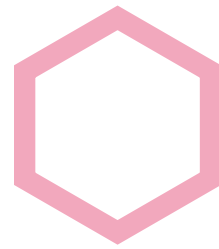
Needless to say, we look down on the youths a bit too much (1 Tim 4:12). We may not see what the oldies see but we do see. Take a glance at the world and you will see young people building capacities, making impacts and doing great exploits. If we can’t trust their capabilities today I doubt if it would be any different tomorrow. Imagine if

David wasn’t given a fighting chance perhaps Goliath would have fed the is-realities to the birds of the air. Do you remember Josiah the little 8-year old boy who ruled Judah for 31yrs? God began to speak to Samuel at a young age. Christ himself sat among the teachers in the temple when he was just 12 years old. The world’s social village ‘Facebook’ was launched from Mark Zuckerberg’s University dormitory room with the assistance of his roommates on February 4, 2004. Mark was just 20 years old at the time. Linda Ikeji began thriving to break through in life at the tender age of 18. She started her now famous blog when she was 26.....at that time it was just a hobby to her. The celebrated writer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, began her journey of words in 1997 with a collection of poems “Decisions”. She was just 20 years old.

Our measure of grace is not weighed on the scale of age. The good thing about grace is that it breaks barriers and limitations. Grace gives the young man lying down the ability to see what the old man sitting down sees. We may not have risen to the zenith but IT IS LITTLE ACORNS THAT GROW TO BECOME BIG OAK TREES.

Don’t despise us because we are young!

Give us a chance to prove our worth!



LOVE HAS SOJOURNED

She pitched her tent amongst us, and in the heart of the community she made herself available to many. Her existence was a blessing to everyone and her presence brought untold joy to all and sundry.

Love went with the women to the river to draw water into their earthen vessels and when one of them fell ill, love encouraged one of her children to help the sick lady. The men protected the homes of their neighbors and with Love, treated the wives with respect and the daughters like theirs. Where Love dwelt, lived men whose loyalty could not be bought and who fought for their people at the ruling council meetings. When love lived, the skies were blue and the grasses never withered. The flowers bloomed, adorning the fields with garments human hands could never make. The birds sang the chorus that mortal tongues could not sing and the women danced to these songs in the wee hours of the morning as they

fixed the home.

The peace that Love brought was not just in the land, it was much more – peace of mind. The men grew pot-bellies, pot-bellies inflated with laughter and good food. No, everyone did not belong to the same class but the rich ensured the others could afford a comfortable and healthy life.

One day, we awoke and found Love's hut EMPTY. Her door was ajar and the hut was void of even a used matchstick. The news spread like the fire of an exploded gas tank and the worries were seen on people's faces. The questions were numerous, but worse still, no one had the answer to the other's question. The men spoke in low tones and gathered in groups. The children clung to the hem of their mothers' skirts and wrappers. They too knew something was not right. For it was Love's hut but she was not among them. Later, we heard that she had been abused.

The farmer by the riverside had raped the neighbor's daughter who had come to fetch water. The man at the council meeting had connived to share money with the contractor, without carrying out the project. The youths were seen at the village square cheering the politician who refused to pay their fathers the pension allowances, but erected a statue of a stranger who is being charged for some crime in his home. I heard the women are no longer safe and I hear the village is attacked at night – man and child murdered in their slumber.

Who knows where Love is? Who knows the path she took – the path to Umunna or the one leading to Ndieyi? Did she paddle towards Mbaozo?

There is untold suffering. It is rumored that she still lives in the tents of a very few. Tell her she took Peace and Happiness with her. Tell her what has become of us since she sojourned.

Nkechi Vanessa

LONELY

I know you love her so much
And the best way you felt she should be saved

Was to keep her indoors, to revolve round the circle of few, so as not to be touched
You kept her from every form of communication with the opposite sex at every Phase

Of her life, she was surrounded by you and fellows of same sex
She didn't mind as she's used to the environment you've created for her
But deep down, she needed something tangible that seems far
Her mind couldn't phantom what it was yet she wasn't vexed.

As she grew
The ladies thing started, she had the urge but she never knew
How to control the feelings springing up within
She fought the fight that no one could see

Mum, where are you? She cried!
Dad isn't giving me the answers I need
Oh my heart wept, for so long I tried
But I'm sick of trying, my emotions I wanna feed

Then she grew wild
Fell in love with her fellow girl
Poor Daddy's girl who was so mild
Couldn't explain how she got into this snare.

Everyone yelled at her
When they found out she's gotten this far.
How could you? They screamed!
To them it was like a film trick

When all the while she fought
The emotions, the urge and the thoughts,
She yelled out for help as she could
But no response, and now you say it's all her fault?

She just couldn't wait
She couldn't bear
And she didn't hear
That she could be saved by Faith!

Faith in Christ,
That would have helped her rise
Above the emotions she felt within
All she could say was "I Was LONELY!"

C. F. Ogbonnaya

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“DOORSTEPPED” INTERVIEW

Clinton glanced quickly at his wrist watch, it was 8.45am. This was more than he could bear. He had stayed awake all night preparing his contract proposal only to be delayed by Kate. To him, this was not just an ordinary delay, maybe, there was a force somewhere in his village preventing his secretary from finding the last piece of document needed to stand a chance

of winning the 10million naira contract from wherever she'd kept it. The future of CLINTOX NIG LTD depended heavily on this contract and he was 15mins away from losing what he'd worked so hard for.

He heavy-gaited round his well-furnished office, checking his wrist-watch every 10secs. Though his com-

pany was about going bankrupt, he was still a lover of beauty. His carefully selected pieces of furniture clearly told the story of an entrepreneur with a high taste. The air conditioners seemed to have no effect on his body as he sweated profusely

“Lord please, save me from this temptation.” He prayed under his breath as he reached for the intercom on his desk for the millionth time.

“Kate, you know this meeting is by 9.00am and I have just five minutes left for a 20mins drive to Umudike. Where on earth did you drop that document?” Clinton tried as much as he could not to raise his voice despite the fact that he'd reached his boiling point inside. He'd always respected his employees and never for once had he raised his voice on any of them.

The words of the commissioner echoed in his mind, “This is to inform all the contract applicants to please relax, don't be late and be sure to apply wisdom. We'll bring the interview to your doorstep.”

He had never really contemplated giving any of his workers the sack but he was certain Kate deserved one, and she was going to get it should he lose this contract. Moments later, Kate appeared; her entire being

shivering.

“Sssiiiiirrr, thiiiiiss is thhee do-do-cument.” She stuttered, her right hand vibrating vigorously as she handed the sheet of paper to him. She tried not to imagine what might be the inevitable - her sack, should the contract not pull through. Through her 4yrs of employment, she'd never seen any boss like Mr. Clinton D. Ezeugo. A man she'd come to respect, not just for his level of professionalism and humility, but for his love for the Lord and for the kindness of his heart which had endeared him to many.

Without saying a word, Clinton collected the document and reached for his suitcase. At least, he was grateful the document was finally found. Moments later, he was inside his black Toyota Camry but just as he was about to drive out, he noticed a young lady sobbing quietly just outside the gate.

“Ahmed! Ahmed!” He called to his gateman

“Oga” Ahmed rushed towards him as quickly as his leg could carry him

“Who is that lady outside?”

“Oga, me I no know oh. I comot, I look she dey. I tell am say, oga e dey busy, she...”

Clinton wasn't ready for Ahmed's quibbles - he didn't have time for it. He just needed to drive straight to Umudike, he could handle the matter whenever he came back. He

wanted to drive out but a force kept drawing him back. He recognized the

force. His relationship with the Lord had grown so much as he could recognize when the Spirit was leading.

“Lord please not now. Please don't do this to me.” He muttered under his breath. Didn't the Lord care that his company was about going bankrupt? Didn't He realize this was an opportunity he couldn't afford to miss?

“...come siddon for floor. So Oga, me, I no dey oh. My hand e clean oh. As I...”

“Shut up!” Clinton bellowed as his gateman stood, stunned. He'd never seen his boss in that kind of mood before. He stood at attention as he tried to tuck his sky-blue shirt into his black trouser.

Clinton walked past him towards the lady. He'd seen a lot of women but definitely not one as beautiful as this one.

Clinton tried to sound as normal as possible though his mind was enjoying a 5000m marathon race.

Chioma looked up and Clinton could swear his heart missed not just one but 10 beats. She was ravishingly beautiful. Her oval face radiated some unseen light that threaten to cripple him. Maybe it was her perfectly positioned beautiful eyes or perhaps her luscious full lips that made him stare for what seemed like eternity. Her lips were moving, but Clinton didn't hear. Not that he didn't want to, but he found it difficult to concentrate.

“He's dying.” Chioma kept repeating; tears emanating from her beautiful eyes - the kind of eyes that should see no sorrow and streaming slowly and painfully down her soft cheeks to her neck region.

Moments later, Clinton regained his composure. This wasn't the first time he was encountering beautiful ladies, maybe not as beautiful as this one, and this was certainly not going to be the last time. He readjusted his finely tailored suit - made solely for his contract presentation as he flickered a glance at his wrist-watch. It was 9.05am. He felt like the whole world was crumbling right before his eyes, his

“Can I help you young lady?”

CHILDHOOD

I'd gotten back home one night while in school, and after having some good laugh with my friends, I felt an urge that isn't unusual, and knowing what my soul immediately craved for, I'd opened my laptop to write. The night was still. The cool evening breeze danced sweetly through my open wooden windows, and immediately began its caressing effect on my almost bare skin. Knowing that I couldn't get enough of nature's massage, I'd closed my laptop, walked outside to the bold glare of the full moon, hoping to continue writing with my blackberry.

Just then Emeka came out, almost immediately. He walked his lanky body to our zinc-fence, and with his hand resting comfortably on one of the wooden posts on which our fence was anchored on, he simply stared at the moon.

Sitting very comfortably on a plastic chair, clad with nothing but my underwear (abeg Naija heat too much), and with my two thumbs busy exerting its pressure on the keypad of my phone,

I could see Emeka's smile from my 'side-eyes'

"The world is saturated."

I looked at him. The smile didn't leave his handsome face as he still stared at the moon. It was as though he was seeing something that no other person saw - like he was seeing Elijah and Moses descend.

"Biko, what do you mean?" Of course I knew the world is saturated. For crying out loud, there are over 7 billion people in this world.

"Do you remember 'Tales by Moonlight?'" Emeka looked at me. The moon brought a nice shine to his face. Well, to be fair to him, Emmy is the kind of guy that ladies generally refer to as TDH, only that Emmy is the fairer version. Guys if you don't know what that means, ask any girl around what her dream man should look like. (Their wahala too much abegi).

Without really waiting for me

to respond, Emeka continued. "I remember my daddy and my mommy coming out every night in our compound in Lagos. They'll sit beside each other, and my mom would tell us all those tales of tortoise. We'd sleep off on their bodies, and they'd carry us back to bed."

Emeka's voice was now electric, like something amazing had been triggered off.

"Did you have a landline in your house?" He asked me

"No. We couldn't really afford that kind of leisure."

"Did you visit the post office to collect your mails?"

"No."

"Then what fun thing did you do as a child?"

I could sense frustration in his voice. But, his last question has immediately triggered off my journey down the memory lane. "I remember sitting down with my cousins in the village. The moon was so beautiful that it made us all look pretty. We chased ourselves all night with

the white sand as our best friend." I could see myself laughing as I remembered my childhood days. Now, I understood why Emeka was sheepishly smiling - I was seeing my own trance.

The night immediately turned into a night of laughter, of cherished memories and of deep thoughts. We shared stories of how we invented our own toys and of how we became chefs with empty milk tins as our cherished cooking pots. Stories of our childhood crushes and of how we had built boats with paper, go out in the rain, drop it into the flowing waters and chase after it as it floats away. Of how we played in the rain and how we couldn't get enough of the sheer ecstasy that came with it.

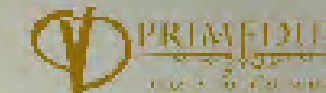
"How do you see this 21st century life?" Emeka asked again.

I looked into the moon once again as though the answer lied within such glorious beauty lying majestically in the skies. "I think life is simpler now. But there is more complexity even in the simplicity."

Yes, with a little tap on our phones we can speak to a friend millions of miles away, but hardly can we sit outside to enjoy the evening breeze and moonlight because of fear of kidnappers. Yes, we can sit on our sofas, and watch Syrians kill themselves live on our flat screen televisions, but we've forgotten what it feels like to really be free - to feel as though the world is yours for the taking.

So I said to myself, amma need to get me some of those moonlight tales, 'cause amma tell my kids those stories. I want them to feel what I felt. I want to think about building a kite or a paper boat before thinking of how to play the latest PlayStation! And I'd like them to tell their own kids same stories as I told them, so they can feel what we felt.

Chukwuka Chukwumerije



How Not To Die

Today I came across a beautiful quote that really made me think. It's a quote by Greg Anderson, an American author. He said, "Focus on the journey, not the destination. Joy is found not in finishing an activity but in doing it." This is how not to die before you die. This is how to live. You see this thing called 'passion'? Ah!

you wait for the 'end' of the job. That point when you retire and become entitled to a pension; that moment when you consider yourself finally 'free'. When you go to school, you wait for the 'end' of the schooling. That moment when you are handed your certificate; that moment when you consider yourself finally 'free'.

When you plant a seed, you wait for the 'end'. That moment when it bears fruit; that moment you finally eat of your labour. That moment you consider yourself finally 'free' of your labour.

PAUSE! THINK!

Life is not like that. Not really. Freedom is not something you find, it is something you create yourself. That was why Nelson Mandela was free

though he was in prison. His freedom didn't start the moment he walked out the prison, he was already free even before he became 'free'.

You see, when you go to listen to someone perform poetry, the fun is not in the 'end', it's in the

experience.

When you watch a dance, you don't wait to see where the dancer would finally land. You see, while the dance is going on, you laugh, you cheer, you smile, you come alive. The fun

velled at the size.

What made that day memorable for me was not the time when the movie finally ended and the credits were being rolled out. No! It was the feeling of listening to people

surrounding.

Wayne Dyer, an American psychologist said, "Give yourself a gift of five minutes of contemplation in awe of everything you see around you. Go outside and turn your attention to the many miracles around you. This five-minute-a-day regimen of appreciation and gratitude will help you to focus your life in awe."

Do what you love doing.

Live out our passion.

Travel.

Love.

Learn.

Live.

Laugh.

Don't just focus on making a living, focus on living instead.

"Sometimes the joy of the farmer is not really the harvesting of the fruit, but the joy of watching that little seed grow into an enormous tree."

is in the experience.

Same thing when you go to see a movie, or an opera, or whatever makes your heart leap in excitement.

I still vividly remember the day I went to a cinema for the very first time. I was so excited. My excitement wasn't because of the over hyped movie I was going to see. As a matter of fact, I didn't even know the movies that were to be shown that day. My excitement was simply in the experience of seeing the movie instead. I remember when I walked into the room. I took some time to savour the hall, and when my eye caught the screen, I mar-

tion of sitting down there and enjoying that beautiful moment.

That's the point of life!

It's not in the end, it's in the experience.

Sometimes the joy of the farmer is not really the harvesting of the fruit, but the joy of watching that little seed grow into an enormous tree.

Take your time to really live this life. Savour the moments. Share your passion, and share your story. Don't be in a hurry to finish that ice-cream, sometimes you need to savour the taste. Don't be in a hurry to get home, sometimes take a walk, and notice the beauty in the



It's beautiful.

There is a unique thing about life – something most people miss. You see, life isn't something you wait for, it's something you live in.

Let me explain.

When you get a job, most times

Don't just focus on making a living, focus on living instead.

company would soon be out of business and here he was trying to help a stranger who he might not even set his eyes on again for the rest of his life.

“Who’s dying?” He asked rather impatiently though it was hard to detect from his tone. If there was a fruit of the Holy Spirit that was generously lavished on him, it was self-control.

“My father. He’s having a heart attack. He needs to be taken to the hospital right now.” The sweet voice pleaded

“Why us? Why come to Clintox ltd? We don’t run car rental services dear. Besides, the company vehicle and driver is out on official duties.” Clinton found it difficult to understand why she must come to him. Why not call a taxi or even a keke.

“Please sir, we live very closely and a neighbor recommended we come to you. We are wasting time Sir.”

Clinton glanced at his wristwatch, it was 9.12am. He could still make it to Umudike before his name would be called.

“Alright enter the car.” Clinton said finally. Maybe God didn’t want him to continue his business; maybe he was too kind to a fault and perhaps that might end up being his undoing.

Clinton sat down in his office still wondering what he would do with his secretary. If only Kate had given him the document on time, he most probably wouldn’t have met Chioma. He can only watch now as he slowly goes out of business. The previous day hadn’t been the best of days for him. He had gone with Chioma to a house she claimed was hers and had carried a man she claimed was her father. Though the man looked very much in good health, but he didn’t want to take chances and definitely didn’t want a man dying in his hands. So he’d done the needful

by carrying him to the best hospital in Umuahia with a promise that he’d take care of his bill once he’d been certified alright.

Grrrrrrr.....Grrrrrrr.....the phone on his desk rang, bring him back to reality.

“Clinton Ezeugo of Clintox Ltd on the line.”

“I’m calling from Umudike, the commissioner wants to see you in 20mins.” A female voice said from the other end of the line. Clinton could swear he’d heard that voice before but could not place it.

“Alright. Tell him I’ll be there as soon as I can.” His heart was already racing. He had Kate prepare all the contract documents together as prepared to meet the commissioner.

“You are Mr. Clinton Ezeugo?” A man said without looking up as he student some documents on his table

“Yes Sir. Yes I am.”

“Please take a seat,” the commissioner said as he pointed a seat to him, “congrats on your successful interview. I don’t have much time. Please let’s discuss the full terms of the contract.”

Clinton was trying hard to process the information he’d just heard, “what interview sir? I wasn’t here yesterday due to some unfortunate delays.”

“Well, the delay was the interview. Remember I said earlier that the interview would be brought to your doorstep when I advised you all not to be late? Well, we concluded that we didn’t just want someone that would supply us with 50,000 wheelchairs. We needed someone with the heart for those that would sit on them. Unfortunately, every other of the contract applicants were too busy looking for the contract that they ignored the people we strategically placed on their doorsteps.” But before Clinton could say anything, the commis-

sioner continued, “From the report by one of our agents Miss Chioma Ken, we believe you are trustworthy and we are willing to increase the contract to 50million naira if that’s ok with you.”

Clinton just got down on his knees, his hands stretched out towards heaven, as he thanked his Savior!

Ps: well, am sure you’d want to know what later became of Chioma. Clinton and Chioma latter got talking and you know how it goes nah.... Anyways, their marriage is now blessed with two kids - a boy and a girl.

The message of this story is very simple. Never be busy to offer kindness to as many as need it. Many

have forsaken their blessings as they didn’t know that it was disguised as the poor boy by their house begging for food or as the old lady across the street who needed help with her load...

You are never too big to serve or to offer kindness whenever you have the opportunity ‘cause “blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” (Matt 5:7)

Author Unknown



Enhance your business
with digital strategies.



Web
Design



Content
Writing



HOW TO HAVE AN EFFECTIVE CONVERSATION

A lot of people have stage fright, but you may be surprised to know that even more people dread starting a casual conversation, or even speaking with someone they have a huge level of respect for. They fear they'd mess up the whole thing. While growing up, I didn't really fear climbing on stages. I was already doing that when I was very little. I was comfortable talking to a lot of people, but I was very uncomfortable with having a conversation with someone I really admired. Yes, I'd

say it – especially if it's with a girl I was crushing on in class or one of the grownups that I just admired. I feared that if they speak with me, they wouldn't want to talk with me again. I feared I would mess up my grammatical constructions, and my mouth would not open.

I remember in my primary school when my form teacher assigned me to a new seat in-between the two most beautiful girls in class. I was immediately humbled. In my cute mind then, I knew all the lines I couldn't wait to tell them, but in reality, I became a little boy sitting quietly between two girls and trying hard not to say what would make them detest me. It was not just about my peers, also with grownups I had great respect for.

The change for me began when I started reading great books

on communication. I learnt how to effectively communicate. You see, a lot of people feel they can talk with anybody because they are very vocal but the truth is that they put people off as soon as they open their mouth. I know someone that once we start talking, he just won't stop. He would jump from one point to the other, and hardly stops to listen, but because he's a friend, I try to endure the time we spend talking.

So how exactly can you communicate with people, and not only would they want to hear you talk, they'd love listening to you talk, and actually look forward to the next talk you'd talk?

There is so much to effective conversation but I'd just share one or two things to look out for.

BE YOURSELF

This is probably the most important. I've seen people use locally fabricated foreign accent just so they can sound nice and impress the other party. People appreciate you more and even relate with you better when you are just yourself. I remember the first time I met someone I really admired for the first time. My general perception of this lady was that she's this sophisticated business-minded no-nonsense lady but when I finally met her at a function, we instantly became friends. She was just her fun-loving self, and that in itself was very attractive. It was obvious she wasn't acting up. People notice when you assume a character you are not, and that could be the end of something that may never even start.

GENUINELY

CARE

The Audacity of Time

One of the greatest lies we tell ourselves as human beings is that we have time. So you have a lot of people with plans to live their dreams 'someday'. Every now and then, you hear things like, 'Someday, I'd pick up my bag and travel the world', 'Someday I'd start my own business and be my own boss', 'Someday I'd go register my NGO and start living my passion of helping young girls with poor backgrounds go to school.'

Someday... someday... someday...

So not too long ago a Facebook friend uploaded a picture of her family taken some years back, and she compared it with their current picture. So I asked her, "How long ago was the 'before' image taken?"

"Six years ago." She replied me.

I did a quick math. Six years ago I was in the University. I closed my eyes and opened them, heck, six years ago seemed like yesterday. You know, that was the exact same feeling I had when during my convocation years ago I remembered the clothes I'd worn during my matriculation and it seemed like it was 'yesterday'.

So when I travel for Christmas this year and my uncle says to me, "Chuchu, o gi hazi otu a? (Chuchu, how did you grow so big)", I'd smile and say, "Unku, na God oh." Because, well, that's what you normally say when you don't know what to say. But the truth is, I didn't know when I grew so big. I woke up one morning, wanted to take my bath and discovered I had little sprouts of hair around my lower region and when I raised my arm, my little sister said, 'Chu, I think you need to shave.' I didn't notice when my voice deepened, my friend just told me one day over the phone, 'O boy, your voice don deep oh.' For real, I didn't know when all these was happening. And believe me, just like that, one day, my body will be full of grey hairs, and I wouldn't 'know' when it all happened.



one day, it comes and says to you, "You've had enough of me, time to go home!" And you're left wondering what exactly you did with the time you had. Heck! The time moved so fast you didn't even you had one.

So this afternoon, I picked up my phone and dialed Samuel, a young man in the east that has been calling me consistently for months to invite me to speak and perform poetry at a leadership summit, and no matter how many times I said no to his emails, text messages and calls, he won't stop calling.

I said to him, "Samuel, I'd be at your event." Because, we live this life once. Not twice. Just once. We have one chance to change the world, one chance to live your dreams, one chance to affect lives, one chance to be you and live you and lead you, ONE CHANCE!

So take it!

Yes, this world may not be our home, but we are NOT just passing through. Take your time, it's yours!

THE POWER WITHIN YOU

“The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine as children do. It's not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own lights shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

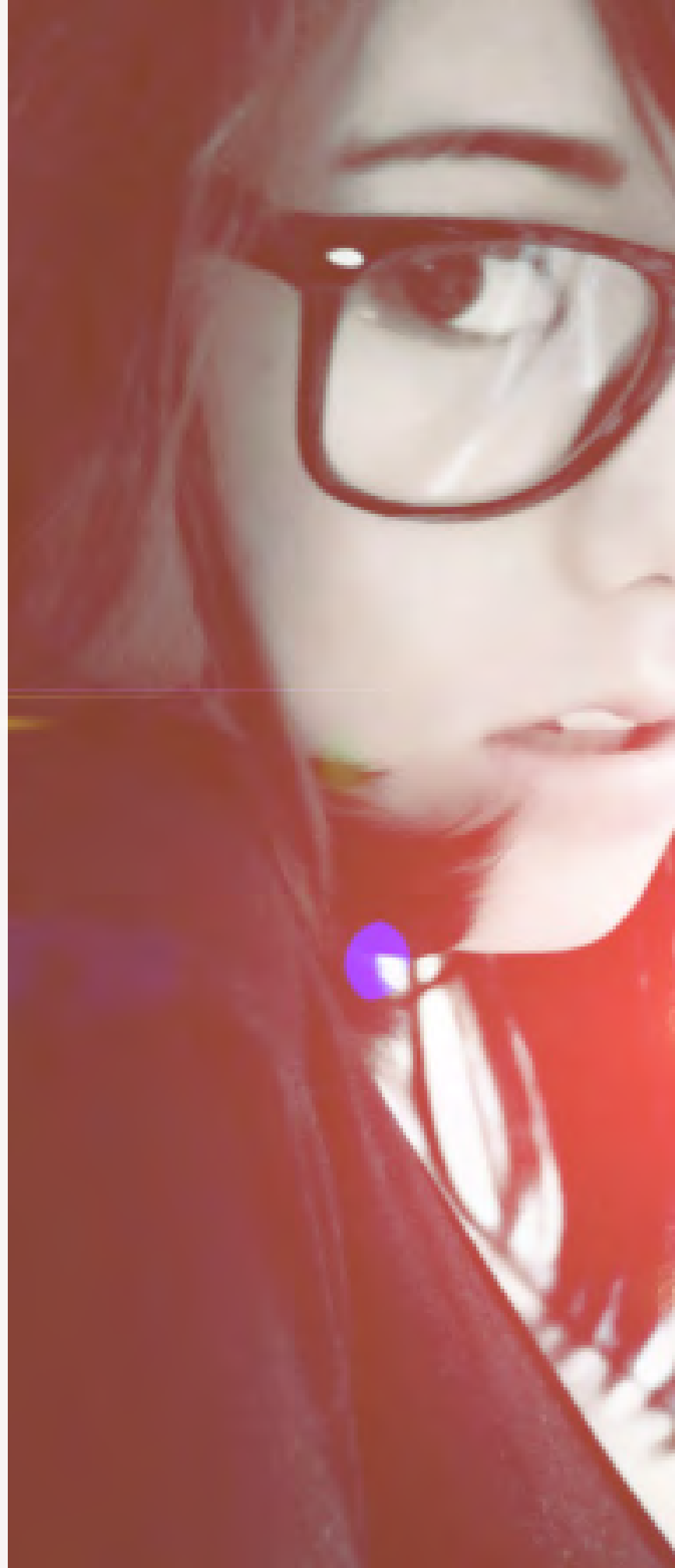
Marianne Williamson

“Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.”

Rob

LIV- ING RIGHT

I was probably five years old. It was at night, around 8.00pm. We'd gathered round the parlour where the priest, my dad, had laid our family altar, for our night devotion. Anyone that knows my family too well knows that our devotions – morning or night – were like national crusades, they always took hours. The reason was simple: my dad has always been a man of prayer, and he made sure he showed no mercy to all the witches troubling Umuahia and the entire Igbo land. Even the witches-in-training were not spared. As family tradition demanded, after we'd done our own share of closing prayers – myself, my siblings and my mom – it was time for the chief priest of our home, my lovely dad, to 'conclude' the prayers. That one alone would usually take at least two hours. But then, I enjoyed listening to his prayers, no matter how long they lasted. I guess growing up in my kind of home helped develop my prayer life. On this particular night, while listening to my dad pray, I heard what made me lose sleep that night. Daddy had said something like this to God, "Father I want to talk to you about my son, Chukwuka. I don't understand what has come over him, but he's been acting very strange lately..." My little fragile heart failed me that night. I couldn't sleep. What on earth did I do that was so bad dad had to tell God? I mean, why didn't he just flog me, why did he have to tell God? GOD!!!



The next day I went to the only person I could go to – my mom. She could tell from the look on my face that I was dying of anxiety, but she patiently waited for me to bare my mind. "Mummy, o nwere ihe m cho-ro I ju gi," I said, as I sat beside her. It means in English, 'mummy, I want to ask you something.'

"Whatever you focus on magnifies. I was focusing on sin, and trying not to commit any. But the more I focused on that, the more I sinned. Then I started focusing on Christ. The more I focused on Him, the lesser the burden of sin, and the more I realized that I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus."

"Ok? What is it?" "Daddy mentioned my name when he was talking to God last night. Why?" That was when mummy said what she should have never said. My mom said, "Your father was simply reporting you to God." What! 'Report'? Let me explain a bit. You see, growing up, 'report' was a word I feared greatly. If my mom ever said, "I'd report you to your father." Then I was in for some serious trouble. Dad was a strict disciplinarian, and 'unkind' reports from my mom about us to him always resulted to a few delicious lashes on our tiny bums. Never a good experience. Never. If my classmate in primary school said, "I'd report you to the form

mistress." Ah! Oh boy! I'm in for some serious trouble. It was always didn't end well. Always! So in my mind, 'report' was a terrible word – one that always ended in punishments. Now, you may understand why I was scared that my own father, would report me to God – the creator of heaven and earth. I mean, my own father!!! It was as though I would die the very next second. Trying as much as I could to hide my shaky voice, I asked mom, "Does it mean I won't go to heaven again?" "Just change your attitude ok? You will go to heaven." Mom said.

While taking my bath today, I remembered this story, and I smiled. You see, I was taught while growing up, to never to commit any sin at all or else, I'd be at risk of going to hell. And because I didn't want to go to hell, I focused all my attention on not committing sins. Ah! I was so sin-conscious. One could hardly find me committing any type of sin. I got so good at not sinning, that I'd mastered the art of not telling lies. The saying then went like this, "If Chuka said it, then it's probably true." It was a satisfying feeling that people counted on me for the truth. I became so full of it that if someone ever said to me, "It's a lie." I'd look at the person like, 'do you know who you're talking to?' Just before saying with some dose of indignation, "Do I look like a liar to you? I don't have time for lies. Take it or leave it." And that was it. It was a statement of finality. As though I even knew what liars looked like. Then I soon discovered that I was committing another terrible sin – pride. I was proud that one could never catch me telling lies. Or fornication? Ah! In fact, that was one of my biggest cards in my exotic game of pride. So I decided not to be proud again. I was so focused on trying not to be proud that I soon discovered that I was faking humility – another sin of its own. Then I became worried about the fact that I was wearing this heavy cloak of false humility in my attempt at killing pride but I then quickly discovered that becoming worried that I had false humility was a sin on its own – the sin of worry.

Kai! I was confessing my sins on a minutely basis. Something like this, "Father I'm sorry, I just lied. I should have just told Emeka that I didn't want to give him my notebook because of his carelessness instead of telling him that I didn't come to class with it. Please forgive me." Then the next minute I'm like, "I just looked at that girl passing in a way I shouldn't have looked at her, please forgive me."

The funny thing? No matter how many times I confessed my sins. No matter how many times I said I wasn't going to do that again. I went ahead and committed even more sins. I was still scared of hell, so I kept confessing. The more I confessed, the more I committed. It was more like an ugly vicious circle – one I couldn't get out from.

Then I realized... I was doing it wrong.

You see, whatever you focus on magnifies. I was focusing on sin, and trying not to commit any. But the more I focused on that, the more I sinned. Then I started focusing on Christ. The more I focused on Him, the lesser the burden of sin, and the more I realized that I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. You see, that is grace. It says, you can't do this on your own. I have done it for you already. Believe in Me, see Me. Keep seeing Me. I love the way KJV puts 2Cor3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." Grace is power – power to live above sin! With grace you don't struggle. And the best part? It's sufficient for us! You might be struggling with something – anything. It could be an addiction that you can't seem to get over. You've undergone every form of deliverance and it seems to get stronger. Trust yourself less, and focus on Him more. What happens is that, everything that is contrary to you begins to fade away when exposed to the light of his glory.

I tell you, you'd begin to enjoy your everyday life.

LE MONT-SAINT-MICHEL

Le Mont-Saint-Michel is an island commune in Normandy, France, which has held strategic fortifications since ancient times and since the 8th century AD has been the seat of the monastery from which it draws its name.

Before the construction of the first monastic establishment in the 8th century, the island was called Mont Tombe. According to legend, the archangel Michael appeared in 708 to Aubert of Avranches, the bishop of Avranches, and instructed him to build a church on the rocky islet.

From 966 onwards, the dukes of Normandy, followed by French kings, supported the development of a major Benedictine abbey on the Mont-Saint-Michel. Magnificent monastic buildings were added through medieval times, one vertiginous section being nicknamed The Marvel. The abbey became a renowned centre of learning, attracting some of the greatest minds and manuscript illuminators in Europe. Vast numbers of pilgrims visited, despite warring cross-Channel royals. However, the ramparts at the base of the island were built to keep English forces out. Other fine buildings went up along the steep village street, now converted into museums, hotels, restaurants and boutiques for today's tourists.

The Mont Saint-Michel Bay has been prone to silting up in the last couple of centuries.

Actions by man, including farming and the building of a causeway to the island monastery, have added to this problem. A major

campaign has ensured that the Mont-Saint-Michel preserves its maritime character and remains an island. The main river into the bay, the Couesnon, for example, is being left to flow more freely so that sediments are washed out to sea.

Now a rocky tidal island, the Mont occupied dry land in prehistoric times. As sea levels rose, erosion reshaped the coastal landscape, and several outcrops of granite emerged in the bay, having resisted the wear and tear of the ocean better than the surrounding rocks.

The magical island topped by a gravity-defying monastery counts as one of France's most recognizable landmarks, and is visited by more than 3 million people each year. Mont Saint-Michel and its bay are on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. The staggering location has long inspired awe and the imagination.

To preserve its exceptional surrounds, the visitor car parks have been relocated away from the shoreline.

The new car parks stand c.1.5 miles away from the island.

Tourism is the main and even almost unique source of income of the commune.

There are about fifty shops for 3 million tourists, while only 25 people sleep every night on the Mount (monks included), except in hotels.

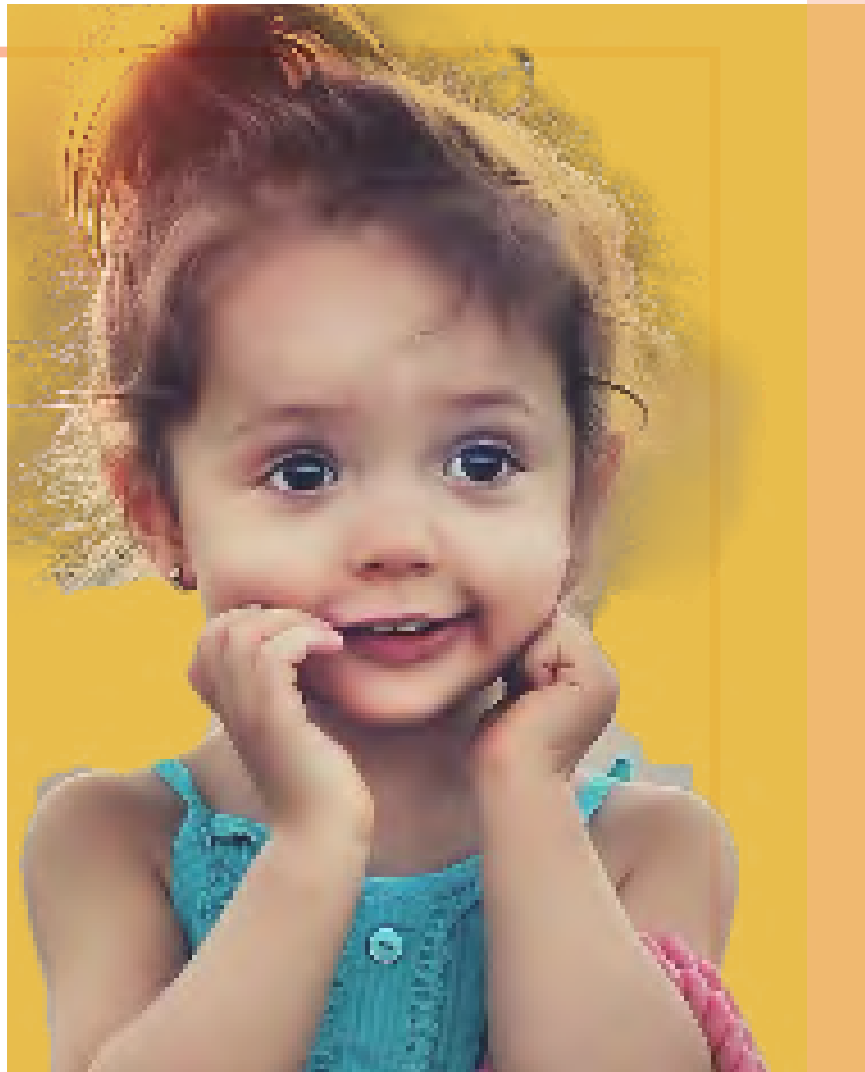
Historically, Mont Saint-Michel was the Norman counterpart of St Michael's Mount in Cornwall, UK, which was given to the Benedictines, religious order of Mont Saint-Michel, by Edward the Confessor in the 11th century. The two mounts share the same tidal island characteristics and the same conical shape, though St Michael's Mount is much smaller.



Save the Child

Let me tell you what scares me. I'm not scared that artificial intelligence is someday going to take over our world, run down our government and initiate global martial law. I'm not scared that global warming will get to the point where every ice in Antarctica melts or that aliens will one day invade the earth and wipe its population.

I'm scared that that baby feeding from her mother's breast may one day become part of a generation of people who may finally bring this world of ours to its knees. So don't tell me its civilization that 5 year olds now have unrestricted and unregulated access to the internet where they are exposed to things too adult for their age. I remember a story I was told years ago – a true story that happened in the town I grew up in. A child was playing with his younger brother. At a point he said to his brother, "I'd shoot you now." Then he rushed out and picked up his father's pistol, pointed it at his younger brother and then pulled the trigger. The gun was loaded and his brother fell down and never got up again. Probably, he didn't know what to expect. Probably he thought that after his brother had fallen down, he'd get up again. Probably he thought he was just acting out a script. It was later told that the boy had been watching a movie with so much violence that was being played on the local TV station. He'd seen so much of it that he'd thought things like that as normal. So don't tell me that it's entertainment that little kids are taken to the cinemas to see movies where heads are being chopped off and fire-spitting guns are dancing all around the screen. So when my cousin's wife said to me, "In my son's school, a primary student was expelled because he came to school with his brother's phone, gathered a few students together, and they were watching pornography," I was not surprised. Why was I not surprised? Because parents do not care that much anymore. Things that were supposedly safe before aren't safe anymore.



Look at cartoons for instance. A mother may say to her kids, 'you can watch cartoon', and she dashes into the kitchen to prepare a meal for her kids thinking that they are watching a safe channel, without her knowledge that subliminal messages that are cancerous to children are being sent out through cartoons. Homosexuality is now on open display, and children are being to see things like that as 'normal.'

So my dear reader, parent, uncle, aunt, teacher, or whoever has some level of authority over a child, save that child. Children are very attentive as they grow. Fill them with so much positive information that the negative has no more space to enter. Because, you see, you may not exactly control the things that they are exposed to when they're with their peers, in schools, at events and functions, etc., but you can certainly control what you give them, and what you expose them to. Once you expose them to so much positives, and the word of God, it will take a deep root in them that nothing else will pull it out.

Continued from page 25

ABOUT PEOPLE

People love to talk about what they deeply care about, like their passion or a cause they strongly believe in.

One way people get this particular point wrong is when they begin to ask you about your job, or where you work. It's not a bad question to ask but some people hate their job and don't want to talk about it, but they'd jump at any chance to talk about their passion.

Instead of asking, "Where do you work?" Ask, "What project are you currently working on?"

Instead of asking, "What do you do for a living?" Say, "You are such an amazing person, I'd really like to know more about the daily activities you do that's allowing you make so much impact."

Sometimes, it's not about what you ask but how you ask it. People feel more comfortable when they notice that you care about what they care about.

DON'T PRY

This one particularly puts a lot of people off. Some would meet someone for the very first time and in a bid to be conversational, they overstep their boundaries. Stay off personal matters. Don't ask deep questions about things like their family unless you have gotten to that point where there is a level of trust that has been established between the parties.

Talk about general things first and feel comfortable with each other before deciding to go further.

DEVELOP A GOOD CONVERSATION OPENER

Usually I start with a compliment depending on the situation. Different situations demand different openers. I'd give you a few examples:

- Wow! That was a great presentation. I just kept jotting down points, this is something you are really passionate about, isn't it?
- Hi! I'm Chukwuka, and you must be...
- Would it be ok if you could lend me a few

seconds of your precious time, I'd like to know your thoughts on

It's easier for things to keep flowing once you get your opener right.

LISTEN!

Talk less, and listen more. This is probably my biggest 'secret'. Listening is not 'not talking'. Listening is deeper. It's so deep that authors have written books on how to listen. It's a skill. Do you know people actually put that as a skill in their CV? It's true. This is because they know that companies and organizations are interested in people that would be really interested in their organization. Listening shows that you really care about that person and what he/she is saying.

If you get an opportunity to speak with someone very influential and have little time to spare. Go straight to the point. Sometimes just three sentences would do the magic. In less than a minute, you should be able to do the following:

- Appropriately introduce yourself giving only relevant information
- Talk about your vision, passion or cause. It has to be related with what they also care deeply about.
- Be direct. Tell them how they can come in, or how you can help them achieve something. It's important that you always give before you ask. Usually, they'd reciprocate by giving you their business card for further discussions. One important skill you need to learn is how to network with people of great influence and I spoke about it here.

Please comment below on some of your best conversation openers.

TAINTED HOPE



She looked down distractedly at the meal of potato porridge on the table, totally short of appetite. Her sullen expression betrayed a guilty and dispirited soul.

“Nwa m,” mama called in their native language, “what is it?” Mama couldn’t help but ask for the millionth time. In spite of their poverty, she’d managed to send her to a university though the current academic strike threatened to prevent her from reaping the fruit of her labour on time.

Oge looked at her mother – the only family she had left, but instead of words for a reply, tears poured down profusely. How was she going to tell her that lack of money had pushed her into it? That she had only

intended to do it once so as to be able to help mama the little way she could? That she’d betrayed her Christian faith? That she was pregnant?

But now, whatever money Samson had given her wouldn’t even be enough for an abortion should she consider it. But she knew better – abortion wasn’t the

solution. Taking an innocent life wasn’t going to wipe the guilt, shame, or save her from the impending pillory. Neither was it going to rebuild the spirit of mama that would soon be shattered.

She flickered a glance at mama. Through her side eyes, she could see trail of tears blurring the vision of a concerned mother. Her heart crushed. But who could she blame? Maybe the federal government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities for making her spend three idle months at home; or perhaps the acute state of their penury; or maybe her lechery; or possibly Samson’s sweet enticing words. But the deed had been done and the embryo formed.

Written by Chukwuka Chukwumerije

Neatily

UPGRADE YOUR STYLE

COMING SOON