BUSINESS DAY

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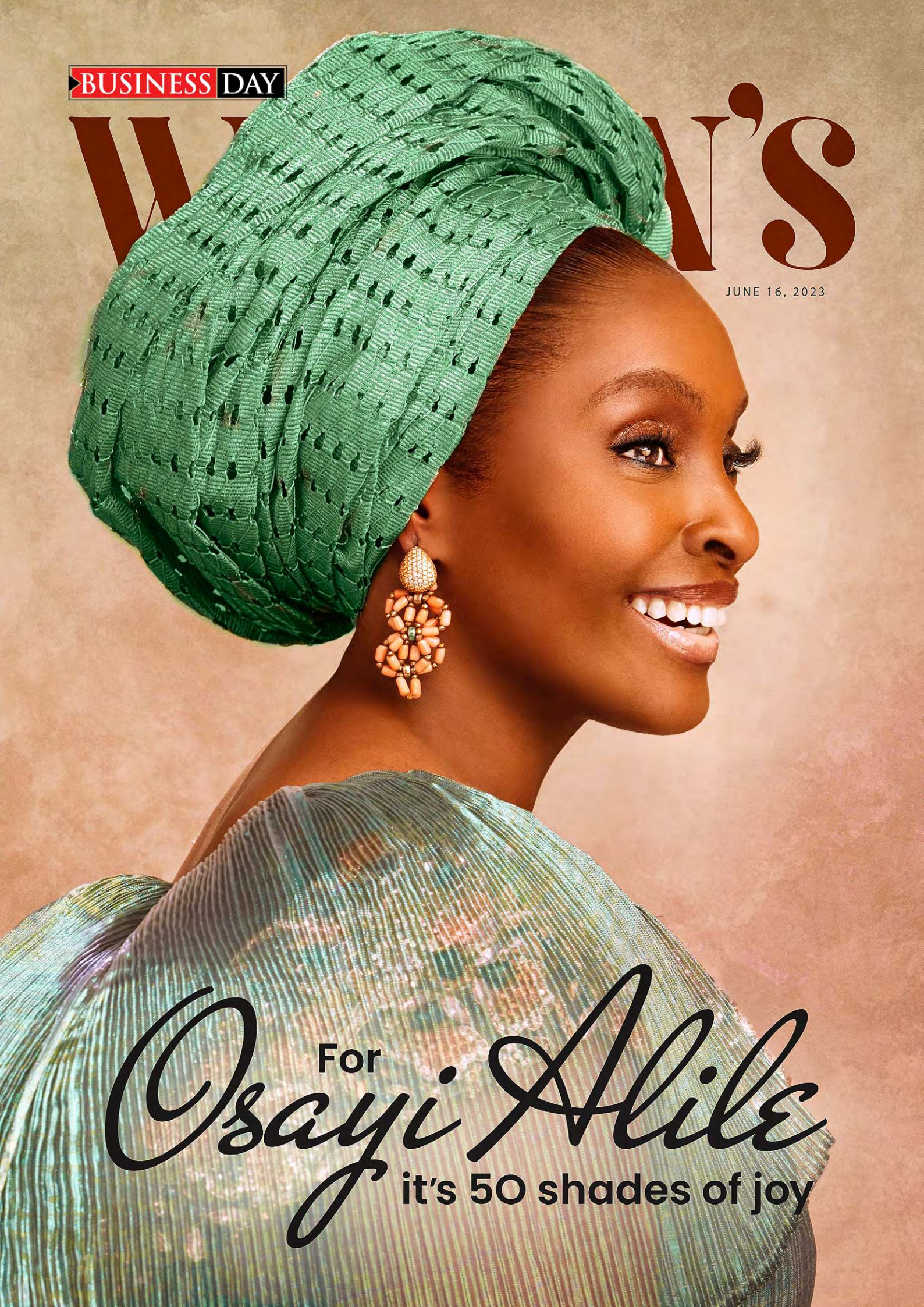
JUNE 16, 2023



For Osayi Alile it's 50 shades of joy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Editor's Note

A beautiful Friday it is and as usual, we are positioned to ensure you have an amazing weekend enjoying this loaded edition.

One of my highest points for this week was the celebration of Osayi Alile's 50th birthday. Osayi is the CEO of ACT Foundation. The show of love towards her is thick! Her life is indeed a proof that though no one is perfect, we can actually get really close. If I thought I had seen and heard it all from the celebration in honour of her, which took place on Wednesday June 14th with distinguished guests present, then the Instagram Live show I always have with my cover personality for Women's Hub for the week was off the hook! She certainly didn't see the surprises coming. From TY Bello, to Hansatu Adegbite, Debola Williams, Waje, Busola Tejumola, Nkem Okocha, Chidi Koldsweat, Charlotte Osei, staff of ACT Foundation and others, we had to come live on Instagram three consecutive times because people wanted to celebrate her. Others who also sent their messages have been published in this edition. Moral of the story, live a life so beautiful and impacting that it inspires everyone around you.

Onyeka Akpaida almost made me feel I had committed a crime when she asked me if I had watched 'Sista' and I said no. She shared in her review on how 'Sista' is a story of resilience and empowerment.

Other stories in this edition include:

- The Ripple Effect of Your Sacrifice for Others
- Finding The Right Balance Between Your Cash, and Your Costs
- Substance Abuse and Your Personal Health
- Thanksgiving as a tool for an easier life
- What You Don't Know May Be Limiting Your Love Life
- Nanny Was Diagnosed HIV+, Things Changed

For fashion, #ANIIKE2023 was a renewal of vows between comedienne Anita Asuoha (RealWarriPikin) and her husband Ikechukwu Asuoha. It was celebrating 10 years of togetherness and a vow to go beyond. Using the radiant yellow "aso-ebi" chosen by the bride for friends, some styles stood out for us, and we are sharing them here.

Try out the Lemon Blueberry Pound Cake and Crepe Suzette this week and share your results with us.

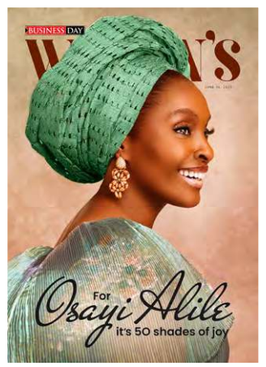
Enjoy!

Kemi Ajumobi
Associate Editor, BusinessDay
kemi@businessday.ng

















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ONE OF THE LESSONS LEARNT AS I CLOCK 50 IS THAT IN LIFE, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE UPS AND DOWNS, GOOD AND BAD AND ONE MUST PREPARE FOR IT

For Osayi Alile it's 50 shades of joy

KEMI AJUMOBI



ACT FOUNDATION HAS RAMPED UP SOCIAL IMPACT IN AN ACCELERATED FASHION

Osayi Alile is a quintessential leader with over 20 years in the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) and the third sector with a wide array of experience covering international development, business and philanthropic management, fundraising and sustainability.

Her degrees in Sociology and Public Administration from Rutgers University, New Jersey prepared her to be a catalyst for change as she has revolutionised the non- profit sector in Nigeria and beyond. She possesses Executive Certifications from LBS (Nigeria), IMD, Cranfield, Harvard University and YALE. She is also a member of the Institute of Directors, Nigeria, CIBN (Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria) Mentoring Advisory Committee, Lagos Business School Nigeria Non-profit Senior Management Fellow, ANDE Executive Committee, Council Member, LCCI (Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry) , Member The-Boardroom Africa, Executive Member of the Access Women Network and Trustee, Alaghodaro (Edo State) Economic Summit.

Osayi Alile is currently the Chief Executive Officer at ACT Foundation, a grant- making non-profit organisation that provides funding to social sector organisations focused in the areas of Health, Entrepreneurship, Environment and Leadership. Through her hard work, dedication and resilience, ACT Foundation has been adjudged the "Not-For-Profit of the Year" at the 2018, 2019 & 2020 SERAS CSR Awards.

She is also the Co-Administrator at the Coalition Against Covid-19(CACOVID) which is a Private Sector task force in partnership with the Federal Government, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) with the sole aim of combating Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Nigeria.

As a visionary leader, Alile has served in various leadership capacities including being the Executive Director, FATE Foundation; Vice President, Junior Achievement of Nigeria; and CSR Consultant, Access Bank Plc.

Osayi Alile is the founding curator of the Global Shapers Forum Nigeria and serves as a consultant on sustainability, non-profit management and strategy.

Board of Trustee, Women in Management, Business and Public Policy (WIMBIZ), Osayi Alile sits on several boards including House of Tara, Zapphaire Events, Future Projects, Africa Leadership Network Forum, IDEA Hub and Global Dignity, an affiliation of the World Economic Forum in Norway.


AS I REFLECT ON 50, I FEEL A LOT OF FULFILLMENT FROM MY JOURNEY, SUCCESSES, FAMILY, FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES AND LOVED ONES
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As you reflect on turning 50, what would you say life has taught you thus far?

First, I am simply grateful and in awe of how far God has brought me and how much I have been able to accomplish. However, I would say one of the many things I have learnt from life especially as I clock 50 in an interesting season where the world is faced with a myriad of challenges, is that in life, there will always be ups and downs, good and bad and one must prepare for it. Experiencing the different sides of life doesn't mean you are a bad person or God doesn't love you, these are simply experiences that must come our way. This is the same way I approach work too. I know there are seasons in my job that will be great and there will be lean seasons too. I prepare for both seasons.

Yes, I have had difficult seasons when I have gone home and cried and asked myself many questions because things were not going according to plan, however, this preparation has in many cases helped me cushion the effects of these seasons. What is important in these seasons are understanding who we are and expressing goodness to others regardless.

Do you feel fulfilled with what you have done so far? Are there plans to do more?

As I reflect on 50, I feel a lot of fulfillment from my journey, successes, family, friends, colleagues and loved ones. However, as I reflect more deeply, I am asking God what next? I ask because I believe I have stepped into another chapter of my life and this chapter must be loaded with what God has planned for my life and what needs to be done. I have had different seasons where God has led me to do various things and I am certain that this season has its unique plot and as the days unfold, I will walk in it.

I WAS DETERMINED TO SUCCEED AND LEAVE BEHIND MY FOOTPRINTS IN THE SECTOR. IT BECAME MY DREAM, AND I CHASED AFTER IT TILL TODAY

As a thought leader in the non-profit space, what would you say birthed your passion for the non-profit work?

Well, I wouldn't say I always knew I would work in the non-profit sector, however, after university, I volunteered in a non-profit project and discovered a passion for it, I decided to pursue after this passionately. I did not understand much about my life or where I was headed, but I listened to my inner self and decided to change my Masters course to a non-profit related course. I remember my father had wondered what was going on with me and why I had made such a drastic move towards the non-profit sector, and he feared for my future. However, I was determined to succeed and leave behind my footprints in the sector. It became my dream, and I chase after it till today.

I BELIEVE THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR NEEDS TO LEVERAGE MORE ON TECHNOLOGY FOR MORE INNOVATIVE IMPACT

What changes would you suggest that the non-profit sector adopt going forward to improve its impact?

Well, I believe the non-profit sector needs to leverage more on technology for more innovative impact. Technology will play a major role not only programmatically, in how funders and implementing organisations engage, but also operationally, how individual organisations operate internally. It is important that NGOs and social enterprises adopt more the use of technology for a much more innovative impact. Through innovation, we can reach and impact a lot more people in a short time and with lesser resources in most cases. Also, with the introduction of artificial intelligence, and other tech innovations, the development ecosystem will have to adjust drastically, or get left behind.

The sector also needs to embrace and engage in more innovative collaborations with the private and public sector. Non-profits must learn to be creative in designing campaigns and projects relevant to donors and partners. This encourages more collaborations to solve the ever-evolving social challenges that Africa faces.

Furthermore, I believe the non-profit sector needs to embrace more indigenous philanthropy and impact storytelling. The truth remains that no one is better positioned to tell our stories and solve our problems than we are.

As a thought-leader with many professionals looking up to you, what are your plans for mentorship?

Mentorship is not new to me; I live a life of deliberate mentoring. I am a product of great mentorships, so, I have made deliberate moves in the last decade to mentor a number of young women. Like I said, it is a lifestyle for me. So, aside from my direct mentees, I am deliberate to impact everyone I encounter, especially young persons including my staff and colleagues. I will keep mentoring till I am done here on earth because Jesus mirrored this lifestyle and personally, I believe this is how we can impact the world to become a better place.





HIRE THE RIGHT PERSONS WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT THEY DO AND INVEST IN THEM

You have successfully steered the ACT Foundation ship in the last 5 years, what unique lessons have you learnt from this experience? Did you envision this level of success in 5 years?

Some of the lessons I have learnt include: hire the right persons who are passionate about what they do and invest in them. Also, like I always say, no one can grow bigger than the sector, therefore, it is important to keep improving oneself so that you can continue to impact and improve the sector. In addition, I believe in investing in people and relationships. Do not leave people the way you met them, invest good as much as you can.

When ACT Foundation took off in 2016, we had big dreams and goals to impact thousands of persons through our four focus areas: health, entrepreneurship, environment and leadership. However, after 5 years, we have surpassed our goals with a very wide margin.

Through a combination of grant making, enterprise interventions, innovation challenges, support programmes, guided conversations and philanthropy, ACT Foundation has ramped up social impact in an accelerated fashion.

We recently unveiled 26 organisations' recipients of the 2023 grant scheme, which is in its 7th cycle. In the last 5 years, we have funded over 80 grantee organisations with over 2 million direct beneficiaries across 8 countries in Africa.

Did I envision this? Definitely not. I am grateful for such growth, impact and more to come.

I AM DELIBERATE TO IMPACT EVERYONE I ENCOUNTER ESPECIALLY YOUNG PERSONS INCLUDING MY STAFF AND COLLEAGUES




WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN THESE SEASONS ARE UNDERSTANDING WHO WE ARE AND EXPRESSING GOODNESS TO OTHERS REGARDLESS
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Accolades for Osayi Alile at 50

Osayi is able to pull together people and keep friendships going.

Osayi is consistent, loyal, honest and she is true. In Osayi, I have learnt a lot about love, the reality and sacrificial nature of love. I have understood better that love is actually a decision. As we go through life, it is very easy, with the things that happen, to step aside from each other or grow away from each other, but Osayi is intentional about life and friendship. She is the only person that I know who is consistent in picking up the phone, calling to find out how you are, stopping by and buying soaps and shea butter for you. She prays for you, laughs with you, celebrate with you, lives life with you. She is a friend of all seasons and through seasons. Two weeks ago, I had some challenges, and I was stressed out and before I knew it, Osayi had set up a WhatsApp group insisting we pray and fast. She would call that it is time to pray. The same way she does this for me, is the same way she does it for others that she holds dear to heart. Osayi is a phenomenal person. Osayi has kept winning because she has been true to herself. I have not met one person that is not jealous of anyone else. She rejoices with you and your success. She cries with you and when done, she asks that we move on and find solution to what next we need to do. Osayi is consistent and dependable. I love, appreciate and celebrate you.

Dupe Olusola
MD/CEO, Transcorp Hotels Plc

As you turn 50 mama, I can't help but marvel at what an amazing journey you have had! All in all, God shows up!!! He has been extremely faithful and kind to us and I do not take it for granted!! Just amazing!

Your commitment to God and his people is evident in everything you do, and you truly are a shining example of LOVE in action. You have touched so many people's lives - You give of your time and goodies (I'm constantly borrowing your stuff…lol) Thank you. She is a connector and always willing to introduce and help everyone. She reminds me so much of our papa!!

Mama, You are a simply amazing and a beautiful human!! I am so honoured to be able to call you my sister. Out #3. I love you!!! Happy 50th Birthday!

Osaru Alile
Principal Partner/Creative Director at CC Interiors Studio

People continue to use the phrase, "I have the best mother in the world" but there is no way you will say you have the best mother in the world when I have the best mother in the world. I have a kind mother who taught me humanity, what it means to have love for other people. She taught me how to love and give with generosity and selflessness. To think about yourself but put other people first, to continue to love and adore other people. My mother loves so wholeheartedly. She continues to revolutionise the face of social sector both in Africa and around the world. She is sacrificial, she will always be there for you, she is always the most intelligent woman in the room. She will raise the bar, raise it and then raise it again. She will draw the line,


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erase it, and raise it again. My mum will have you laughing so hard and crack you up. People are often congratulating me for what she said or did, sometimes on things I do not know about. If you sit by my mum, you will hear 6 alarms throughout the day, praying for me and my younger brother. I cannot be more grateful for this. Did you ever know mum that you are my hero? You are the wind beneath my wings. I and my younger brother love you, and it is an honour to be your sons. May these next 50 years bring you joy, blessing, peace, wealth, prosperity only a woman like you deserves. If you think you have seen my mother on TV, magazines or anywhere, that isn't all, there is more…watch this space!

Tamunobuomie Oruene (Son)

I first met Osayi when I came into ACT Foundation for an interview as a Finance Officer. This was after the first interview with the HR team. I had prepared myself but was a little nervous as usual.

I entered Osayi's office, and she greeted me with a very warm welcome and engaging interaction as though she had known me all her life. I felt she was trying to make me comfortable as an interviewer. I was wrong. Osayi has remained the same till today.

If you have bad moments from home, you can be sure to leave work happy, just because of her presence. There are no dull moments with Osayi. She inspires you to be a better version of you and always wants you to leave her better than when you joined her.

Osayi is a great inspiration and I celebrate her.

Aghogho Erakpotobor
Finance Manager, ACT Foundation

Happy 50th Birthday Ma! I celebrate and honour your extraordinary leadership, dedication and contributions to ACT Foundation. Your guidance has helped the organisation flourish to transform lives and communities and nurture the potential of countless African organizations. Your vision, passion, kindness and fun-loving nature inspire me daily. Thank you for being an exceptional leader and role model. I wish you joy, good health and many more years of success and happiness.

Oluchi Okoroafor
M&E Executive, ACT Foundation

Over five years ago, I had the privilege of meeting Ms. Osayi, who played a crucial role in my journey into the non-profit sector as her Executive Assistant. Working closely with her, I not only experienced her leadership as a boss but also got to know her on a personal level. Throughout our time together, she identified qualities in me that I hadn't recognised within myself—both personally and professionally—and continuously encouraged me to surpass my own limits. Today, I proudly hold the position of Head of Human Resources at ACT Foundation.

To me, Osayi Alile is more than just a boss; she has become my mentor, friend, and sister. Her unwavering support and kindness are truly remarkable, and I consider it a blessing to have her by my side. Witnessing her passion for work, family, friends, and everyone around her inspires me every single day.

As she celebrates her 50th birthday, I am filled with excitement and gratitude. Osayi, may this milestone birthday bring you immense joy and fulfillment. I wish you a year filled with new adventures, meaningful connections, and continued success in all your endeavors. May your passion for making a difference in the nonprofit sector continue to touch the lives of many, and may you find fulfillment in every step of your journey.

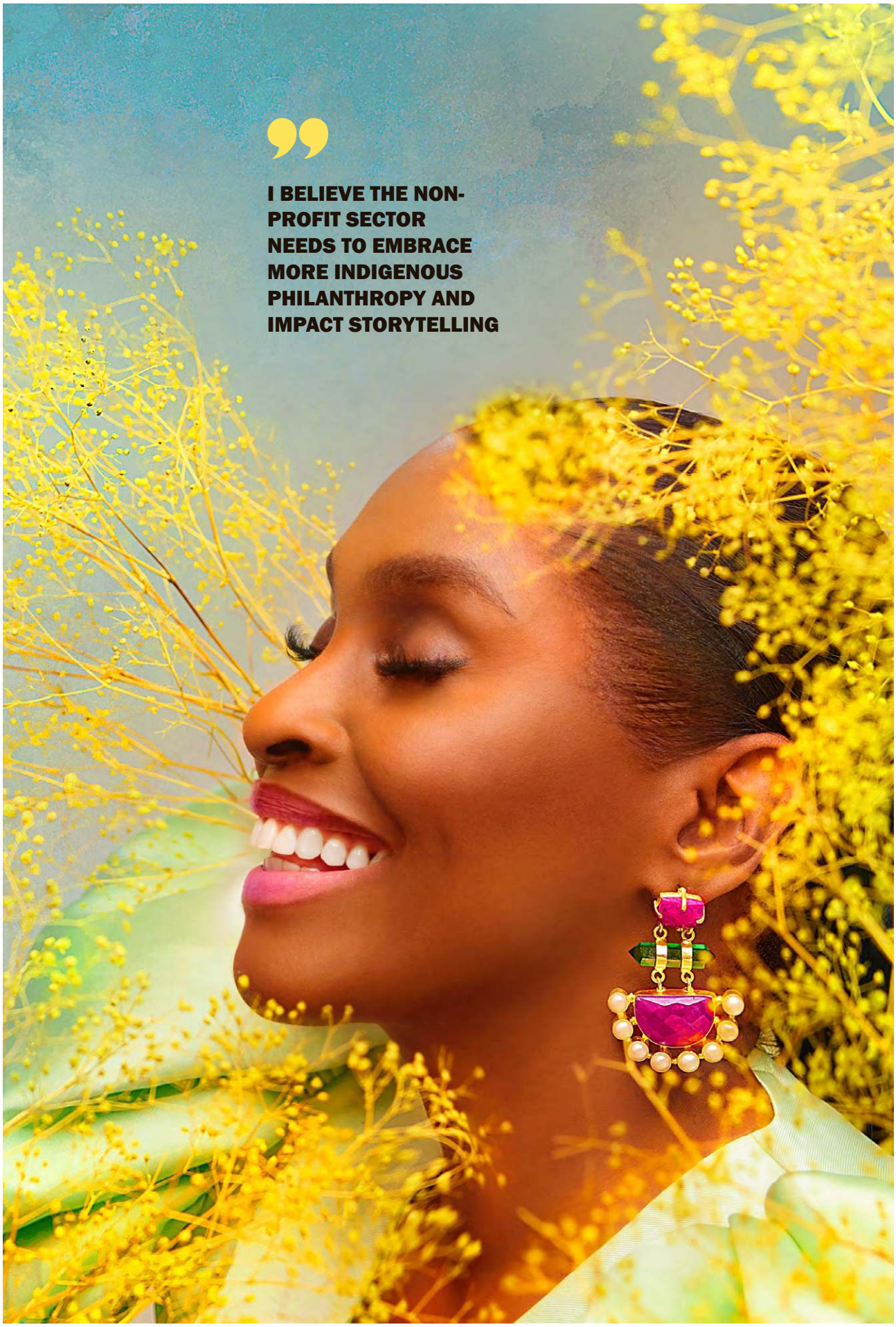
Afe Buoro
Senior Human Resources and Administrative Executive, ACT Foundation

Osayi!!! How many ways do I love you? You are light and love. You are the quintessential woman's woman. You are the true example of women supporting women. Always looking out for all your friends, going above and beyond. You were the first person to visit me in hospital when I gave birth to my retirement baby!!! You were so worried with my old age belle. Thanks for being a sweet soul. Happy 50th Birthday, you deserve all the blessings coming your way. I love and celebrate you dearly.

Ini Abimbola
Vice President & Trustee, Sustainability Professionals Institute of Nigeria

Very few women truly can be identified as a woman who uplifts and supports her fellow woman, she, however, personifies this saying. From the moment I met Osayi, she has been a picture of grace, kindness, love, happiness, and consistency. It's very difficult to find somebody who has something negative to say about Osayi, which goes to tell you a lot about who she is and who she has been consistently.

I met one of the most prominent people in my life through Osayi. I had said to her, I wanted to meet women who would add value to my life in any capacity as she


I BELIEVE THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR NEEDS TO EMBRACE MORE INDIGENOUS PHILANTHROPY AND IMPACT STORYTELLING

introduced me to Ijeoma Ubosi. Who I truly count as one of my big sisters and best friends. I'm forever indebted to her for that relationship.

She is a leader, an inspiration, a guide, always available for a much needed conversation, gives herself intentionally and deliberately to those around her.

I've watched her with WIMBIZ, Chairperson, Zapphaire events, CEO ACT Foundation and pillar leader of 'This Present House' and an extremely intentional parent with her boys and loving sibling to her family.

It's a blessing to know her, access her and now celebrate her in a way she truly deserves at the legacy age of 50. She is an icon and deserving of all accolades.

Lovev

Chizoba Okpala Atsu
CEO Ellesice Cocktails & Drinks

If support system were a person… I am certain I won't be where I am today if I didn't come across the amazon, Osayi Alile. I met this woman just when I was coming into the fullness of knowing what it meant to be a young woman. My first encounter with her was as an undergraduate in the University of Lagos when she came to Sovereign Army fellowship to teach on prayer. I had never been in close contact with a woman that commanded so much before. I was in awe…literally.

We got introduced and I officially became her "aburo" and mentee. From teaching me life skills, holding my hand, supporting me, cheering me, praying with me, opening doors for me and taking me into rooms I otherwise won't have access to. Just knowing I have her in my corner doesn't only keep me going but it inspires and challenges me.

My sweet aunty Osayi as I call her, is a blessing not just to me but to her generation and everyone that comes in contact with her, breaking every myth that women don't support women.

Blockbuster Regards,

Lala!
Actress, Producer, Host.

My darling Osayimwense - My sister and my friend. The one who encourages, looks out for and is real with me. Godmother to my children, and the one who blessed me with two precious boys to mother and love on as well.

We have been blessed to have so many years to see the manifestation of God in multiple dimensions in our lives, and it is a joy to see what God is doing and is poised to do as you step into Jubilee.

I know you don't do mushy but here is a chance to let you know that you are much loved by me and mine.

Love you tons

Adetola Owolabi
Executive Director, Black Pelican Limited

Dear Phenomenal Osayi,

Happy Birthday my treasured golden friend. I pray God continues to be the hedge of protection around you. I pray that your children always bring you comfort and solace. I wish you a life of love, peace, joy, abundance, beauty, contentment, and satisfaction. I pray your beautiful smile never fades. I pray for you many more avenues to keep making us proud, you know you have big cheerleaders behind you. I pray that you always have good friends around you in times of celebration and through the bad times as you have been there for us. May you never lose your gift of making everyone feel like they are your total focus, I don't know how you do it, but I love it. Your ability to carry a conversation with anyone of any age is a unique gift. Thank you for sharing your talents with us and for the incredible philanthropy you do at work and in private. Stay prayerful, kind, generous, confident, resilient, assertive, stylish, sexy, girly, womanly. Keep dancing like no one's watching with so much energy and passion. You are blessed and are deeply loved and cherished by me and so many others.

Love Always,

Belinda Smith
Lecturer – Department of Sociology
University of Ghana

Every time I think of Aunty Osayi, words like strong, supporter, encourager, adviser, mentor and friend come to mind. Aunty Osayi shows up for everyone in her life. She loves hard and if she loves you, you can't ever doubt it. Some people are plugs but aunty Osayi is a whole extension box. She knows someone that knows someone that can solve your problem and she's not afraid to ask you to help solve other people's problems for them.

Aunty Osayi, in this 50th year of your life, before you ask for help you receive it. I pray that as you diligently support the visions of others, you birth your own visions and are supported by nations. May God grant you a special birthday gift and May your joy be full.

Happy birthday Aunty Osayi

Much love,

Ayobami Bamisaiye
Outgoing Curator, Global Shapers
Community Lagos Hub

'My OA' - Osayi Alile@ 50

A woman of diverse authentic parts , that is Osayi Alile. ' My OA' as I have Fondly called her for decades, remains my kinetic energy, moving me to make bold progressive strides in life. I have been with her through her academic and professional journeys, truly inspirational every step of the way. Osayi abases and abounds, devoid of arrogance. She is a respected force within for profit and non-profit business arenas, being able to ensure collaborative work by both sides, to enable nation building.

Osayi walks the whole journey with you and would pull out every tool in the toolbox, every connection that is required, to ensure you finish strong.

Osayi shows up for everyone and she is one who lifts others as she rises. My OA is not just a thought leader but also a truly thoughtful leader, one who genuinely leads with kindness. She is indeed a leader who is committed to the development of people and the society that she finds herself in. A soulful mother at home and at work.

Our friendship cuts across personal as well as professional lines, and her intensity of care comes through the same. Osayi loves and serves God. She is a spirited dancer in worship as well as in celebration. I am eternally grateful to God for blessing me with this great wealth of friendship in Osayi.

I thank my OA for being in the required form of support (hard or soft) through my life's journey. I am grateful for our trust filled friendship that is built on God's love. I wish Osayi God's joy and marvelous elevation this new decade.

Kind regards,

Bukola Thomas
Executive Head, Human Capital, Old Mutual Nigeria

As Leap Africa Social Innovator in 2016, I had the pleasure of meeting Osayi, she was one of the facilitators. She played a crucial role in teaching us the art of networking, which was particularly valuable to me as an introvert who was hesitant to socialise. Her lectures and guidance encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and embrace the power of connections.

Also, as the CEO of ACT Foundation, ACT generously funded our work at the Mamamoni Empowerment Foundation. Thanks to her leadership, nearly 500 women had the opportunity to learn valuable skills at no cost. Her dedication and commitment to empowering others left a lasting impression on me.

Osayi is a personal source of inspiration, always cheering me on and motivating me to strive for greatness. Her belief in my potential uplifted me and gave me the confidence to pursue my goals. I am truly grateful for her impact on my personal and professional growth.

Happy 50th birthday Osayi Alile, wishing you more healthy years ahead filled with God's protection and provision.

Nkem Okocha
CEO, Mamamoni

Sometime circa 2008 I was at a WIMBIZ event where I sat beside a very friendly lady who was very keen about helping me to get better at what I was doing then. She invited me to participate in the Fate Foundation's Aspiring Entrepreneurs Program. She took special interest in my entrepreneurial endeavors and also helped me to participate in other training programs as well. Since I met Osayi at the WIMBIZ event, she never stopped looking out for me and my daughter. She gave my daughter an opportunity to intern with ACT Foundation at a point. Osayi is someone who tells you as it is, she is a great woman of faith who is always ready to go to great length for her family and friends.

Osayi, as you hit the golden mark, I pray that God will never leave you forsaken. Happy 50th birthday and thanks for all your seeds of love.

Yemisi Adekunle
Corporate Affairs and Communications, Pfizer

"Caring for others requires caring for oneself"

Dalai Lama



TheRipple Effect of Your Sacrifice for Others!

by Gladys Agwai

Have you been experiencing challenges related to your continual sacrifice and prioritisation of others' needs over your own? It is no wonder. Too often you are in roles where you are expected to provide emotional support and care for others, whether it is in your personal relationships, family dynamics, or professional settings. Often as women, you take on significant care giving roles within your families, whether it is caring for children, aging parents, or extended family members. You prioritise the needs of your loved ones neglecting your own self-care, leading to physical, emotional, and mental strain. You become fatigued by stressors related to racial and gender biases, discrimination, and the expectation to over-perform to prove your competence, i.e., taking on extra work or working long hours to navigate oppressive systems. Do you feel compelled to constantly educate others, advocate for social justice, and work towards equality to break through barriers leading to your emotional exhaustion and burnout? Do you feel a sense of responsibility to maintain harmony, avoid conflict, or cater to your partner's emotional well-being at the expense of your own happiness?

All too often, you are navigating all these things at once neglecting you!!! It is EXHAUSTING! It is critical to your well-being to know that while compassion and empathy are admirable qualities, it is equally crucial for you to set healthy boundaries, practice self-care, and prioritise your own well-being. You must be mindful and present with yourself and not operate on autopilot. Be consciously learning to navigate these dynamics in a healthier and more balanced way. Otherwise, you become emotionally and psychologically dependent on providing care and support to others and gaining their approval. This stems from a deep-rooted need for validation, self-worth, or a desire to avoid personal pain or emptiness. While your intentions are noble, this can lead to a series of problems. For example:

- Burnout and emotional exhaustion are the result when you constantly put others' needs ahead of your own. Your relentless self-sacrifice leads to burnout, decreased productivity, and a decline in your overall well-being.

- Neglected personal relationships become strained as you devote excessive time and energy to help others or gain

their approval. This neglect creates distance and resentment among family members, friends, and romantic partners.

- Diminished self-Identity and emotional neglect create an internal struggle diminishing your sense of self. This self-neglect results in emotional detachment, decreased self-esteem, and an erosion of your personal identity.

- Enabling dependency on you can create harmful cycles of dependency because of limited encouragement to be self-sufficient to develop the other person's skills and independence.

- Ignoring personal boundaries when helping others undermines their authority and limits their decision-making abilities. Gain their consent. If you do not, it will lead to discomfort, invasion of privacy, or even emotional harm.

- Reinforcing co-dependency occurs when individuals rely on each other in dysfunctional ways, reinforcing unhealthy behaviors and preventing personal growth and independence.

- Enabling destructive behaviour such as drug or alcohol addiction or other harmful habits without facing the consequences or seeking necessary help does more harm than good.

It is important to note that while helping others can sometimes become harmful, it does not negate the value of genuine and appropriate support. Balancing empathy, compassion, and personal boundaries is key to ensuring that your actions provided are truly beneficial. You must challenge yourself to know the right path through awareness, acknowledgement, attention, intention, and action. To make a shift towards change, ensure you create an environment of:

- Self-awareness, healthy boundaries, and realistic expectations is essential to avoid excessive self-sacrifice.

- Self-care and personal well-being by engaging in activities that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being, such as, exercise, hobbies, and seeking support from loved ones and co-workers, can help restore balance and prevent burnout.

- Self-compassion by treating yourself with the same kindness and empathy you extend to others is fundamental. Engaging in self-reflection, self-forgiveness, and practicing self-compassion techniques can foster personal growth and emotional healing.

You can overcome and be transformed to have a healthier expression of empathy, care, and gaining approval. By cultivating self-awareness, practicing self-care, and nurturing self-compassion, you can break free from the negative consequences of self-sacrifice over your own well-being. Ultimately, striking a balance between compassion for others and self-care leads to personal growth, improved relationships, and a more sustainable approach to helping others.

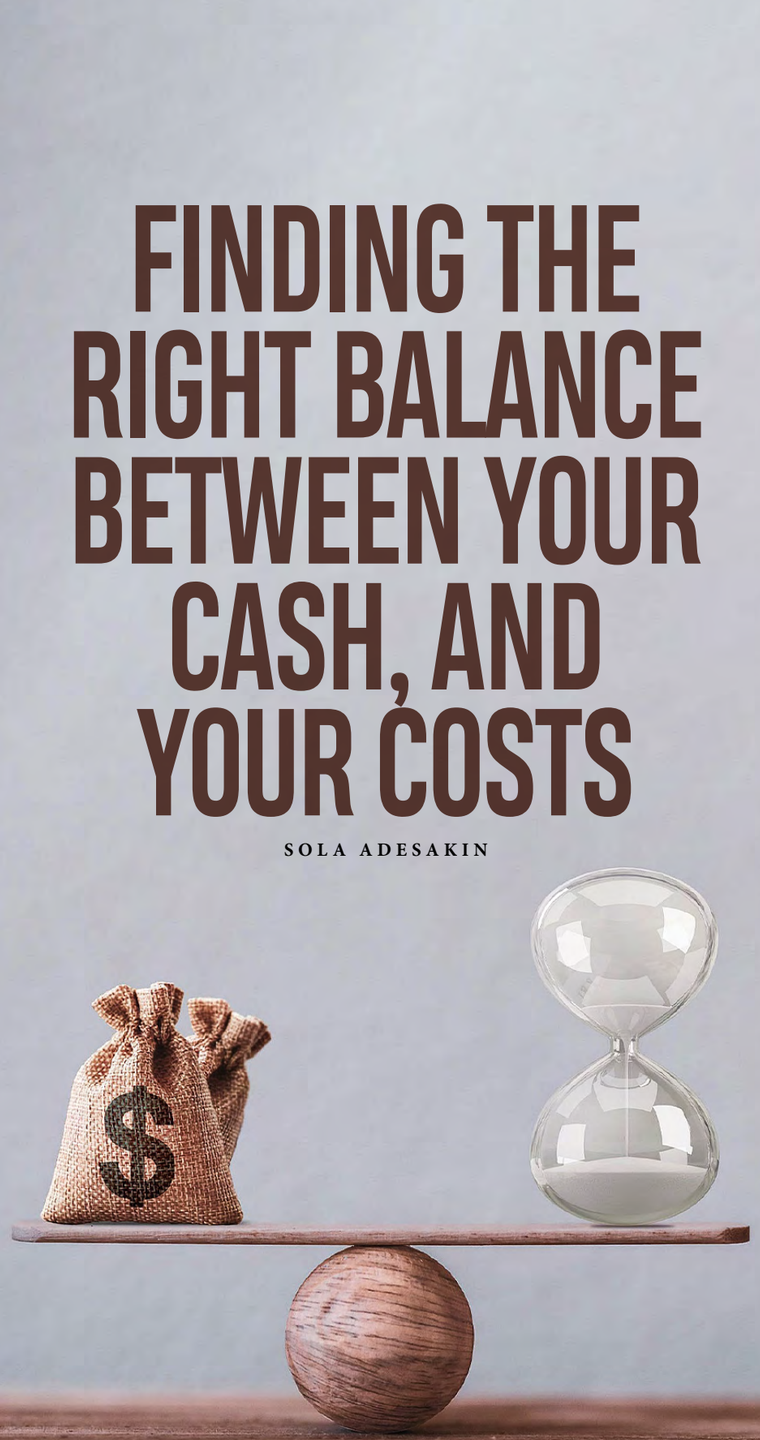
"Forgive yourself for what you think you have done or not done.
At every moment you had your reasons for all actions and decisions.
You've always done the best that you could do. Forgive yourself." Doreen Virtue



Gladys Agwai is the Founder of Ignite Within and an International Author, Speaker, Life Coach, and Trainer. She transitioned as a business owner in 2014 after spending 30 years as a global corporate executive within IBM in the US, Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya. She is the author of Dumped! NOT Dumped On! How to stop reliving the negative impact of rejection in your life, business, and career! and IMPOSTER: Five Strategies to Your Authentic Self. Gladys helps professionals and leaders who want to make organizational, career, and life transitions gain the clarity and right mindset required to take uncomfortable actions to achieve sustainable success. She can be reached at ignitewithin.org

FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN YOUR CASH, AND YOUR COSTS

SOLA ADESAKIN



In navigating the complex realm of personal finance, there are three critical components that directly impact our financial well-being: our cash, our costs, and our cultivated mindset. While your cost is like your life support, your cash is the oxygen or lifeline that fuels the life support. Life requires spending, and having enough money to cover your needs helps you do this effectively.

Your Cash

Your cash serves as the oxygen or lifeline that fuels your financial well-being. It represents the funds you have available to meet your needs, cover expenses, and achieve your financial goals. Without adequate cash flow, it becomes challenging to sustain your financial life and navigate through various circumstances.

Meeting Immediate Needs: Cash is essential for meeting your day-to-day needs. It allows you to pay for groceries, utilities, transportation, and other essential expenses. Having enough cash on hand ensures that you can fulfill these basic requirements without relying on credit or incurring debt. By managing your cash effectively, you can maintain financial stability and avoid financial strain.

Handling Emergencies: Life is unpredictable, and unexpected emergencies can arise at any time. Having sufficient cash reserves enables you to handle these unforeseen events without derailing your financial progress. Whether it's a medical expense, a car repair, or a sudden job loss, having cash readily available provides a sense of security and peace of mind.

Seizing Opportunities: Opportunities for financial growth and investment often require upfront cash. Whether it's starting a business, investing in stocks, or purchasing a property, having cash at your disposal allows you to capitalise on these opportunities when they arise. By having cash readily available, you can take advantage of favorable market conditions and potentially generate additional income or wealth.

Managing Debt: Cash is instrumental in managing and reducing debt. By having cash on hand, you can make timely debt payments, reduce interest charges, and ultimately pay off your debts faster. This helps you regain financial freedom and reduce the burden of debt in your life.

Building an Emergency Fund: An emergency fund is a crucial component of financial resilience. It acts as a safety net, providing you with a cushion to handle unexpected expenses or income disruptions. By consistently setting aside a portion of your cash flow into an emergency fund, you are better prepared to handle financial setbacks without resorting to credit or debt.

Supporting Long-Term Goals: Your cash plays a vital role in supporting your long-term financial goals, such as retirement planning, home-ownership, education funding, or starting a family. By saving and investing your cash wisely, you can accumulate the necessary funds over time to achieve these milestones and secure your financial future.

To optimise your cash flow, identify areas where you can reduce expenses. Look for cost-saving opportunities such as negotiating bills, switching to more affordable alternatives, and eliminating unnecessary subscriptions or memberships. Prioritise saving a portion of your income and consider investing it wisely to grow your wealth over time.

Additionally, explore ways to increase your income. This can involve seeking promotions or raises at your current job, acquiring new skills that are in demand, or exploring entrepreneurial opportunities. By diversifying your income sources, you can enhance your financial resilience and create more room for financial growth.

Your Costs

Understanding and managing your costs is essential for maintaining a healthy financial life. Take a thorough look at your expenses and categorise them into fixed and variable costs. Fixed costs include rent, utilities, and loan payments, while variable costs encompass items like groceries, entertainment, and discretionary spending.

Evaluate each expense and identify areas where you can cut back without sacrificing your quality of life. Look for alternative, more cost-effective options, such as buying in bulk, cooking at home, or using public transportation. Embrace a mindset of mindful spending and avoid impulse purchases. By continuously reviewing and optimizing your costs, you can allocate more resources toward savings and financial goals.

Your Cultivated Mindset

Your mindset is the foundation for financial success. Cultivate a positive and growth-oriented mindset that sees challenges as opportunities for learning and growth. Recognise that setbacks are temporary and that your determination and resilience will lead you to overcome obstacles.

Invest in your financial education and stay updated on personal finance strategies and trends. Read books, attend seminars, and follow reputable financial experts to gain valuable insights and expand your knowledge. Surround yourself with like-minded individuals who share your commitment to financial success, as their support and encouragement can reinforce your positive mindset.

Practice gratitude and visualisation to keep your financial goals at the forefront of your mind. Visualise yourself achieving financial success, and let that vision guide your actions and decisions. Celebrate your financial wins, no matter how small, and learn from any setbacks along the way.

By nurturing a cultivated mindset, you will develop the resilience, discipline, and determination needed to navigate financial challenges and achieve your long-term financial goals.

In conclusion, to achieve financial success, it is vital to manage your cash effectively, optimise your costs, and nurture your cultivated mindset. By taking a proactive approach to your finances, making conscious decisions about your spending, and fostering a positive mindset, you will be well-positioned to maximise your cash flow, minimise unnecessary expenses, and achieve financial well-being. Remember, financial success is a journey, and by continuously improving these three components, you will pave the way for a brighter and more prosperous financial future.



Sola Adesakin (FCA, FCCA CPA MBA) is a Personal/ Business Finance Coach and Chartered Accountant with over 20 years of hands-on experience. She is passionate about helping people understand the "make-manage-multiply money" message, maximize their resources, achieve their crucial financial milestones and build true wealth through the concept of financial planning.

As a financial enthusiast, Sola is an advocate for SDG5 and SDG10, with a firm belief in achieving gender equality and reducing inequality via financial literacy and access to funding. Sola is the author of currently eight (8) published books and several unpublished articles in the public domain. She has recently been admitted into the Forbes Coaching Council, as she continues to leverage global alliances and partnerships to amplify the money message around the world.



WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW MAY BE LIMITING YOUR LOVE LIFE

Nike Folagbade

Some years ago, we ordered for a new printer from a popular online store for home use. Since we were not conversant with the set up, I and my husband read through the manuals, watched YouTube videos and began to implement the setup process.

It was easy to unbox the package, make certain adjustments and get it working but we had an issue. We didn't know how to connect it to the network to the printer because it had a wireless connection.

Every time I watched the videos online, it kept asking me to connect to WPS router and, in my mind, I was wondering how to find that on my Spectranet WiFi. I had never seen the WPS option on the WiFi so I got confused. We had used this WiFi for over 3 years but never noticed it since we didn't need it.

This got me stuck for days. I needed to print some training manuals I had paid for from a certification program and I planned to finish the lessons immediately.

Here is what happened. Since I was the one who needed it the most now, I had to figure out a way while my husband just felt we would get it done later.

I started putting pressure on seeking the knowledge I needed and I spent more time watching videos, then I decided to do something I had not done before - check the WiFi if it had WPS function. Guess what? I found it somewhere, very small. You can even miss it if you're not searching diligently on the WiFi. How come I had never noticed it? This ignorance kept me stuck for 5 days without progress. It was so small that I actually ignored its purpose all the while until I searched for what it looked like.

But I also found it because I was more desperate than my husband since I needed it to progress at that point in time.

Do you know sometimes, what you don't know may be affecting your ability to progress in your relationship? This happens in life generally. You may also become too familiar with certain things that you don't even know when you are struggling because of a lack of acknowledgement.

What are the lessons? And how does it apply to your relationship?

1. You may be experiencing the same kind of patterns in your choice of partner and relationships because of a major aspect of your life that you haven't explored yet. For instance, your past, your upbringing, your values or your expectations.

2. Even when it is a healthy relationship, you may be currently stuck because you haven't discovered how your partner thinks, or their emotional needs in terms of having a healthy connection.

3. You may also be having issues with love and dating because you haven't sought out for the knowledge you need. This is very common since some people believe that head knowledge is enough to confront the issues of love.

4. In life, you can't afford to be simple, you have to choose between being wise or foolish. You can be any at some point but let your desire for growth push you into transformation. Embrace the power of research and knowledge but most importantly is, applying the knowledge.

5. The answer to your problems might be around you but you haven't taken note or your life partner might be one of your friends but you're ignoring and waiting for someone more fancy.

Imagine the breakthrough I had because I put in more effort, diligence and quick application?

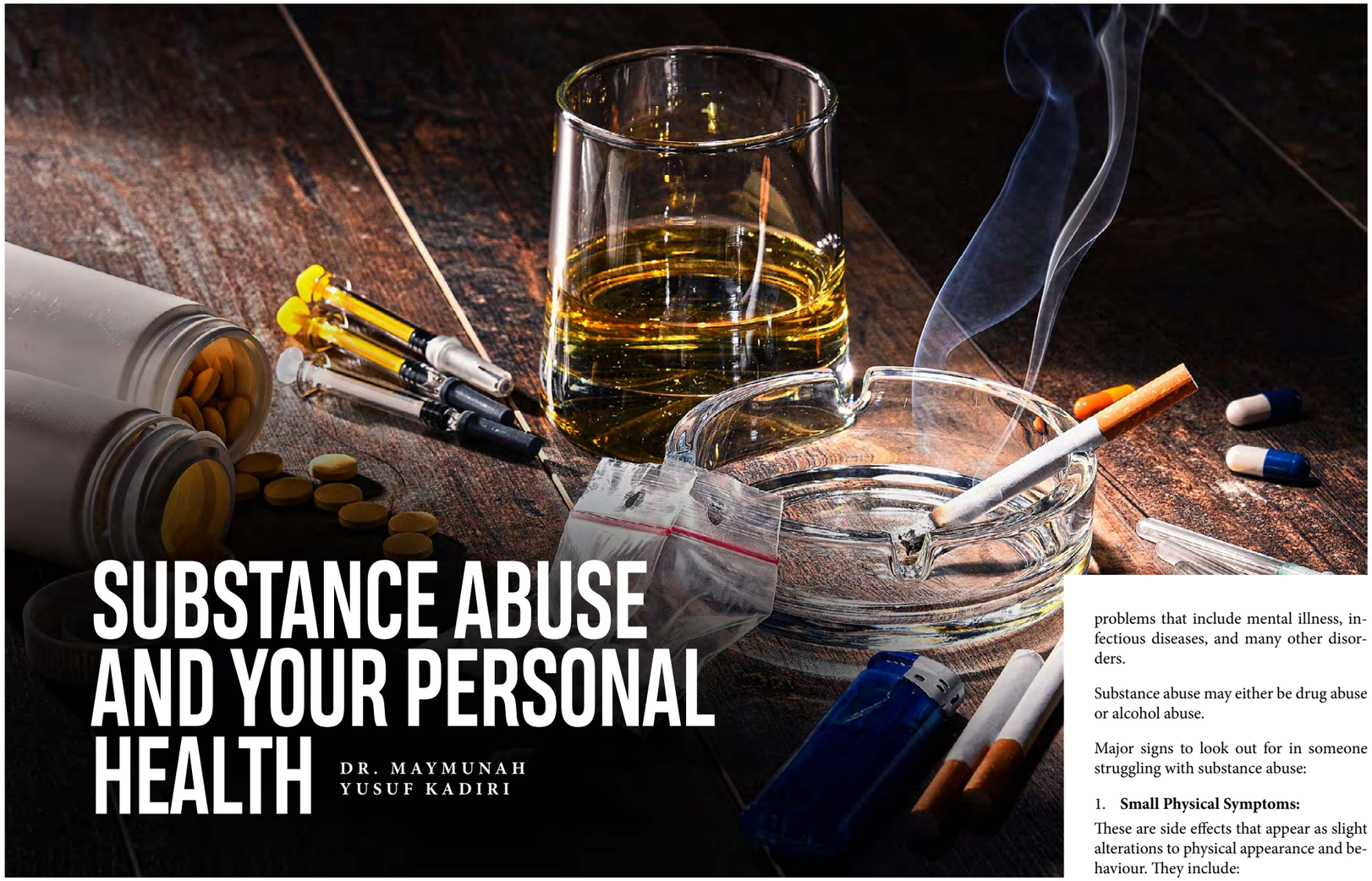
What would happen differently in your life if you took your self-awareness journey more seriously? What changes would occur in your love life if you paid attention to the values and beliefs system in the persons you are meeting?

What did you learn from this? How can you apply it to your love life and relationships?

What is that thing you need to do now that can get you the result you need?



Nike Folagbade is a family life coach and counsellor. She is the founder of Nike Folagbade International.
She's a Master Practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Results Coach; an Associate of Family Systems Engineering and a certified emotional intelligence and anger management coach. Equally, she's a SYMBIS facilitator, who helps engaged and married couples prepare for the 'before and after' of their marriages.
Nike has written over seven books including 'Get The Ring', 'Untold Secrets That Wreck Marriages', to mention a few. Her signature course, Warrior Brides Network, has created a movement of single and married women (in over 10 countries) please visit her website www.nikefolagbade.com
She is also the founder of the 'Love and Life Hub' platform that equips singles and married with the right knowledge on love, dating, marriage and purpose.



SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH

DR. MAYMUNAH YUSUF KADIRI

Emily had it all: A loving family, wonderful friends, and good grades. However, as she entered high school, things began to change for the worse.

Emily developed an interest in drugs and alcohol. She felt like everyone else at school was doing it, and she didn't want to feel left out. As a result, she began going to parties and experimenting with various narcotics.

At first, she found it enjoyable. She had the impression that she had, at last, joined the hip crowd. She eventually realised, though, that she couldn't quit abusing narcotics and alcohol. She started skipping classes, which caused her grades to fall and her relationships with her family and friends to deteriorate.

When Emily's behaviour changed, her parents addressed her. She exhibited a protective attitude and wouldn't hear their issues. She believed that her parents didn't comprehend what she was going through.

Emily's substance abuse increased, and she began to feel more alone. Though she made an effort, all of her pals had moved on without her. She was terrified and lonely.

She experienced a major low point. She had no memory of the previous evening when she woke up in a pool of her own vomit. This was when she realised she needed assistance.

After Emily's parents located a treatment facility, her road to recovery started. Though it wasn't simple, she managed to discover coping mechanisms and the best ways to manage her addiction with the aid of a therapist.

Substance abuse refers to the misuse of drugs, alcohol, and other substances such as tobacco. It is a problem that is prevalent in all parts of the world, affecting people from all walks of life regardless of age, gender or social status. Substance abuse is a contributing factor to a range of health problems that include mental illness, infectious diseases, and many other disorders.

Substance abuse may either be drug abuse or alcohol abuse.

Major signs to look out for in someone struggling with substance abuse:

1. **Small Physical Symptoms:**

These are side effects that appear as slight alterations to physical appearance and behaviour. They include:

- Bloodshot or red eyes
- Pinpoint or dilated pupils
- Puffiness or flushed skin
- Persistent itching in a specific area of the body
- Impulsive pulling down of sleeves to hide marks
- Slurred speech
- Frequent sniffling

While these are not definitive signs, if they are accompanied by secretiveness or defensiveness, they could provide helpful clues as to whether something is wrong.

2. **Overall Appearance:**

- Drastic sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Poor hygiene
- Loss of teeth and hair
- Decline in personal grooming

3. **Finding certain items in their rooms:**

Some common items include:

- Cigarette wrapping papers
- Pipes
- Syringes
- Rolled up banknotes
- Cut-up straws
- Soiled cotton swabs
- Lighters
- Burnt spoons or bottle caps
- Razor blades
- "Cutting" surfaces like mirrors or glass
- Medicine bottles from more than one doctor

Depending on many factors, someone struggling with addiction might go to great lengths to hide the physical signs or treat the symptoms with total apathy.

Substance abuse also has an impact on our mental and emotional health. Many people use drugs and alcohol as a way to cope with stress, anxiety, and depression. However, this can lead to addiction, which can cause greater mental and emotional distress, creating a vicious cycle. S

Substance use can also lead to changes in some of the same brain areas that are disrupted in other mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, anxiety, mood, or impulse-control disorders.

Here's how one may prevent substance abuse:

1. **Effectively deal with peer pressure**. The biggest reason teens start using illicit drugs is because their friends utilize peer pressure.

2. **Deal with life pressure.** Finding other ways to deal with life pressures such as exercise, reading a book, or writing may prevent the risk of turning to drugs as a way to deal with stress. Drugs only make life more stressful.

3. **Seek help for mental illness.** Those with a mental health illness may turn to drugs as a way to ease the pain but it is best to seek help from mental health professionals as drugs will only make things worse.

4. **Keep a well-balanced life** People usually take up drugs when they feel like something in their life is not working, or when they're unhappy about their lives or where their lives are going. Look at life's big picture, and have your priorities in order.

In conclusion, substance abuse can also have significant impacts on a person's mental and emotional well-being. Substance abuse can lead to feelings of guilt, shame, and isolation, and can strain relationships with friends and family members.



Dr. MAYMUNAH YUSUF KADIRI (aka DR. MAY) is popularly referred to as "The Celebrity Shrink," She is a multiple award winning mental health Physician, advocate and coach. She is the Medical Director and Psychiatrist-In-Chief at Pinnacle Medical Services, Nigeria, prominent in the application of innovative clinical approaches in the management/ treatment of a wide range of psychological, emotional, and behavioral related disorders. Dr. Kadiri is a Consultant Neuro- Psychiatrist with almost 20 years' experience as a practicing Physician. She is a trained and certified Rational Emotive and Cognitive Behavioural Therapist from Albert Ellis Institute, New York, USA. She is also a certified Trauma Counsellor and Neurofeedback Practitioner.

THANKSGIVING AS A TOOL FOR AN EASIER LIFE

DR. AGILITY OBI-IHESIE



Nkechi let out a long exasperated but muted hiss; she just couldn't understand what this prayer was all about, like who prays for Ribena, biscuits, the flowers, the pencils and the new water bottle that mummy just bought. She just wanted all of this to end so that she could go back to her retail store.

The only reason she was here was that she had promised her bestie, Bisi to stand in for her during her daughter Amoke's birthday celebration which had coincided with an international conference where Bisi was the keynote speaker. Amoke who just turned the 'Big 5' years had requested that she be allowed to celebrate in school with her friends and had themed her birthday 'Gratitude Party'.

Hmmmmm. Gratitude indeed! The girl was just a child and would soon grow out of that foolishness. Life was too hard to find anything to be consistently grateful about and honestly, she really felt sorry for the exuberantly happy little children. Who would tell them that adulting is hard? Since she had promised her friend to stay, she decided to listen to their silly childhood talk.

"I'm grateful that I can pee-pee every day and flush the toilet without any assistance. I'm also very happy that I no longer pee on the bed at night."

"I'm grateful my daddy has started coming home early and spending time with me. He even helps me with my homework and does not shout on me anymore."

"I'm grateful that I wanted a yellow pencil with a shimmery body and a pink eraser and my mummy bought them for me yesterday. That was the best day of my life and my mummy is the best mummy in the whole wide world."

One after the other, each child stated what they were grateful for and each statement was followed by loud cheering, jumping and hugs freely shared amongst themselves. The scene was reminiscent of a company end of year party after a particularly successful financial year where large bonuses had been announced.

Why were these small inconsequential things making these children so happy?

One of the traps of adulthood is the "is-it-only-this-small-thing"attitude, which is the tendency to minimise small achievements and dampen the enthusiasm that comes with so-called small wins. We tend to anchor our happiness to big events like weddings, promotions, winning major contracts, finishing our new homes, going overseas for vacations and so on. Because our minds have associated happiness with these big wins, we have unconsciously become unaware of the little miracles we are blessed with every day and instead, complain about all the things that are not going well.

These little miracles are the ones that children tend to notice and get ecstatic about, until the adults around them start telling them about how when they grow up they will see how hard the world and 'adulting' are.

What if adults became very aware of and intentional about noticing every single good thing or act that happened to them on a daily basis and gave thanks for them? This is the basis of thanksliving or gratitude and can makes 'adulting' easier in so many ways.

It is a mood-booster because the act of gratitude usually helps us to remember more things to be grateful about, leading to increased feelings of happiness and reduced negative emotions such as anger, aggression and resentment. When we are in a grateful state, our self-esteem increases, we are more pleasant and easy to get along with and this makes it possible for us to network and build new relationships while maintaining cordiality in older relationships.

Thanksliving also reduces stress, improves our sleep and overall health, makes hard tasks easier, increases resilience and causes our focus to stay on the things we have (contentment).

You can start practicing gratitude right away. Begin to be thankful for the things you can see, taste, hear, smell and feel, for the people in your space, for the way your body functions. Intentionally look for 'small' acts of goodness to be thankful for daily. The more you practice this, the easier 'adulting' becomes.

Here's to a life of thanksliving. And THANK YOU for reading this.



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WORKPLACE PALAVER

NANNY WAS DIAGNOSED HIV+, THINGS CHANGED

KEMI AJUMOBI

Nike has been married for 5 years. For some people who have tried in their own way to counsel her, the idea of not having children in the first 5 years wasn't "all that bad", if she had faith, they told her it would happen. "When? When?" She said amidst tears while talking to one of her aunts. Nike wasn't having it at all, she was frustrated. Her husband, Kunle did not make things easier, he longed to have a child, but he did not see it as a do or die matter. To make matters worse, he wasn't always around. Due to the nature of his job, he was in and out of the country frequently.

The thought of not being able bare children always made Nike sad. While at work, she found difficulty sometimes focusing on her job. She had been counting down to the time she would go on her annual leave. She believed it would be a time to share moments with her husband outside the country.

Kunle and Nike had an amazing holiday. They went to Seychelles and spent two weeks there. The next two weeks were spent in their house in Texas. Nike had so much fun that she wasn't looking forward to coming back to work in Nigeria.

By the time she returned from holidaying, everyone said she looked fresh and relaxed "hopefully, I don't have breakouts on my face as a result of the stress on the job" she told Chinedu, her colleague.

A month later, Nike observed changes in her body. She wasn't sure what it was, but she and Kunle agreed they had to go and see a Gynecologist. After tests were carried out, the doctor confirmed to them that they were expecting a baby. The news was received with so much joy.

Kunle was so particular about Nike's health that at some point, he asked her to resign because he did not want complications "Come on now Kunle, if all pregnant women retired, who would do the job? I am having our baby in the US not to worry; I will have enough time to rest after the birth."

Nike continued going to work and putting in her best. Few months to delivery, she travelled and had their beautiful baby girl and they agreed she was going to be called Favour.

Kunle flew in to America to see his girls (baby and wife). It was love at first sight. The baby looked exactly like him. "Gosh! She looks so much like me" he told his wife and she responded "I saw that coming". "Well, I will try not to be too excited, babies change as they grow, we will see who wins" Kunle teased and gave Nike a pack on her forehead.

Luckily for her, her aunt had helped to look for a nanny before she returned. Nike's mum had died, and Kunle's mum was in her 80s. They did not want stress for her.

As they returned, a week later, Kunle had to travel to Morocco for a business deal. The Nanny resumed at Nike's house, but Nike wasn't going to take things likely, so a day later, she decided the nanny was going to undergo various tests including, Tuberculosis, HIV and more.

When the results came out, the doctors requested for the Nanny to speak to her confidentially, but she said it was okay for Nike to be there because Nike was her employer. There, the doctor delivered the sad news. The nanny was HIV positive. Nike almost fainted. She began to calculate how many times the nanny pecked the baby on the cheek, if the baby had scars and so on. Nike was going nuts but tried her best to remain calm. They left the hospital, but she needed a second opinion, so they left for another renowned hospital and the result came out negative. Nike concluded that she needed just one more confirmation and she got it at the third clinic. The way the nurses were jittery, and the doctor tried to act like everything was okay made Nike convinced that the result was positive. She was right. The nanny was HIV positive!

In her presence, the nanny called her husband to tell him and all he could say was that going to the city had confused her into believing what "City doctors" said "Come back to the village, there is nothing wrong with you" Nike paid her off and encouraged her to seek medical attention, she was told of where she could get drugs for free. The nanny was sad she was leaving but Nike made her understand that the baby could no longer be in her care. Every now and then, she would call to check up on her and Nike has been very kind to her, till date.

Kunle would call and ask about the nanny because he observed the baby was always with the mum whenever he face-timed. Nike wasn't going to tell Kunle on the phone, so she waited till he returned. Two days after he returned, Nike told him everything "I knew something was wrong. I am glad though that you did not treat the woman badly. I am proud of you."

Tests were carried out on the baby, but the doctor said they needed to do it again after three months and after three months, the test was carried out on the baby. Kunle and Nike are happy their baby girl Favour, is HIV negative.

Moral of the story, before you employ any house staff or worker, carry out all tests!

SISTA

A STORY OF RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT

ONYEKA AKPAIDA



I watched this thought-provoking and emotionally charged film on Prime a few days ago. The plot revolves around a single mother's sacrifice to protect her children from her past. It's a love story with betrayal, forgiveness, and sacrifice.

There have been numerous online discussions about the depth of this film and its brilliant delivery; for some, it was as if their lives were being reenacted on the screen, while for others, it was a lesson in the cost of sacrifice.

Consider the following female characters:

Victoria (Sista)- embodies optimism in the face of adversity, resilience, kindness, empathy, dedication, and business acumen.

Aunty Jay- embodies the true meaning of women helping women. She identified Sista as a businesswoman and went above and beyond as a mentor and sponsor.

Tiwa (Fola's Wife) - A woman who, despite her private insecurities, ensured her husband did the right thing by the children he abandoned; she walked the line of an outlier to support another woman. To be honest, many women would find it difficult to take Tiwa's stance; she was a total class act!

The purpose of this article is to share some of the most important lessons I learned from this film about Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE):

1. Economic inclusion always comes before financial inclusion. Sista started a business at the university Fola was attending to meet students' needs for quick, easy, and cheap food (noodles). That increased her earning potential.

2. Financial inclusion is essential! We never saw Sista use a bank in the film, but we can assume she used formal or informal financial services. She was saving money for her business, which she used to pay for Fola's (her children's father's) tuition and maintenance. She still had business savings, which she used to go from cooking at home to opening a store.

3. The Obstacle is the Way: I now have a better understanding of Ryan Holiday's book. Even after the task force demolished her shop on the same day she received her 'Dear John' letter from Fola, Sista refused to give up. She used the strength of her resilience to launch a new cleaning business!

4. The Influence of a Good Product: Sista was an excellent product. Because she was well-mannered, professional, dedicated, and did her work with integrity, she was booked and busy every day of the week. Her customers adored her and kept her in business.

5. The Influence of Mentorship: Aunty Jay epitomizes the role of a mentor/sponsor. We can refer to her as a 'destiny helper' in Nigerian/Christian parlance. She went above and beyond to refer clients to sista, parting with personal and monetary gifts for a single mother who she already knew needed all the help she could get. The lesson here is that sista always gave her all in all of Aunty Jay's referred jobs. I also noticed that she treated her with dignity and respect, despite her vulnerable situation.

6. The Influence of Aspiration: Sista, like most low-income women, has goals. We could see in the movie that she lived in a nice apartment, dressed nicely, and provided the best for her children. She refused to allow her children to work to support the family because she wanted them to do well in school. She realized her adolescent children would be missing out on things, so she bought them smart phones as well. She kept her goals in front of her to motivate her to keep working hard.

There are numerous other WEE-related insights I could share, but the bottom line is that when you empower a woman, you empower the person who empowers everyone else. Women will always find a way to make things work in the face of adversity. Every time I go to the market to buy groceries, I see a potential story in every woman, which is why I am unafraid to advocate for the economic inclusion and empowerment of low-income women.

They have stories like Sista's, and every time you help someone by providing microcredits, insurance, savings products, low transaction fees, pensions, and so on, you are empowering someone who will empower others!



Onyeka Akpaida is a gender advocate and economic empowerment specialist with a track record of success in financial inclusion, economic inclusion for women, gender policy strategy, public sector/stakeholder engagement, and improving the livelihoods of low-income women in Nigeria. She is the Relationship Manager, Africa at Women's World Banking and also serves as the founder and chief impact officer at the Rendra Foundation, a gender social enterprise that improves the livelihoods of low-income women in Nigeria.

#ANIIKE 2023

It was a renewal of vows between comedienne Anita Asuoha (RealWarriPikin) and her husband Ikechukwu Asuoha.
It was celebrating 10 years of togetherness and a vow to go even way beyond.
Using the radiant yellow "aso-ebi" chosen by the bride for friends, some styles stood out for us, and we are sharing them here.
Wishing the couple many years of joy and bliss!


Nikau's
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PHOTOGRAPHY




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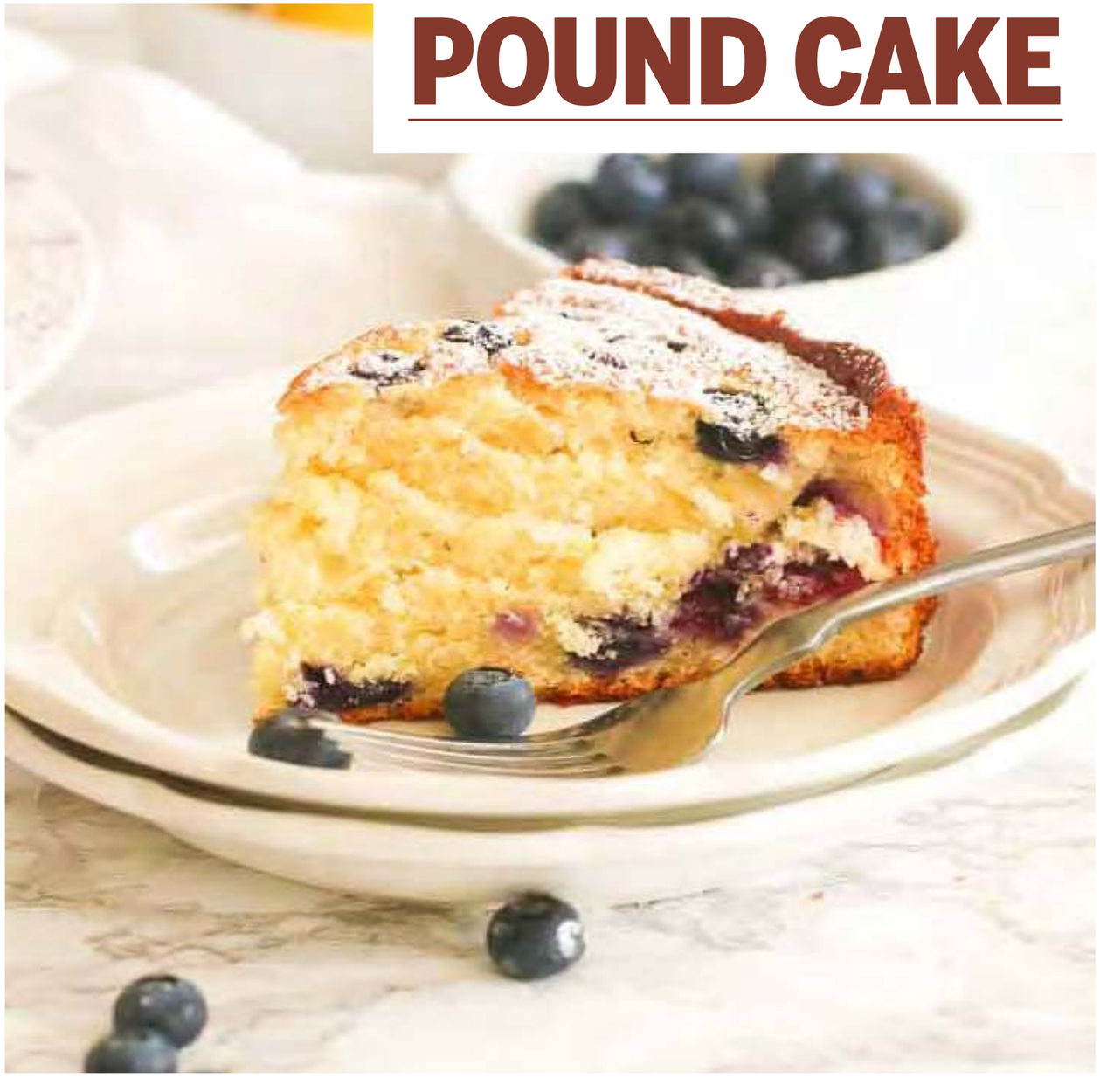
ERNEST

MEALS TO ENJOY
By ImmaculateBites

LEMON BLUEBERRY POUND CAKE





Lemon Blueberry Pound Cake – This moist and fluffy cake is filled to the brim with bright flavors you'll love. It comes out perfectly sweet and tangy every time, with minimal effort. Ideal for breakfast or dessert, this recipe is ultra-satisfying.

INGREDIENTS

- 1-1½ cups (100-150g) blueberries (fresh or frozen)
- ½ tablespoon (5g) cornstarch
- 2 cups (260g) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons (8g) baking powder
- 1 tablespoon (6g) lemon zest
- 8 ounces (227g) unsalted butter
- 1½ cups (300g) granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs, separated
- 1 cup (245g) yogurt (I used 2% Greek yogurt)
- 1 teaspoon (4g) vanilla extract
- ½ lemon, juiced (about 2 tablespoons)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Dust the blueberries with cornstarch.
- Preheat the oven to 350°F/160°C. Grease a 10-inch springform pan generously with cooking spray and set aside.
- Mix flour, baking powder, and lemon zest in a small bowl.
- Cream the butter and sugar at high speed in a stand mixer (2-3 minutes). Add egg yolks one at a time and continue mixing for an additional 2 minutes.
- Add yogurt and continue mixing. Sift the flour mixture into the batter, then add vanilla extract and lemon juice. Mix gently but thoroughly.
- In a separate bowl, beat egg whites until soft peaks form.
- Using a spatula, gently fold the beaten egg whites into the batter.
- Stir well until everything is fully combined. Scrape down the sides of the mixing bowl.
- Pour half of the batter into the greased cake pan and spread evenly. Top with half of the blueberries. Spread with the remaining batter, then evenly place the remaining blueberries over the top.
- Tap pans on the work surface to eliminate any large air bubbles.
- Bake at 350°F/177°C until a tester inserted into the center comes out clean – about 50-55 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack.
- Let the cake rest in the pan for about 20 minutes, then remove the ring and let it cool. Don't be tempted to remove it before then.
- Dust with optional powdered sugar.



TIPS & NOTES

- Measure your flour correctly. This is critical if you want a light, fluffy cake. Instead of scooping your flour out of the bag with a measuring cup, which can pack it down and give you more flour than you need, fluff the flour with a fork, then scoop it into your measuring cup. Level the top off with the flat side of a knife before adding it to your mixing bowl.
- Be gentle. You'll need a gentle touch when folding in the egg whites so you don't mix that lovely whipped-up air right out of the batter. You should also handle your blueberries with care. If they get cut, bruised, or otherwise damaged while mixing, they'll bleed into the cake batter, and the final product won't look as nice when you cut into the cake. (It's just a question of aesthetics.)
- Please remember that the nutritional information is a rough estimate and can vary significantly based on the products used in the recipe.



CREPE SUZETTE

Warm, tender crepes coated in a delicious orangey buttery syrup, all made from scratch. Craving a decadent French dessert for a hot date night at home or the next day for a fabulous boozy brunch? This is the one!





INGREDIENTS

- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup (240ml) milk (whole or low-fat)
- ¼ teaspoon (1g) salt
- 1 teaspoon (5ml) vanilla
- 1 tablespoon (12.5g) sugar
- ⅓ cup (79ml) water
- 1 cup (125g) all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons (42g) unsalted butter, melted

Crepes Suzette Sauce

- 4 tablespoons (56g) unsalted butter, chilled and cut into pieces
- ¾ cup (187ml) fresh orange juice (fresh squeezed is best)
- ¼ cup (50g) sugar
- 1 tablespoon (6g) finely grated orange zest
- 1 teaspoon (2g) finely grated lemon zest
- 1-2 tablespoons (15-30ml) Grand Marnier (or other orange liqueur)
- ¼ teaspoon (1g) kosher salt
- Vanilla ice cream for serving

INSTRUCTIONS

The Crepes

- In a medium bowl, using a whisk, beat: eggs, milk, salt, vanilla, sugar, water, flour, and melted butter until well incorporated and smooth. Or combine all the ingredients, pour in a blender or food processor, and blend until the mixture is smooth.

- Let the batter rest for an hour or more in the refrigerator or overnight so the crepes can get crispy.

- Heat a skillet over medium-high heat, then lightly coat the hot pan with vegetable oil, cooking spray, or clarified butter.

- Pour about ⅓ cup of batter, depending on your fry pan or skillet, and start swirling the pan immediately so the batter spreads evenly across the bottom of the pan. Return the excess batter to the bowl. Cook the crepe for 1-2 minutes, until the bottom is light brown. Lift with a spatula, flip over the other side, and cook for about 30 seconds. Remove and place on a plate. Do the same for the remaining batter.

Crepe Suzette Sauce

- In a large skillet, heat butter over high heat until it completely melts and bubbles. Pour orange juice and bring to a boil. Add the sugar and zests, reduce the heat to a simmer, and stir using a wooden spatula until the sugar has melted and the mixture is slightly reduced, for about 5 minutes.

- Remove from heat and add the orange liqueur and salt. Set aside.

- Fold crepes into quarters using tongs or spatula to form triangles, and arrange them in a circular pattern, slightly overlapping, in a nonreactive skillet. Pour ¾ of the warm orange liqueur mixture on top of the crepe and place over low heat until crepes are warm, for about 5 minutes (optional).

- Serve immediately, spooning crepes and sauce onto each plate and top with vanilla ice cream.

TIPS & NOTES

- Stir the chilled batter before cooking. Crepe batter consistency should be close to that of heavy cream. A splash of milk will thin it if need be.

- Too many bubbles in your batter mean it was beaten too long. Just let the batter set until the bubbles subside before cooking.

- There are two reasons the edges of your crepes crack. Your pan may be too hot (decrease the heat), or your batter may be too thin (add a tablespoon of flour to thicken).

- Please remember that the nutritional information is a rough estimate and can vary significantly based on the products used in the recipe.



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