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# YOUR LIFE AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP MATTERS

*20 Practical and Proven  
Ways to maximize your life  
and your relationships*

WRITTEN BY OMOBOLA STEPHEN  
EDITED BY WHITNEY YOUNT



**YOUR LIFE AND RELATIONSHIPS MATTERS**  
**20 PRACTICAL AND PROVEN WAYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR LIFE AND**  
**YOUR RELATIONSHIPS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **YOUR LIFE AND RELATIONSHIPS MATTERS**

It is very easy to focus on the lapses of other people to making a resolve to overlook them. The urge to be seen as the macho man or the superwoman is reflected on the outward demeanor as we battle for space to be seen or heard as the case may be.

To really enjoy your relationships ,you must be ready to value people. There is always a guiding principle for relationships and that is ... *To love others as you love yourself*. However, before that, you must love yourself first. See yourself as a wonderful masterpiece, redeemed, and blessed by God. Once you are able to do this, it becomes easy to focus on loving others all the way. Then you must learn to see people as God sees them. This is how you build successful relationships and live a worthwhile life.

I grew up in a dysfunctional setting and in some way, it affected my self-worth and self-confidence. The outcome which was poor decision making and wrong relationships. I was constantly living in the past. Now, developing and maintaining healthy relationships didn't come quite easy for me. I was very critical, sensitive, and easily irritable. I didn't realize the downward slope these extremes were taking me to. I just believed it was natural to act in such manner. I lost few precious relationships in the long run and recovering them wasn't easy as I thought.

One critical aspect to consider when cultivating a healthy relationship is your *emotions*. Your emotions are very powerful and if not managed well, it can affect your relationships and life in general. Most of the outcomes you notice in the people in your life is as a result of what you communicated to them through your actions which ultimately came from your thoughts. Now, your thoughts controls your emotions. However, you have the power of not allowing it dictate your life. You must exercise this power on a regular basis.

I am overly emotional and because I never understood this at any early stage, it affected my relationships in a negative way. I have heard some of my friends tell me, *Omobola, you need to control your emotions*. In other instances, they tell me off and utter the statement- *emotional basket-case*. I felt they were unnecessarily judgmental and critical of me and I didn't care much. I recently realized that they were absolutely telling me the truth and I have been constantly improving on myself.

Another critical aspect to deal with is your *personality*.

If you don't understand your personality, you will struggle through life especially with relationships. Understanding your personality is a great way of unlocking positive relationships into your life. Going by the law of

attraction, *positive attracts positive*. It's that simple. Each personality traits has its own good and extreme sides, so you need to watch out.

After all, relationship is life and life is relationship. How would life be without people in our lives? You can begin to figure out the outcome.

When it comes to balancing relationships and life, there are important factors to consider. These factors you will find right in this book.

This ebook, **Your life and your relationships matter** is borne out of the desire to educate, inspire and lead each one to cultivate and manage healthy relationships. There are tons of proven and practical ways in this book which you can employ in order to have a worthwhile relationships and also live the life that is truly rewarding and fulfilling.

To your success and a fulfilled life.

Omobola Stephen.

## CHAPTER ONE : MANAGING YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Managing relationships is no big deal in as much as you understand these simple tips.

- **Set a definition**

The truth is that most people start a relationship on the basis of *feelings*. However, feelings can be misleading.

When a [relationship](#) is defined between two or more parties, then the relationship would be on a smooth and easy pedestal. By setting a definition, you are communicating that there are boundaries that needs to be respected and honored and things are put in proper perspective.

I have seen cases especially when it comes to the opposite sex, of how one party feels betrayed by the other and decided to throw a vindictive campaign around the town all because the relationship in question wasn't defined. There were no clear terms.

Like a case of a young man who came to me and said he had been friends with a lady for about one and half years. She was God-fearing and had qualities he liked. He then asked me if he should begin courtship with her. My response was that, he needed to start right away since the lack of commitment meant that he could lose her altogether. I told him to make his intention known, but to court her for another two or more years before deciding on marriage. When we [define](#) the relationship would help them to focus better and to be more committed. I explained to the man that courtship was the perfect time to discover things about each other and that he was under no obligation to marry her if he realized that he did not like

her enough. This doesn't mean that people should take courtship lightly. People aren't cars that you can test-drive; they have hearts that break.

Some people misconstrue friendship for 'relationship'. When you are a friend to somebody, it is simply a casual affair. When you aware that it's a 'friendship thing', then stick to the rules of the game and don't overstep your boundary. Don't start the emotional roller coaster here because it's not welcomed. Once you can honor this rule, then you can be assured of a corresponding respect from the other party.

Sometimes, your emotions get in the way especially when its obvious you appreciate the other person. Should you ignore the emotions and pretend they never popped up? Of course, you should. At least for the sake of the rules of engagement in the relationship.

When you realize that your feelings or emotions is beginning to override your sense of reasoning, its always better to confide in the other party and check if the feeling is mutual. Once you are able to match this with your reality, then both of you can proceed to the next level which may be, starting out on a love relationship and this will happen naturally and not by manipulation.

- **Understand People's Psychology**

You may need to understand the natural disposition, emotional moods, and mental constitution of the person. This will help you to know how best to deal with them and also to decide if you can tolerate their relationship or not. Also, is the person manipulative, domineering, passive, or firm?

Passive people don't express their disappointment, frustration, or hurt. They say 'yes' when they really want to say 'no' and will always sacrifice their own feelings, wishes and desires in order to be accepted by others. They usually don the victim cap rather than take responsibility for how they want the relationship to develop.

The Domineering people will pursue their goals and ambitions selfishly without any respect for the needs, goals, feelings, or self-esteem of the other person. Domineering responses include name-calling, trading blames, humiliating, and always want to be in charge. The Domineering

person will always insist on having the last word and may even resort to physical violence.

Manipulative persons use more indirect and often psychological means to get their way. They seek subtle ways of controlling people. They usually appeal to people's emotions, and sentiments. They will always say things like, "After all I've done for you, how could you do(or fail to do) this for me?" or "If you don't stop doing this or that, I will kill myself."

The Firm person always speak their mind without fear or intimidation. These persons express anger and annoyance in ways that respect the feelings and self-esteem of others. Similarly, they cope well with someone else's anger comfortably and non defensively. They can easily initiate, maintain and end conversations with strangers, family, and friends.

- **Create an Open Communication**

Problems and differences are part of life and you must understand this when dealing with people. If we are to avoid situations from spanning out of control, then there should be open [communication](#). The inability to communicate problems and differences often poses a threat to the relationship.

If by reason, you are unable to express your threats - fears,worries,anxieties,or doubts with your partner, then there's an underlying problem.

Living in self-denial is dangerous. When you are struggling with being *real* in your relationship, it may be time to do some reevaluation.

Communication is the life of a relationship. It is the exchange of feelings and information. Where there's no communication, there's no information, where there's no information, there's no understanding, where there's no understanding, there's no relationship, where there's no relationship, there's no love.

When the Communication link is broken, the relationship suffers.

Pastor [John Hagee](#) says, "Communication is not out-yelling or out-talking your partner. Intimidating your partner through temper is not Communication. Communication is giving your partner the freedom to

disagree with you without flying into a rage, without pouting for a week, or sulking most of the day."

Communication is when you are able to talk with your partner and honestly tell each other your psychic makeup, your truest feeling; your deep thoughts, your values, beliefs, and commitments. If you are unable to communicate these without being interrupted, your relationship isn't worth the effort.

- **Accept Your True Feelings**

Does the person in your relationship keep you on your toes? Are you startled when you hear his or her voice? Do you feel at ease when they are around you, even though you have strong affinity for them and actually desire their presence? Do you stammer or get fidgety when he or she is around you? Do you feel constraint in expressing yourself? You don't have peace! These are red lights in a relationship. A relationship that is of God and therefore has a solid foundation, should and will put you at ease. Everything you say and do will come naturally without any feeling of being pressurized.

If you are in a relationship and you often experience disquiets, then it's a signal that you lacked peace.

I remembered when I was starting out a relationship with a boy while in my early twenties. On two occasions, I have been restless about giving him a chance in my life. There were some alarming situations that came up within those periods and I had begun to contemplate a break away. I kept seeking the opinions of people on the matter and they were simply saying the same thing-To walk away because it's never a good sign.

When I eventually sought the face of God concerning it,I was reminded that my lack of peace was a strong indication that I wasn't following His will.

Eventually, I walked out and I found true peace afterwards.

Relationships are meant to bring joy and peace to the persons involved. If you aren't following God's will, you will feel you are being held captive, physically or mentally against your will. One of the basic elements of any good relationship where God is present is [peace](#)-inner peace.

## The essence of relationships

If you are looking forward to having a relationship which brings fulfillment, you will need to change your mindset when it comes to dealing with others. Here are some ways you can do that:

- Learn to understand people

Many people care about others, but they still remain out of touch. In those cases, I think the problem is that they don't understand people.

If you desire to improve your understanding of people so that you can build positive relationships, then remember that,

People are selfish... However, speak to their needs first.

People need to be understood...listen to them.

People are insecure...give them confidence.

People get emotionally low...encourage them.

People want to feel special...Sincerely complement them.

- Place High Value on people

If you don't care about people, you are unlikely to make building good relationships a priority in your life.

You can't make the other fellow feel important in your presence if you secretly feel that he is a nobody.

[Les Giblin.](#)

The solution is to place a high value on people. Expect the best from everyone. Assume people's motives are good unless they prove them to be otherwise. Value them by their best moment. And give them your friendship rather than asking for theirs.

- Add value to others.

Some people approach every interaction with others as a transaction. They are willing to add value, but only if they expect to receive value in return. If

you want to make relationships a priority, you must check your motives to be sure you are not trying to manipulate others.

- Put Others first

The best way to start off on the right foot is to put others first. The most basic way to do that is to practice the Golden rule: Do unto others as you would have them do to you. If you take this mindset into all your interactions with others, you can't go wrong.

- Give time to your most valuable relationships

Most people give their relationship on a first-come first- served basis. Who ever gets their attention first gobbles up their time and relational energy.

Since its obvious that your family provides the most valuable relationships in your life,they should come first as you plan to spend your time. After that, should come your next most important relationships. It's a matter of practising good priorities.

## **CHAPTER TWO: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION IN RELATIONSHIPS**

It's not enough to say something, how it's been said and how it finally comes across is equally important and to be considered too.

Communication isn't complete till the other person perceives and understands the message. This is why much effort should go into communication. There's need for the other person to hear and understand you, and for you to be sure that the message he or she picks is exactly what was intended.

Now, here are ways we communicate and let's see how we can improve on them.

### **Non-Verbal Communication**

How do your partner communicate? It's important to study your partner's mode of communication. What he says or what she doesn't say is a form of communication. This may sound strange to you, but *silence* is also a form of communication. When people choose not to speak to each other, they aren't communicating verbally, nonetheless, they are speaking volumes non-verbally.

Just as not speaking at all is a form of communication, there are other forms of non-verbal communication, some of which amplify verbal messages and others which are complete messages on their own. These include: body, facial expressions, gestures and dressing.

The danger in all non-verbal communication is that the meaning we intend to convey may be distorted by any of the above indices and the wrong messages may be picked up. The interpretation and understanding of non-verbal messages are entirely dependent on our partners' perception and judgement. Moreover, most non-verbal messages are instinctive, and mostly we do not have any control over them.

You need to have an open communication. Make your real opinion known. Don't leave your partner wondering what you meant or what's going on in your mind. Even though you are communicating when you aren't

talking, you should rather choose to talk because you don't like to be misunderstood.

This is however not to suggest that when communication is verbal, there's always perfect understanding. In some cases, non-verbal cues interfere with the message you receive. This could either adulterate or amplify the message. What you finally pick up may vary from what was actually intended. This is why communication is said to be incomplete till there's a feedback. The feedback conveys to you what your partner has received, interpreted and has made of what is communicated.

You can achieve a healthy relationship with your partner only if you understand that communication is a *process* and rarely an open and shut case.

## **Verbal Communication**

Verbal communication is voicing our ideas, feelings, concerns, messages, likes and dislikes. In contrast with non-verbal communication, where we sometimes pass on messages involuntarily, in verbal communication, we pass on messages voluntarily via speech. We say what we have in mind.

By the time you stopped communicating verbally, your relationship has stopped growing. When people don't get along anymore, one of them is apt to say, "We grew apart." Actually you have stopped communicating the right way. An important distinction to note is talking is not the same as communicating. To communicate verbally, of course, you need to talk, but just talking doesn't entail communicating. You can talk about your day or the awful storm, you can talk about the morning papers and still end up not communicating.

In a relationship, till you start to convey emotions, feelings, personal experiences, what you really think, or your fears, you aren't communicating. Intimacy comes not so much from the sharing of serious topical issues, as it does from sharing little things which are important to the other person- your partner.

Listening to your partner when he or she is talking is very important. Effective listening means you give him or her undivided attention when he or she is talking and that you are not thinking about what you are

going to say immediately he or she stops talking. Listening should be more than merely hearing words. Effective listening is receiving and seeking ways of understanding what you are receiving.

The importance of communicating verbally and listening can not be over-emphasized .They are equally important if you wish to have a sound relationship. A partner who communicates verbally will not be difficult to understand and therefore difficult to please. Furthermore, people like this are rarely burdened with animosity because they usually extricate their feelings. With someone like this,you will always know what is going on on his or her mind, and will readily gain insight into how to adjust or at least how to live with him or her.

The underlying factor here is that, where there is no verbs communication,there is no understanding, because the situation breeds misunderstanding. Where there's no understanding, there is no meaningful relationship and where there is no meaningful relationship, there cannot be love.

Communication between you and your partner could be likened to the circulatory system. We can understand more of the intricacies of meaningful communication by observing the workings of the circulatory system in the human body.

In a relationship, communication is meant to flow unobstructed. By merely chatting or sharing the deepest dreams, making it a priority to listen to one another makes for a healthy relationship. Just as toxic substances can impair the flow in the circulatory system, faulty communication patterns can impair a relationship. When there is a communication breakdown, it is as though the relationship suffers a stroke. We become disabled. The growth of the relationship is stunned and if we do not reopen our communication channels fast, the relationship may die.

### **CHAPTER THREE: BARRIERS THAT KEEP YOU STUCK IN LIFE**

**M**aking changes provides an opportunity to dramatically better our lives. We can improve our health,relationships,career,income,level of happiness

and our hopes for a more optimistic future. Making changes requires a conviction that we are making the right choices.

Now, there are five(5) barriers that will stop you from moving forward. The first step is to become aware of these barriers. When you take the time to observe what is really going on, you will be in a better position to make wise decisions.

American entrepreneur, [Jim Rohn](#) said, "You cannot change your destination overnight, but you can change your direction."

- **Coasting In Your Comfort Zone**

We all love comfort but unfortunately it is one of the culprits which keeps us stuck. Even when we know we need to make changes, we often choose what feels safe and familiar instead of what we really want. We are great at making excuses, living in denial and justifying why we choose to stay stuck.

For years I was using an old version of database software, though it keeps giving technical itches here and there but I seem not to be bothered. As my career advances, I realized I needed an upgrade. It was time for change; to move from the familiar and comfort zone to a whole new experience. The thought of leaving the comfort zone scares me and I'm sure you can relate.

It is not only computer software we hang on to in our desire to stay close to the familiar. We do it in other areas too; we take the same route to work every day, we shop at the same stores, we order the same items from the menu instead of selecting something different.

Too many routines hinders you from challenging yourself. It's pretty much the same thing day in day out. Choosing to stay in a comfort zone eventually restricts your capacity for life. Is that what you really want?

- How about requiring more of yourself so you can create better options.
- How about no longer waiting for someone else, or your life circumstances to change, before making a move.

- **Beware Of Apathy And Indifference.**

Realizing your life is on hold because you are stuck in the comfort zone trap is quite different from another obstacle to change: Apathy and Indifference and a lack of passion rob many people from taking calculated risks that will improve their circumstances. For some, it's their life-load that is holding them back. They are burdened enough already.

Change for these set of people is just another thing to do. Many are shut down emotionally-life feels flat and joyless. They go about the motions of living, but they are dead inside.

Perhaps, you are thinking, there's no way I can be excited about my job. I challenge you to change that. Feeling indifferent or bored is not a good return on the many precious hours you invest at work. Your jobs need to be more fulfilling than just picking up a paycheck. Even the most menial work can become stimulating with the right attitude. What could you do to build on your enthusiasm and boost your energy?

It is not only people who are overburdened that end up feeling apathetic and indifferent. Most working individuals would like to change their situations but they have stayed too long at the same job and eventually Indifference sets in. This robs them of any remaining desire. They don't care anymore, they don't like their work, they become tired and numb. It's just a job.

Be careful! When you are apathetic in one area of your life, it can soon spill into others.

- **Fear**

Fear often appears when you are about to take a risk. The level of fear is proportional to the size of the risk. If you are making small changes, you may not feel overly fearful. However, if you are planning major life challenges, your fear is likely to be much greater.

What do you fear?

-Rejection

-Failure

Being judged

Humiliation

Abandonment

Success

What's at the top of your list?

- **Justifying Your Actions**

Sometimes we don't want to open our eyes to reality because the truth is extremely painful. It's easier to justify and rationalize being stuck instead of making changes.

Have you ever known someone who could not manage her money? Her bills were not paid on time plus the credit cards were overused and abused. Yet she can justify spending the money she doesn't have because she's addicted to shopping. Just like fun-loving Nancy, a comic book character who's always in debt but can't seem to stay away from the stores.

- **Putting Things Off**

If you hadn't already noticed, procrastination is another major roadblock to change. Do you ever put things off? Just about everyone does, to some degree or another. Here's the crash course to discovering why we play this stressful game. Check the list to see where you stack up.

- You are bored.
- You are overwhelmed with work.
- Your confidence has slipped.
- You have low self-worth.
- You are doing work you don't really enjoy.
- You are easily distracted.

- You are downright lazy.

How often have you put off some unpleasant or unrewarding task until it is nearly too late, or worse? The deadline looms, the pressure mounts, and finally you swing into action. In the end, more often than not, the deed gets done. But the stress is draining. You swear you will never put yourself through that again, but the vow is soon broken. Why, oh why, do we keep doing this ourselves?

We know that should act, and that failing to do so will bring us grief and yet we do nothing. "When we procrastinate, it's almost often about long term objectives. Instead of attending to those, we go with what is more pleasurable or less painful right now." says [Piers Steel](#).

My question now to you is -What is really holding you back from advancing in life? Do a check now and make amends where necessary.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: LIVING A QUALITY LIFE**

**So** how do you live a quality life? Let's talk about solutions. As always, awareness is the first step. Thinking on paper will give you clarity, so you can make better decisions. One of the most valuable skills you can develop is the ability to ask yourself really good questions. Often simple [questions](#) provide the greatest insights. Ask yourself:

- What specifically am I stressed about?
- What is the root of cause of this stress?
- What can I do right away to alleviate the situation?
- Who or what can help me?
- How can I prevent this from happening again?
- What resources can I use to learn more?

Another great way to de-stress and improve balance is to adopt the traditional day of rest. Absolutely, it's a day you intentionally set for yourself for a 'me' time or with the girls or the boys to let your guards down and be you. The choice is absolutely yours.

The pressure is constant and each one is trying to keep up with the pace without regard for our mental and psychological wellbeing. This creates chaos and imbalance in our day to day activities.

Now, it's easy to get caught up in the hectic activity of daily living and lose sight of what you truly value. Unless you schedule this day off, it won't happen. I suggest getting out of the house-it's easy to get distracted by your to-do-list, by feeling guilty about not working on it. Get away if you can. Don't let your mind burden you with worry, guilt or thoughts of work. Learn how to slow down and have fun. Give yourself permission to take this day off. It's a gift. You deserve it. All the other stuff can wait. Perhaps, it's not really that important anyway.

Once you begin this, you will be amazed at how well you can manage. This day off will go a long way towards restoring relationships, bringing family members together, encouraging recreation and regaining your balance.

Another time-out strategy is to set out Girls or Boys day out. Whichever is applicable to you. These are amazing unique memorable experiences meant simply for fun and relaxation. They are special occasions that you can plan well in advance. There's nothing like a group of women or men heading off for the day and enjoying a few good belly laughs. It's great to be a little silly, to see the child in us come out to play. Go ahead and have fun, meet together for lunch, have a glorious picnic in beautiful surroundings, or go on a hike. No guilt allowed! Your [time](#) is not a luxury, it's a necessity. When you nurture yourself, it does wonder to your psyche. Absolutely.

The truth is happiness is infectious and those in your immediate world get to be infected first when you are truly happy.

The same principle applies on the workfront. Women think that taking time for themselves will affect their performance. That's right, it will- for the better. Some companies even insist their employees do this because they know the benefits that [rejuvenation](#) can have on the bottom line. Creative ideas most often originate during down time. Keeping yourself healthy, nourished and rested is a huge benefit, even if you are neglecting other areas of self-care. Just know your physical limits. Avoid the lame excuses: "But I don't know how to relax," or "I can't relax with these workloads." Taking enough time is a learned behavior. It involves discipline

and practice. The busy stuff of life will always be there. You must learn to hit the stop button each and every week.

### **Take the 15-Minute Crossover**

Some days when you walk through the front door at home, your husband, the kids and the dog are all eagerly waiting to launch themselves at you with news and requests, even before you think of taking off your clothes. But if you have worked a full day and your head is buzzing with meetings and deadlines, you need a mechanism to switch off the workplace. Here's a good strategy to help you ease out on one role and into another.

The 15-Minute Crossover is an agreement with everyone which allows you fifteen minutes to unwind, -change your clothes, take a few deep breaths, have a cold shower and have something refreshing to drink, or whatever works for you. Then you are better prepared to step into the role of wife and mother or husband and father again. Beautiful! If you are able, push the time to thirty minutes and slip in a mini-nap. It makes a world of difference. Even if you don't have a full house when you come home, you should still take fifteen minutes to unwind from the pressures of the day. Don't allow busyness to determine the *quality of your life*. Take care of you first, and everything else will fall in place.

### **Practice Self-care**

When last did you give yourself a treat? Taking a day off for yourself. I mean, a 'me' time. This is what I call self-care.

Self-care is everything you do to nurture your mind and soul. Self-care is different for everyone. For me, it can be writing my long-term goals journal, listening to a favorite music on radio, or calling a loved one. Incorporating self-care habits gives you a new outlook about life and improves your body, mind, and soul. Choosing a day to give yourself a thorough self-care shouldn't be a daunting task. I hear few of my friends say, "But you don't understand, I have to check my mails, return calls, do school runs, go to the grocery store and so on." But the truth is, any of us can take a day for ourselves without consequence. Believe it or not, the

world will keep spinning. Calls will wait and so will emails. This is a day just for you. If you normally do the cooking, on your extraordinary self-care day, you will refrain from making meals. Trust me, your family will not starve. Obviously, if you have dependents, you would have to modify this. Perhaps you can have someone else feed them for this one day. Overall, try to do nothing that is related to your normal work. This is a pampering day just for you.

I tried this few weeks ago. I decided to give myself a body pampering. Before that day, I had modified the feeding pattern of the family especially my dependents. Everything went well and I felt so good with myself. Nothing happened after all and I looked forward to more self-care day. I advice you do this for yourself preferably once or twice in a month. You can write down what you want to do on your wish list and set out a day to achieve it. Your self-care tips may include: - Meditate for ten minutes - Cook a healthy meal - Buy yourself an icecream while you binge-watching your favorite tv show. - See a therapist or a dentist - Attend workshops, seminars, or conferences that are in line with your purpose. - Put on your favorite lipstick - Create a vision board - Declutter your closet - Pay a visit to the homeless, motherless and make donations. - Visit the spa, or the salon - Do some shopping for yourself Whatever, it may be, ensure you take time and do this. You end up more productive, have more clarity and be better focus on the task on hand. After all, your happiness should be a top priority for you than anything, so go ahead and spoil yourself.

Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the rest we take between two breathes.

Entry Hillesum

### **The Miracle of drinking water**

As outrageous as it seems, [drinking water](#) may be the single most important catalyst in shedding weight, and increasing energy and preventing certain diseases. If we think of this logically, it makes sense because more than 70 percent of our body is comprised of water.

Depending on the study, it is believed that more than 70 percent of our population is **chronically dehydrated**. We have seemed to replace Mother Nature's beverage with soda, coffee, milk, juice, and beer. Once again, we have become victims of the food industry marketing giants, convincing us to drink anything but water.

Get this- **each time you drink a liquid other than water, your body reacts quickly to dilute it with your internal water stores.**

This causes a shortage, unless you have consumed large amounts of water that day. So each time you drink a beverage other than water, drink another glass or two of water to counteract it. This solution can help the millions of people who are chronically dehydrated. How very natural and simple. Water can play a life-changing role in your quest for great health. Strangely, you will notice as you begin drinking more water that you become thirstier than before. Why this? On the surface, it doesn't make sense. But here are the facts:

- Water *suppresses* the appetite naturally and helps your body metabolise stored fat.
- A *decrease* in water will cause fat deposits to increase, while an increase in water can reduce fat deposits. This alone should catch your attention if you want to shed weight.
- Your **kidneys** can't function properly without enough water. The **liver** has to help the kidneys, so it works harder. But one of the liver's primary functions is to metabolize stored fat so it cannot handle this excess work.
- Drinking more water prevents fluid retention.
- Water rids the body of waste and toxins-especially important if you are shedding weight or changing lifestyle.
- Water can help relieve constipation but since we are now eating enough fibre we are okay, right?
- Water is mother nature's greatest beauty clinic.
- Drinking more water reduces overnight hunger pangs.

- Drinking more water can prevent fatigue, headaches, sinus problems, allergies, breathing difficulties, joint discomforts, neck, and back pain, sleep disorders, impotence, depression, and brain dysfunction.  
Wow!
- Water helps maintain proper muscle tone by helping muscles in their natural ability to contract.
- Natural thirst returns. This is why you are thirstier even though you are drinking more water. Your body is loving it and telling you it wants more.
- Drinking at least eight glasses of water a day makes your rate of metabolism work faster and you know what that means- No chance for fat deposits and toxins.

Don't worry if it takes time to get used to doing this.

*Thousands have lived without love, no one without water.*

*W.H Auden*

### **Choose to be happy**

. **Why** does happiness seem so elusive? Because many of us are looking for it in the wrong places. Too often, we think the answer lies out there in the pursuit of material possessions. Like, If we buy a bigger home, somehow that will make our pain-filled marriage better or when we get a bonus at work, we'll buy a new car-surely that will make us happier.

**Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.**

**Mahatma Gandhi**

It's true that when we acquire something new, there's an initial surge of pleasure. Our cravings and desires are satisfied for a short while. Then the happiness bubble bursts and we are enticed into seeking something more.

Even if we elevate our social status by accumulating more, the happiness usually doesn't last. We quickly adapt to this new level. What was originally "more" becomes normal. We still want to increase our pleasure.

In reality, most people compare themselves to others who have what looks like a more successful lifestyle, believing that if they had the same lifestyle they would be happier. I have felt that way before. I mean, it was very overwhelming.

I need you to know that money isn't often the way we measure our success. Okay, we go ahead to say, "If only we had more money, life would be great. "If I could just win the lottery, all my worries would be over and I'd be happy." Well, it's natural to nurse those feelings.

Anyways, research proves this is not true. In fact, when these sets of people acquire the wealth, they realise that it creates more strife and misery and not the happiness they had anticipated. Divorce and loss of friends are commonplace after a lottery win you bet. The evidence, I mean, is indisputable. Money does not buy happiness, yet we have the illusion that it does.

Happiness is not something you postpone for the future, it is something you design for the present.

Jim Rohn

The truth is, receiving an unexpected windfall only makes you more of who you already are. If you are a shopaholic before you won the financial bonanza, you will probably just become an even bigger spender. The reason so many lottery winners are not able to gauge on to their winnings is that they haven't yet become the type of person who can successfully manage large amounts of money. They blow it on extravagant living flashy cars, bad investments and divorce settlements. No wonder they end up unhappy.

Are you in the habit of putting your happiness on hold for some future date? Remember the when-then game?

Something like,

- **When** I retire, **then** I'll settle down and be happy.

- **When** I meet the right right man, **then** I 'll settle down and be happy.

What if our happiness is not out there? Our thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and desires are continually changing. Nothing stays constant. Because of this, we will never find enduring happiness out there. Things that used to give us happiness lose their appeal .

People who brought us joy in relationships now disappoint us. The great job we thought would be so q now leaves us empty. Even the purchases that excited us initially grow old, worn, and are no longer good enough. It all seem so futile.

So where do we find happiness?

We find happiness in the simple pleasures of life; appreciating the beauty of nature enjoying the warmth of the sun on our body or walking on the beach with the water gently lapping at our feet. Maybe it's winning at sports, the feeling of satisfaction for a job well done or simply holding the hand of someone you love. "It's the little things that keep you bouncing along above your set point" says Dr. Lykken.

There are many ways to find happiness in everyday things. We only need to be more aware of them. Sometimes we think happiness means giggling and having fun. That's good, but don't we also feel happy when we do a great job at work? Just remembering a wonderful holiday or a favorite piece of music can make us smile and feel warm inside. Filling our day with what matters most to us, and living authentically are the recipes for happiness.

Are simple pleasures enough? Can we also sustain this feeling of happiness? Maybe we could if we stopped wrestling with how to change our outside circumstances in order to satisfy our inner cravings-When we slow down enough to find the serenity that comes from just being who we are, or relying on what we have.

I remember a holy moment I had few years ago. I call it a holy moment because it wasn't just a moment of happiness and joy, it was much more. It was the moment in time where my life felt great. For an instant it felt like the world has stopped and held its breath so I will take notice. It was a beautiful spring morning and I have just finished teaching in one of my relationship classes. I knew had done a great job. I went outside and stood in the warm sunshine and felt it, my holy moment. At that point I didn't know why I felt so

overwhelmed with joy but now I know- I had caught a glimpse of my purpose.

Let us never know what old age is. Let us know the happiness time brings; not counting the years.

Ausonious.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: IMPROVING YOURSELF IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS**

Once you have recognized that you alone can change your behavior ( and not the behavior of others), you become a change candidate through an intimate relationship with God. You will begin to correct your own behavior. You will engage your spouse in a conscious effort to correct past hurts or pains, and you will find ways to create an atmosphere of change in your relationships.

Here are ways you can achieve these changes:

- **Set Up Positive Exchanges**

Remember, change occurs more often in the presence of positive exchanges. When you praise a child for doing things you like and want to build, you are increasing the likelihood that the child will make those changes. Adults are no different. If you praise even small movement in the right direction, you will get change. Praise is powerful. It prepares the atmosphere for change.

- **Work On Yourself**

Spend less time blaming and criticizing and more time working on conforming your life to what's positive. You need to identify your flaws and correct them, or you have no credibility telling your partner what to do. Often, partners say, " He wants me to change, but he is so messed up himself." or "She points out my faults but won't talk about hers."

Again, this unwillingness to see yourself as a work in progress creates resentment and resistance to change. Take responsibility for yourself first, then watch your partner follow suit.

- **Resolve Conflict**

A predictor of divorce is the inability to resolve conflicts. If you're somewhat uncomfortable with conflict, that's okay. It usually relates to your family experience. Conflict resolution is a skill that gets better and easier with practice.

Don't let things build up. This is unhealthy, physically, spiritually, and relationally. Agree with your partner to have regular checkups when it

comes to disagreements and conflicts. Ask, "How are we doing? Anything been bothering you that we haven't talked about lately? Do this everyday, or at least once a week, until you raise issues with regularity.

Conflict is part of every relationship. Your ability to resolve it makes the difference and fosters change.

- **Become More Empathetic**

Willingness to change is encouraged when a person feels heard and understood. Spouses are famous for stubbornly resisting change when they feel misunderstood. Your effort to intellectually identify and vicariously experience your spouse's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes is called empathy.

How much empathy do you show? People are far less defensive and far more willing to consider options when they are understood. When you put yourself in someone else's shoes and try to understand what they are going through, they are more willing to share from the heart.

Practice listening and then repeat what your partner has said. Ask if you got it right and if you accurately reported what the person was feeling or experiencing. This won't be easy (you are learning a new skill), but it's worth the time. Empathy empowers change.

- **Lessen Your Dependence On The Other Person**

No one can meet all your needs all the time, only God can, and since you don't physically live with him yet, you are still dependent on others.

It's healthy to have friends to talk with, share activities with, and support. It's great when you can depend on friends, but balance is the key. When friends replace couple intimacy needs, it's not healthy. When others are your only source of support, the same is true. Balance your [intimacy](#) needs between your partner and friends. In the same way that you don't expect one of your friends to meet all your friendship needs, don't expect your husband or wife to meet all the other needs. Sexual, spiritual, deepest intimate needs are the preserve of God and your spouse alone. Friends can support and add to your intimate covenant relationships, but they should not replace them.

- **Take Care Of Yourself**

Self-care is vital. Again, consider balance. Attending to your own physical, spiritual, and emotional health creates an atmosphere for change. When you value you, others will too. When you take care of yourself, the burden of worry is lifted from the other.

When you spend yourself beyond reasonable limits, guilt often results. Most women don't know how to say no or take time for themselves. Most men don't nurture themselves spiritually or physically because they are overly busy trying to succeed in life. Now, there is a difference between indulgence and self care. Self-care is simply saying, "I need to be responsible for replenishing myself and I will see to it that it happens." While indulgence is giving in or satisfying a desire or need. When you practice self-care, you are more centered and better equipped to deal with change in your life.

## **GET OUT OF YOUR HEAD**

Have you ever been trapped at a party enduring a lengthy, overly cerebral discussion full of obscure facts and figures? Incredibly boring. The talk amounts to analysis to the point of paralysis. And throughout the entire episode, not one flicker of emotion escapes from this bland conversationalist. If you have, you just had an encounter with [The Intellectual](#).

While I think men wear the intellectual mask more than women, some women are also over-the-top intellectuals who use their academic prowess as a smokescreen. The woman who hides behind this masks prefer thinking to feeling. She's rigid in her thinking, wrapped up in concepts and analysis. Because she lacks an emotional connection (here comes those feelings again), she has difficulty relating to others at work especially if she is in a supervisory role. As well, her emotional void often causes problems within her family, where she may be perceived as cold and detached. People who wear the Intellectual mask are not generally big on hugging! This woman likes to be super-objective, living a life that is structured by rules and regulations. She can rationalize any situation to make a point, and in the process ensures that associated feelings are kept hidden. Women

who wear the Intellectual mask may have developed the belief that showing emotion is a sign of weakness and therefore should be kept under control. The Intellectual prefers the boardroom and the classroom to the social world of people and their problems.

To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart.

Eleanor Roosevelt

What about you? Do you ever get feedback that you are "too much in your head," or overly analytical?

There's nothing wrong with thinking. Infact,we do it everyday. It is an essential component for designing the type of life that gives you the most joy. However thinking should not be at the expense of feeling.Any behavior that becomes too extreme is unhealthy. A big part of our lives involves interacting with people,and developing relationships with these people requires both a mental and emotional stimulus. The woman who wears the intellectual Mask may feel fragmented by a deeper need to connect with others emotionally and the discomfort it creates for her. If you are struggling with this,here are a couple of suggestions:

- Identify your emotions in general conversations. Become familiar with the all-important feeling words. I feel happy,I'm bored. I'm feeling angry. Instead of saying , "The new promotion I received is recognition for my ability to conduct accurate research." You can say, "I feel honoured by this promotion because it recognizes my ability to conduct accurate research.
- During conversations, use your mental acuity to discern what the other person is feeling. Make it a game,if that stirs your intellectual juices. Provide accurate feedback that shows you really understand what the other person is saying. And yes,that means taking a genuine interest, even if it is a new sensation for you.

Here are two examples of good "feelings" feedback:

- Sounds like you are pretty excited about buying this piece of property.
- That must have been really scary.

You can practice these simple techniques and it will create a healthy alignment between your heart and your head and you will become a lot more real to the people who know you.

## **CHAPTER SIX : LETTING GO OF THE PAINS OF THE PAST**

### ***Forgiving Yourself***

In order for you to experience a beautiful and fulfilling life, letting go of past hurts or pains can be the respite.

The most important factor here is *Forgiving yourself*

There is a lot of freedom and joy when you are able to release your past burdens including your own mistakes.

Have you noticed that the word, *Forgiveness* is grounded by the word *give*? By forgiving, we give ourselves a gift. We choose to let go of the past, in the hope that by doing so, we will make a better life in the future.

### **What Forgiveness Is Not**

There are four misconceptions which surround forgiveness. These false impressions have held many people back for many years. These misconceptions are:

#### **Compensation**

Forgiveness does not seek an apology. You are not asking for validation for your pain, or any other form of compensation. It is unconditional and personal. You may wait a lifetime for compensation and never receive it.

#### **Condemnation**

Blaming, adopting a one-upmanship position or feeling morally superior has nothing to do with forgiveness. These attitudes are about you being right. They will keep you stuck.

#### **Excusing**

Forgiveness isn't letting someone else off the hook. You are still holding him or her responsible for the wrongdoing, and rightly so.

#### **Denial/Forgetting**

In some situations, time never fully heals bad memories. Forgiveness is not about ignoring pain or the wrong that was done to you. Your reality cannot be denied.

You will remain a victim unless you avoid these four misconceptions. They keep you powerless. Do not allow the pain of the past to become a permanent crutch in your life.

To remind yourself, memorize this statement: I am forgiving you because I've paid enough. Now I am ready to move on.

## **Steps To Forgiving Yourself**

### **Step 1: Accept What You Did**

Take full responsibility for your actions or inactions. Confront the situation head on, no excuses or denial. I suggest you journal your thoughts. This will bring clarity, and help purge the memory. Allow yourself to be emotional. Release any pain you have, shed some tears if you need to.

### **Step 2: Confession**

Confession is one of the oldest and best methods for unloading heavy burdens. It works! Confess to God, or someone else, what you did. Nothing you have done, no shame deep enough can separate you from your creator. Reconcile your relationship with God if you need to. Telling someone else is a bonus. We share our humanness by showing each other that we make mistakes. Letting go of the pain with someone you trust will prevent you from making excuses or living in denial.

### **Step 3: Give Up Self-flagellation**

There is no value in continuing to punish yourself, even though you feel you deserve to be condemned. Remaining a victim will negatively affect the relationship you have with yourself and with others.

### **Step 4 : Make Amends If Appropriate**

A sincere apology or a verbal olive branch may be all that is required. Perhaps, you need to return something or pay back money which you owe. A word of caution- for every choice there is a consequence. Sometimes

you can create more damage by the way you make amends. Be discerning. It's imperative that you proceed with the right intentions, having no expectations about the outcome.

### **Step 5 : What Did You Learn?**

Mistakes have a habit of reoccurring unless your eyes are wide open. I believe all of life's experiences are designed to teach you something. If you have blinders on, you will miss the lesson and its significant to your life.

As a perfectionist, it is much easier to forgive others than to forgive yourself. This is not right at all. You need to focus more on self-acceptance. By doing so, you will notice that having compassion for yourself becomes easier.

Learn to forgive yourself. Travel through life lightly, unburdened by guilt. It's one of the best gifts you can give yourself and those you love.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN : LETTING GO OF THE PAINS OF THE PAST**

### ***Forgiving Others***

Those who hurt you have power over you for as long as you are unable or unwilling to forgive. They occupy space in your mind, and play with your emotions.

Forgiving wrongs done to you gives you an opportunity to grow and heal. But forgiveness is not simple, it's a complex process. For some people, professional help is required. Others can do it on their own.

Forget what hurts you in the past, but never forget what it taught you. However, if it taught you to hold on to grudges, seek revenge, not to forgive, or show compassion. To categorize people as bad, to distrust and be guarded with your feelings, then you didn't learn a thing. God doesn't bring you lessons to close your heart. He brings you lessons to open it by developing compassion, learning to listen, seeking to understand rather than of speculating. Practicing empathy and

developing conflict resolution through communication. If he brought you perfect people, how would you ever learn to spiritually evolve."

*Shannon L. Alder*

Being unable to forgive the wrongs done to you may keep from your consciousness the good qualities of your partner. As long as you keep channelling your energy or ruminating on the offence, you may become blinded to the good side of the offender.

Each one of us has got the good, bad, and the ugly side. But because of the need for approval, some of us prefer to put on the good side before the people in our life forgetting that, the other person also isn't as perfect as you think.

Offence will always be there, but how do you react to them? It is absolutely natural to be angry, but the same anger turns into sin if you do not deal with it immediately. When you let go and forgive, you are unburdening unnecessary weight that can sabotage your peace of mind. You are free and can walk through life with ease.

I know sometimes, it can be difficult to say those words, 'I'm sorry'. To some, it's easy to say 'I'm sorry' but those words are often muttered with clenched teeth and with eyes that communicates another message.

**The truth is, forgiveness is not a word which is merely announced. It is a gift which has to be given. You should forgive even if the other party hasn't said 'I'm sorry.'**

Anyone going into marriage must understand that there is nothing harder than trying to forgive, especially when you have been desperately wounded. It's even worse when the offender shows no remorse, but displays a nonchalant, uncaring attitude, sometimes even innocently, as could happen in marriage. If you have never been the forgiving type, you will definitely find it herculean to practice forgiveness in your marriage. You must realize, however, that forgiveness is the lifeline of any relationship because it is the first commandment of love.

Moving forward, **forgiveness** is not just a change in our behavior, a reluctant handshake and a forced smile. It is an active process which goes on inside

the mind of someone who has been hurt. It is a change in our feelings and attitude. By forgiving, the offended person knocks down the barrier between him/her and the offender so that they are both free to be friends again.

Forgiving does not always mean forgetting. Though we forgive somebody, the memory might stay with us for a long time. We can carry it in our bodies as a physical sign. But forgiveness changes how we remember. It converts the curse into a blessing. When we forgive our parents for their divorce, our children for their lack of love towards us, our friends for their unfaithfulness in times of need, or our counsellors for their wrong advice, we no longer have to suffer as victims of events over which we have no control. Forgiveness allow us to take back our power and not let events destroy us. It actually allow those experiences to deepen our wisdom and sharpen our discernment. In order words, remember, forgiveness heals memories.

*Bob & Debby Gass*

## **Steps To Forgiving Others**

### **Step 1: Make The Decision**

It is essential that you first make the decision that you want to forgive the one who injured you. This is a courageous, heroic choice.

### **Step 2: Take Responsibility**

Realize that it is your responsibility to heal yourself. Nobody else can do it for you. Unforgiveness saps your energy and may even make you ill. Studies have shown that heart attacks and cancer can be linked to the retention of anger and resentment.

### **Step 3 : Confront Your Pain**

Journal about your pain and who you want to forgive. Confront and recognise your hurt. Allow someone else to validate your pain; a good friend, partner, pastor or therapist. When you receive empathy and compassion, you can heal faster.

#### **Step 4: Take A New Perspective**

Be willing to find a new perspective about the person who wronged you. This is not condoning the behavior or making excuses for the person. The fact is that people hurt other people because they have been hurt themselves. They act out of their own pain. Ask yourself

- What was their life like growing up?
- What was their life like at the time of the offense?

These two questions will help you understand the behavior of the person who hurt you, where he/she is coming from and why he /she acted as they did. You will be able to forgive others by separating them from their behavior.

#### **Step 5: Acknowledge Your Part**

Acknowledge the part you have played in the wrong doing, if any. This will help move you from being a victim to taking some responsibility. Forgive yourself for this part. ( In some situations, in a brutal rape for example, you would be completely innocent and in no way responsible)

#### **Step 6: Learn From The Pain**

Seek to learn from your pain in order to stop any recurrence in the future. Did you gain anything in your life as a result of this pain?

#### **Step 7: The Total Truth Letter**

When you are ready, use the Total Truth template and write a letter to the offender. There's no need to mail it. Express your thoughts clearly and honestly, starting with your anger. Write about how the offender hurt you. Get mad. Allow yourself to fully express your feelings. Anger is the place to start. Then follow the steps through hurt, fear, regret, and wants to forgiveness. This is where you will find emotional completion.

#### **Step 8 : Closure**

You can use the letter symbolically to bring closure to the forgiveness cycle. Some people like to bury or burn it, others like to tear it into pieces and let the wind take it away. Create a ceremony which is meaningful to you. Close your eyes and see the link between you and the offender being severed. You are now freed from this memory. Visualize the person you are forgiving being surrounded by the love of forgiveness.

### **Step 9 : Release Expectations**

Let go of any expectations you have for the offender. Forgiveness may not lead to reconciliation, that may be desirable but it is not a requirement. Forgiveness does not depend upon repentance by the offender. In reconciliation, both the victim and the injurer need to be mutually committed, and this may not happen. You may not choose to share the fact that you have forgiven him or her, let alone express this in a face-to-face setting. If you do choose to share your forgiveness, check your intentions, making sure they come from love, not pain.

### **Step 10 : Practice Forgiveness**

Think of forgiveness not so much as an act, but as a lifestyle. Make a practice of forgiving. As soon as you realize you are injured, forgive. You will feel freer and healthier. Conserve your energy for living rather than wasting it on resentment and pain. When you can see the hurt child in others, it enables you to forgive faster.

### **Step 11: Give Thanks**

Last, but certainly not least, you can ask God to help you forgive. He is deeply concerned about your wellbeing.

### **Four Reasons To Forgive**

- To heal your body- eliminate your toxic thoughts and anger.
- To heal your heart- Let go of thoughts of revenge, or feelings of ill-will, and begin to love unconditionally.

- To heal your relationship-explore the potential for reconciliation or re-connection.
- To heal your life, pain should not define you.

## CHAPTER EIGHT : BALANCING CONFLICTING PRIORITIES

- **Weigh the options**

It is very crucial for you to process your thoughts carefully and consider what is important and urgent to what is important but not urgent when it comes to balancing conflicting priorities .

- **Consider what's most important and urgent first**

It is very easy to act on impulse when you are at this juncture. This is absolutely the best time to process your thoughts carefully and focus your energy on what is important and urgent at the same time.

If there are two important but conflicting stuffs and a urgent stuff in front of you,you should consider tackling the former first. In this case,you will need to strategize how you can attend to those two stuffs at the same time without losing your head.

If you are faced with paying the wages of your staffs within the next two days and paying for your graduation fee before the week runs out. Though both are important and conflicting,but you need to attend to the urgent which is to pay your staffs and save your face from humiliation.

One important aspect is to always plan ahead. If you do,you won't be caught napping at extreme situations.

- **Highlight The Pros and Cons**

When you are at a crossroad between two important Conflicting priorities,considering the pros and cons is crucial.

Would this be a worthy cause at the end of the day? Would it not backfire on me someday? What do I stand to gain after considering this effort?

- **Take Immediate Action For The Option You Have Finally Chosen.**

When you have finally decided on the best option, go ahead and do the needful. And when you are done with it, don't hesitate to begin working out the second most important priority.

- **Begin To Think Of How You Can Balance The Important Priorities In Your Life**

Next time, you are confronted with conflicting but important priorities, you should do the following:

- **Determine your priorities**

Set aside time to define what you consider to be the most significant aspect of your life. Do they include such priorities as family, work, friends, self, and community? Which out of these consume more of your time, energy, and resources? Which are the most rewarding to you? Overall, how do they add and subtract value to your spiritual, mental, and physical wellbeing?

Focus on creating priorities that are achievable and make the most sense to you.

- **Establish and execute an Implementation Plan for each Priority**

To develop your plan, establish specific strategies for each priority and tie them to your overall plan to maintain balance. If one of your priority is to care for your mother with a stage two cancer, how can you accomplish this goal when you have a demanding work schedule? What specific steps will you take to manage your efforts? As you execute your implementation plan, align your actions to your words. Your priorities will be revealed to others by how you live.

- **Evaluate your progress**

It is important to set time to assess and evaluate your progress. It has to be a conscious effort. It will be clear to you on how you have made progress and also see the areas you need to improve upon.

If you still feel out of balance, be willing to adjust your priorities or implementation strategies to jolt you back into alignment. This will be an ongoing process if you wish to keep moving forward in life.

- **Be resolute on your values**

One of the ways to be happy is to understand that you own your life and nothing can undermine this truth.

Be prepared to walk away from any situation that will compromise your state of balance in your life's endeavors. Consider it a personal victory when you have the strength and courage to protect what is important to you. Do not relinquish your power to the unreasonable demand of others.

- **Allow room for self-focus**

A very crucial aspect of balancing your life is to take time for yourself.

Create a self-care list and ensure you follow through on it.

The list can take the form of:

- A review of your goals.
- A visit to a place you have always desired.
- A walk in nature.
- A school reunion.

As you focus on giving time to your self, you become more productive.

[Steven Covey](#) puts it clearly, " The key is not to prioritize what is on your schedule but to schedule your priorities."

## CHAPTER NINE: HANDLING THE DECEPTIVE COMFORT OF PAST MISGIVINGS

Most people would rather live with old problems than new solutions. We would rather be comfortable than be correct; or rather stay in a routine than make changes.

Until we are familiar with stepping out of our comfort zones, we cannot get any better. Roots of rejection must not be suppressed, solutions can only be found when you open up and talk.

I am not necessarily saying that people go on a revisit to their [past](#)-It is wisdom sometimes to forget the past. But if there's a pattern in your behavior that is negative and disturbing, it is advisable that you take a closer look at it. Until you deal with the root, you cannot deal with the fruits.

### ❖ Your Life is your Responsibility

It's the responsibility of everyone therefore to watch the pattern of their behavior keenly and cut out those areas that are unfavourable. I figure that this may be challenging for some people because a lot of us are better able to criticize the faults of others, but are uncomfortable when the spotlight is on us. It is not enough to trade blames with the people in your life for your problems. You must take [responsibility](#) and do something about it. That was what happened to Helen, a new friend of mine. She was sensitive to rejection and thus became reclusive and detached from her present environment. Somehow, she began to feel some level of discomfort and knew something wasn't right about her lode which was gradually falling into a dangerous pattern. She made frantic effort to seek for answers to her predicament and in the process, learnt that she was rejected by her father while she was a baby.

If she hadn't taken responsibility, she wouldn't have had the slightest idea of what led to her predicament. She could as well accepted everything as normalcy and moved on with life

Today, she is a counsellor on rejection-related issues because she had received help. We can only give the comfort that we have received.

Likewise, we may need to deal with our issues before we can be confident to help others.

### *A rejected past will blight your future relationships*

It is a well-known fact that our upbringing will impact the way we behave to others if they are not addressed. Ultimately, when you have inadequacy problems, you do not appreciate love and compliments. Even when you are paid a compliment, it often appears as false all because you struggle with self-acceptance.

When we feel rejected, we tend to react in certain predictable ways. We often become angry, hold grudges against people and find it hard to forgive them. Feelings of resentment from lack of forgiveness only feed a poor self image. Ask God to show you people you need to forgive. They may have hurt you deeply, but by forgiving them, you are freeing yourself to receive God's [forgiveness](#) and restoration in your own life. At other times, rejected people find it difficult to forgive themselves, assuming that they deserve the ill-treatment people are meting out on them. This in turn makes them feel they have been rejected by God too.

These are perfectly understandable reactions, but they are not appropriate responses. In the end, they do not really do much beyond simply heaping more painful emotions- anger, self-contempt, and bitterness. Being resentful or angry with others or yourself will not take away the hurt rather learning how to respond to rejection will.

This is how you can respond to it.

- **Watch The need for acceptance**

Just as each of us long for the basic need for food, likewise, we desire the need for acceptance. It is the need for this that makes us prone to rejection.

A thoughtless, seemingly harmless word spoken by a parent to a child can result into rejection.

Only God can meet your emotional needs. He is sufficient for all situations including the need to be accepted and approved. We can not attribute our worth as an individual by the opinion of others. If we do, we are doomed to disappointment and rejection.

As American actress, [Tracee Ellis Ross](#) said, "As I get older, the more I stay focused on the acceptance of myself and others and choose compassion over judgement, and curiosity over fear."

- **Understand the person behind the challenge**

A basic understanding of the personalities is a vital tool in dealing with them. This is because people can easily resort to the pleasures of [illicit sex](#) or drug abuse in an attempt to heal the pain from the scars of the past. For example, an adolescent who turns to masturbation to block the pain of rejection he experienced from his peers; a woman who finds solace in a lesbian relationship which caters to her hatred for men through years of sexual abuse from her father; or a person who became [promiscuous](#) in an attempt to find the love and affirmation she lacked from her parents especially her father

You must not expect that everyone would come out of traumatic experiences at the same time or pace. Some people by nature, hurt easier and deeper than others, but others quickly overcome offence or hurts. No one should be judged or condemned. When you come to [understand](#) all these differences, it will help you in dealing better with anyone that comes to your space.

## **CHAPTER TEN : HOW YOU CAN SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE**

Coping with life's exigencies in this twenty-first century can be a big deal especially when it comes to family, work, and life. This is a reality each one of us must face. However, you have a choice in settling for the comfort zone and allow the pressures to keep mounting or find ways to simplify your living so you can achieve more positive results in the long run.

Here are some useful tips to help you as you look forward to simplifying your life. Follow each one of them and you will see how easy life can be when you understand it.

- **Accept What You Cannot Change**

As [Buddha](#) once said, "In the end, only three things matter: How much you loved, how gently you lived, and how gracefully you let go of things not meant for you."

I know it's not easy to let go of the people you truly loved and cared for. But if they are sincerely meant for you, no one would have come for them or perhaps, they wouldn't be in another person's lives. You must come to the realization that life is a twist and the things we often wish were ours seldomly come to us. This is something that no one has control over. It would be wise of you to accept the reality of situations and free yourself of any emotional and psychological trauma that only adds more trouble to your health.

When you accept what you cannot change, it only shows your maturity and life becomes easy as the day passes.

- **Appreciate what you have**

Showing appreciation for the things we have or the people in our lives is one sure way to live a simplified life.

The famous proverb, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." is very apt.

Do you know that the people in your life didn't appear just like that, it was a natural design and for a purpose. So you must learn to grapple this truth and look beyond who they are or what they stand for to *why* they are in your life. This is what I term *Purpose*. In order to enjoy the benefits of anything, the purpose must be clearly understood.

Sometimes, we lose the most important people or things because we fail to see the reason why they are there instead, we prefer to look out for something 'better'

A friend of mine had been a single mother for the past ten years because she failed to *accept* her husband right from when she got pregnant for him. She felt he wasn't good enough. She was looking forward to be engaged to her former high school mate who was doing much better than her husband that she totally lost sight of all the potentials and benefits she ought to be

enjoying as his wife. She is living in regret till date. The man she longed for never came and the husband who truly loved her died two years ago.

- **Limit Your Activities**

When you have to extend the usage time of your phone, it will tell you to apply some settings in order to extend the battery life. Though this option may not allow you to enjoy some other important applications you are used to, but this is only a wise thing to do especially when you don't have a power bank with you. This analogy is also applicable to our personal lives. If you really want to have a healthy working vitals in your body, then it's time to put a check on some activities that isn't leading you anywhere. The more you try to be 'everywhere', the more complex life becomes and this doesn't help with your overall wellbeing. Learn to pursue after activity that will add immense value to your life and let go of trying to prove a point to people.

- **Ditch The Hurts and Misgivings of Yesterday**

Sometimes it's okay to let sleeping dogs lie and move on with life. If you have been hurt many times, it doesn't mean you should go on a vindictive campaign. You must realise that no one is perfect including you. Also, no matter how deep the hurt or misgivings are, it should serve as a lesson to improve your life and not to cause you bitter resentment towards those people. Forgiveness doesn't seek an apology. You are not asking for validation for your pain, or any other form of compensation. It is unconditional and personal. You may wait a lifetime for compensation and never receive it.

It's okay to always put yourself in other people's shoes before you take a decision.

- **Focus on what You do Best.**

Of all the potentials you may have, there's going to be a major one that you are most comfortable and confident with, this is where you should direct your energy to. When you do what you love, not only will you feel great joy and accomplishment, your energy will flow freely. Doing what you enjoy most is crucial part of tracking your sources of energy and restoration. This is searching out the truth of who you are.

Though your potential is what will unlock your breakthrough in life but it would be much demanding if you have to channel all your energy on each one at a time. When you focus on what you do best, you will find more possibilities out of it and this will further open doors of opportunities for you.

For example, If you are good at swimming, writing, singing, or directing. You may consider opting for one or two out of these potentials and do your best to improve more on them.

- **Set Healthy Boundaries**

If you allow people to bump into your space without setting boundary for them, it could make you appear cheap. Just because you want to be accepted doesn't mean you should sell away your dignity and self-power. When you need to explain how you feel about something or a situation to someone and it becomes a big weight, then you may need to challenge your self-power. Once you are able to do this, it will be easy to speak your mind without feeling guilty. One of the biggest benefits of setting boundaries is learning to say no, part to people who use up your time. People tend to respect an individual who knows what they want and what they stand for and are not afraid to communicate it.

Boundaries create healthy relationships. Not only will your relationship with yourself be more genuine, your relationship with others will be more honest. You will improve your Communication skills and feel less resentful.

- **Reevaluate Your Social Networks**

In as much as it's feels great that our social life is going on well, it may be a lot better if we consider reevaluating our relationships.

Sometimes, you may need to ask yourself a sincere question. "Is this relationship leading me anywhere?" or "Are these networks solving any concerns in my life?"

If you are looking towards living a life of simplicity, try sticking to relationships that will help nurture your destiny to fulfilment and not otherwise.

And sometimes, it may be wise to keep a private life; one free of any unnecessary demands from the people we tend to keep in our lives. You

have to learn to *hear yourself* and this can only happen when you make up your mind to be alone within your walls.

- **Learn To Outsource**

Life is too short to be trying to prove you are a superman or superwoman to the people in your life. The Perfectionists are fond of doing this. They feel good when they are the one holding the aces and everyone seems to be dancing to their tunes. But this often poses a health risk to them. In life, it's not possible to be everything especially when it comes to work/Job, or family. Try to delegate work/assignment/job to other people and watch how life can be more enjoyable when you do this.

- **Stay On Your Lane**

Staying on your lane will earn you respect, and the honor you deserve. Remember, these two are earned.

Though this is relative especially in this twenty-first century where there's so much disheartening situations around. Sometimes, in trying to maintain our lane, we may lose sight of the neighbor who needs our assistance in saving his family from a fire outbreak. So many lives have been destroyed because some people don't want to be seen as meddling in affairs that is not of their concern.

However, you may need to weigh the options and see that your motives are right. Also, when trying to offer any assistance, check with your spirit and see if you are truly led. Be wise.

- **Do only things that Matter and is of huge importance**

When you feel that every case brought before you needs to be attended to at once, then you are setting yourself up for a major health breakdown.

While in high school, I remembered my economics tutor taught us [scale of preference](#) which means attending to things in order of their importance. By this, people will focus on what needs utmost attention and then choose others accordingly. This way, we can curtail our spending lifestyle.

In this age and time, People only want to focus their priority on *need* and not *want*. We all have priorities no doubt but are they truly of huge importance to our overall wellbeing or are we only trying to prove a point?Whichever way you see it,Whatever is a top priority in your life should be one that will serve a meaningful purpose at the long run.

Remember, your life is a bit like a balance sheet. It's a statement of accounts,a running tally of how you are really doing. If your life load does not allow time for rejuvenation,a health crisis may be close at hand. If this describes you,then it's time to make changes...now

## CHAPTER ELEVEN : HOW TO BUILD YOUR SELF-ESTEEM

How we feel about ourselves affects every aspect of our experiences from how we do our work,raise our children and interact in relationships. It affects how we let others treat others and how we treat others. All of our life's experiences are shaped by who we think we are. Self-esteem is essential for a fulfilling life; it is the key to success or failure.

The stronger our self-esteem, the more likely we are to attract healthy relationships. The more resilient we are, the better we can cope with life's demands.

When you focus on building a healthy self-esteem,it will sustain you for a lifetime. It doesn't matter how tough your journey has been,how old you are,or how disadvantaged you perceive yourself to be,you can create this crucially important quality.

To have high self-esteem is to have a high regard for yourself. In the same vein,self-acceptance is accepting who you are, and that means all of you,just as you are.

The basic premise is,no matter what others may think of you,no matter what situations occur,no matter what you do,you are able to love and value yourself. Of course,this value does not restrict you from continually improving your skills,knowledge, or your habits.

Self-improvement never ends-It is a life long process. Above all else,you must understand that building self-esteem is an inside job. You build yourself from the inside out. Self-esteem is not determined by worldly success,physical appearance,popularity,or any other external value. It is accomplished by taking personal responsibility,having integrity,demonstrating competence,feeling worthy and embracing self-acceptance.

*Confront the dark parts of yourself and work to banish them with illumination and forgiveness. Your willingness to wrestle with your demons will cause your angels to sing-August Wilson*

I struggled with low self-esteem throughout most of my early life.When I became a Mom,I panicked. If there was one thing I looked out for in my children,it is for them to be confident,to love,and value themselves,to be

audacious, and bold, and to be the best they can be. But how can I encourage them to have something that I do not boast to have myself?

When we do not have an inner sense of value, we often look elsewhere to create it. It is like having a void within us. The lower our self-esteem, the bigger the void, and the greater the yearning to fill it. This desire for them to turn out well jolted me into discovery and rediscovery of my true identity. I started reading books on the subject, get along with friends or colleagues who had self-esteem and be their secret learner. I had to really subject myself to a learning and relearning process. Today, I am grateful that I embarked on that journey. I am a very confident person and also have a healthy self-esteem. My kids are not left out too.

Building a healthy self-esteem doesn't have to wear you out completely. You do not need to wear a mask so that your self-esteem will be strengthened. By this, I meant you trying to manipulate others with the illusion that in the process, your self-esteem will be boosted. Approval seekers manipulate so that they will be liked or accepted. Victims manipulate individuals in the hope that they will be cared for- This gives them the illusion of power. Rescuers build the illusion of self-esteem by giving conditionally. We criticize other people to bring them down and raise ourselves up, or we attempt to control others so that we are in charge. The bottom line is that, we don't think we have value unless someone else confirms it. But using people do not build self-esteem or self-worth, it only break relationships.

Your journey to being the real person you truly are starts with you. Start by asking yourself; What am I worth? And how can I maintain and sustain this important virtue? When you start to do this, you tend towards experiencing a brand new you and the urge to want others to accept you will fade completely.

*One's dignity may be assaulted, vandalized, and cruelly mocked. But it can never be taken away unless it is surrendered- Micheal J. Fox*

Here are ways that you can build your self-esteem

- **Integrity**

Building healthy self-esteem requires integrity. This means honestly-matching who you are on the inside with who you are on the outside.

When you are not being sincere with yourself, or to others, the fraud is directed right back at you. Your self-esteem takes the hit. Courage and independent thinking are elusive traits and this is why so few people are authentic.

When we have integrity, the more self-respect we earn and our self-esteem begins to flourish.

Another crucial aspect of integrity is keeping our word. It isn't easy though. I believe this is one of the prime reasons our world is in such a state. Do you keep your word? All the time? When you break your **word**, you break an agreement. There's no such thing as little agreement. All agreements are important; they are all based on doing what you say you are going to do. The outcome can be war when leaders of countries break agreements. Husbands and wives break agreements, and marriages fall apart. When business partners break agreements, the lawyers get rich.

- **Personal Responsibility**

Being responsible generates self-esteem. This world needs more participants, not more passengers. Active, responsible people get things done. They are not dependent on society to look after them, nor do they expect handouts.

Now here's a big question. Consider it carefully and be honest. Are you taking personal responsibility for creating the life you really want, or are you just hoping it will all work out?

If you want to feel better about yourself, start taking responsibility in more areas of your life.

Below are some stem sentences that will help you discover the benefits of increasing your responsibility.

*If I took more responsibility for my body, I would exercise three times every week, drink six glasses of water daily and eat more fruits and vegetables.*

- *If I took more responsibility for my life, I would...*

- *If I took more responsibility for my finances,I would...*
- *If I took more responsibility for my hapiness,I would ...*
- *If I took more responsibility for my work,I would...*

Now think of one specific area where you are not taking responsibility. The exercise below will be helpful.

1. *Define the situation*

Example:*I do not take responsibility for my health*

2. *List the benefits if you don't make any changes*

Example:*I can continue to eat what I want.*

*I do not need to take time to exercise.*

3. *List the costs if you don't make any changes*

Example: *I will continue to put on weight.*

*Low energy*

4. *What are you pretending not to know?*

Example: *I'm very unhealthy,I could be at risk for diabetes.*

5. *What can you do to be more responsible in this situation?*

Example: *Take action-start by exercising everyday.*

6. *When will you start?*

- **Boost Your Self-Image**

Self-Image is based on how you have interpreted what others said,how they treated you,what you told yourself. Your self-image may or may not be accurate,yet it forms your personal beliefs. A belief is anything we hold to be true. Most of our beliefs are formed in childhood when our life experiences and knowledge is limited. During that time,we looked up to

significant people like parents, teachers, and others in authority—and mostly believed what they told us. Over the years, these beliefs formed our attitudes and created our life experiences.

Some of our beliefs go deep, to our core, while others lie below the surface. Some labels like *You 're a loser!* may be surface-deep in one person and cut to the core in another. If the second person has a low self-esteem, he could easily interpret this statement as, "I'm not worthy." A self-image of negative core beliefs can become increasingly negative as you grow older, unless you challenge and change them.

As an adult, you have beliefs about everything including your intelligence, competence, image, and lovability. Unfortunately, much of what you believe is false. To help you better understand this analogy. Have you ever worn someone else's glasses? They distort the true image of you and your life.

Whose perceptions are you wearing? False beliefs limit you. They become the glasses through which you see your world. You don't see things as they are, you see things as you are. The glasses act as a filter, screening out anything that does not match your beliefs.

- **The Competence Factor**

Do you have the ability to think, reason, and judge for yourself? Do you have a mind you trust? Do you defer to others most of the time? These are important questions to ponder as you continue to build a foundation for healthy self-esteem. Competence is like having internal security. You are self-reliant, confident, you trust yourself to make good decisions, are capable, well-grounded, savvy enough to overcome the obstacles that life presents.

We all feel overwhelmed and helpless from time to time. The competent individual knows these situations are not permanent. He is proactive and uses his knowledge and ability to initiate solutions.

To keep this in perspective, it's impossible to be competent in all areas of your life, and you don't need to be.

A woman who has been out of the job market for eight years may not feel competent re-entering the workforce. However, she really shines at

managing the home. So do yourself a favour-lighten up,you can't be great at everything. Here's what will build the competence factor for you:

- Experience life fully-actively participate
- Understand that unexpected challenges teach you resilience.
- Take responsibility;think for yourself.
- Make your own choices and decisions.
- Improve your skills,keep learning.
- Trust yourself.

- **Self-Worth**

Self-worth comes from who you are and not what you do. You can look for your self-worth through achievements by wearing masks and building pseudo self-esteem from external sources, and announce, "Look, I'm worthy." But inside, you still feel hollow and unworthy. Your internal critic says, " You are not good enough." As a result,you feel lost and unloved.

Your worth comes from God. This is a divine gift and doesn't require validation or proof. It will always be a part of you. It's where your creativity,enthusiasm,peace,love,trust,happiness,joy,and wisdom resides. It's your spiritual core and it's invincible. Just know that you are worthy,you are enough- right now.

Can you say that with conviction,really believing it? I 'm enough! This is a cry from your spirit. People who know they are enough value the way they are treated and how they treat others. What about your values?Do you allow people to take you for granted or to demean you? Do you treat others with little or no respect? Only when you feel worthy and have love for yourself can you love others unconditionally. Then your love will be unlimited and will flow freely

- **Self-Acceptance**

It is crucial to have a loving relationship with yourself. It isn't just a good thing,it's absolutely indispensable for a healthy,meaningful life. Of all the

relationships you will have in this lifetime, you are the only one who will never leave you. Some of us have bought into the belief that it is selfish, conceited, and morally suspect to love and accept ourselves. We are taught to satisfy others and live for everyone else. This is not the moral high ground. Yes, I know we've all had enough of the "me, myself, and I" generation. It's not about that. This is about building self-esteem, by honoring and accepting yourself with all of your faults and attributes. That means loving yourself with forgiveness and compassion.

You cannot expect to contribute to the world, to show compassion, and to love others when you reject yourself. To fully accept yourself is to embrace all parts of who you are. It's easy to love the side of you that's generous, compassionate, happy, and helpful. But what about the greedy, angry, jealous, or envious side of your character? You need to accept these attributes too. If you only accept the good parts, you are rejecting yourself, and you will never feel whole. By doing so, you automatically reject others as well.

For example, if we deny or are uncomfortable with our anger, we will attract angry people into our lives. We will suppress our angry feelings and judge people whom we see as angry. Since we lie to ourselves about our own internal feelings which allows us to recognize and reclaim them. Next time you judge someone else for having a negative quality, take a look at yourself first. See if this same quality is part of your own character, but you haven't accepted it yet.

My advice is to be gentle with yourself, become your own best friend, acknowledge the fact that you are human and you make mistakes. Learn to be compassionate and forgiving of yourself as you would be to a dear friend. Value and love the unique person you are as you strive to love and accept others.

## CHAPTER TWELVE: HOW YOU CAN KEEP YOUR MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS ON TRACK

Your relationships depends on how willing you are to do what you need to do to be accountable for your thoughts and and actions.

When trouble erupts,many couples go to therapy. Good step! But that's not all,Here is one out of the three key preconditions to keep your marriage from derailing. Keep in touch for the remaining two.

### 1. **Consider the possibility that you contribute to ongoing or past problems.**

I know it's tough to admit,but a relationship is composed of two people who bring unique issues to the relationship. Before you complain about what your partner is or not doing,first take a hard look at yourself.

I am not asking you to be the scapegoat for problems or to be responsible for things that are not yours.I am asking you to entertain the idea that you are not the perfect mate. You may be close to perfection,far away from perfection,or somewhere in between,so can we open up to this possibility?

Start by asking these questions:

- Do I carry old wounds from my past?
- Am I operating out of fear or other unhealthy emotions?
- Have I blamed my spouse for things that are really my fault?
- Am I allowing myself to be deceived, falling away from the truth?
- Am I willing to believe change is possible?
- Am I walking in a close and intimate relationship with God,or have I relegated Him to a backseat position?
- Do I even believe what God says is true?

When you allow deception to creep into your life-a little here, a little there, soon you deviate from God's plan and become the enemies pawn. The further you veer from God's truth, the more difficult it is to keep the marital covenant.

It's time to stop blaming and to access accurately your contribution to the damage. Beginning to do this opens the possibility for change. Begin by asking God to reveal things in your life that requires changing. These things

may be unrelated to your spouse but they will certainly affect him or her. Spend time in prayer and listen for God to speak.

## **2. Recognize that you don't have Control over your spouse's will but you do have a great deal of Influence**

The second precondition to keep your marriage from derailing is recognizing the *influence* you have with your spouse. Maybe you don't feel influential, but you are. There's a well-known physics axiom that states "For every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction." Apply this reality to your relationship.

For every action in marriage, there's a spousal reaction, sometimes equal, sometimes opposite. You can only control your actions, regardless of how your partner behaves. No matter how bad things get, you can exercise self-control. Self-Control is a desired quality, one that is not reinforced much in today's culture. God promises self-control:

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control-Gal.5:22-23.*

According to these verses, love is the fruit. All fruit grows from a seed. The seed is the word of God. You plant the seed (The Word) in your heart first. The result of knowing and believing God's Word is love. Said another way, the result of planting the seed is growing a crop of fruit (love). God's love, then, produces self-control.

When you work to develop self-control, you concentrate far less on what your partner is doing and more on your own actions and reactions. A change in one person creates a change in another. It's like a dance. Couples create dances together. One Spouse behaves one way, the other follows with a behavior. These actions repeat and follow a pattern. Overtime, couples lock into familiar dances. Some dances can be wonderful, romantic, dreamy, soothing, supportive, easy, flowing, creative, innovative, and fluid. Other dances can be jerky, tense, toe crushing, out of step, body slamming, and

embarrassing. Obviously, the latter are the dances we don't like and need to change.

How do you change the dance? By changing your step in the dance. You can't force your partner to move differently. Some spouses will make a new move based on suggestion or helpful feedback. Others will not. But you can take a different step. When you do, the result will likely be tension, either you will fall back into the old step, or your spouse will accommodate the new. If you don't give in, the dance has to change. It feels awkward at first, tense, and terribly uncomfortable but eventually the steps begin to form a new pattern, a new dance. Here's your hope: By changing your step in the dance, the dance will change as long as you don't go back to the old way.

Notice, I didn't say your actions/ reactions determine your partner's actions, I said they influence. However, when you firmly practice a new step, you have more influence than you realize.

But if one person in a couple decides to walk away from the things of God and steps into the world system, trouble begins. You can't force someone to turn back to God. Sound familiar? You may have screamed, cried, and manipulated; being hurtful, angry, pitiful, depressed, anxious, perfect, tolerant, condemning, distant, or dependent, or dragged your spouse to counselling (add whatever I've missed here). Yet nothing has changed. Your spouse is still bent on divorcing you. It seems you've tried every new step in the dance imaginable. If so, then your problem is probably a spiritual one. Your spouse has hardened his/her heart to the things of God. Nothing will move that spouse because he/she is determined to pursue a new dance without you. Your spouse no longer wants you as a dance partner. He/She thinks there's a more talented dancer out there. The truth is that the coveted new dance will hardly be new—your spouse will merely choose a new partner.

Your hope in this situation is that your spouse will be convicted of sin and will awaken from spiritual slumber to have a true encounter with the living God. Pray to that end and ensure you read Chapter 12.

*You need self-control in an out-of-control world-*  
*James C. Collins*

### **3. You must become aware of the spiritual deception that attempts to derail your relationship**

We forget that marriage is a holy act. The uniting of two people through marriage is a union of spirits. Ending a marriage doesn't absolve that union-it simply separates the partners physically. It only takes one person to sever the tie but a host of people are deeply affected for the rest of their lives.

To be willing to dissolve a holy tie, you must be deceived. The deception process is slow and insidious. It begins with a little disappointment, unhappiness, or wounding. You entertain the notion that someone or something else can make up the difference or provide something you don't have. It's the same lie Eve bought in the garden.

Remember Eve? She could have eaten from any tree in the garden except one. That's the one Satan used to lure her. When he appeared in the form of a lowly snake, she listened to his ideas. Satan lied to her. "You can eat and you won't die." We might all be running around naked in a Middle Eastern paradise if she had replied, "Satan, you're liar, take a crawl. I know what God said."

*The greatest deception men suffer is from their own opinion-*  
*Leonardo Da Vinci*

Take this position with even the smallest thing that goes against God. When God's word is clear on something, don't believe anything else. Eve ate the food and found out God was serious about His word. Just like Eve, if you believe the myths and lies and choose to divorce, you'll live with the consequences of your choice. Certainly, God still loves you and shows His grace and mercy, but natural consequences will follow your actions.

You may be in the middle of very difficult circumstances with a spouse. You may even be separated. Let me say a few words about separation. At times, marital separation is warranted to stop abusive behavior or to show that you mean business when dealing with unrepented sinful behavior such

as pornography, adultery, gambling, and things that could be harmful to the rest of the family. Separation might be a step toward reconciliation. It can be a strategy used to say, "knock it off. Get serious, get control, and stop misbehaving. When you can show me you are a changed person (over time), we'll reunite."

Separation doesn't work when a spouse is already determined to get out of the marriage and uses the separation to do as he or she pleases. It also doesn't work if a spouse refuses to address the spiritual, behavioural, or emotional issues of the marriage. In these cases, the spouse has already disconnected emotionally. Separation only reinforces that distance.

For the Christian, reconciliation should always be the goal. Reconciliation requires forgiveness, and a true change of heart. One or both spouses may have to make serious behavior changes. However, change usually begins with a willful decision to think and behave differently. Add God's power to the mix, and reconciliation is possible. I speak from professional experience.

*The devil doesn't come dressed in a red cape and pointy horns.  
He comes as everything you've ever wished for. Pray for  
wisdom and discernment*

## **CHAPTER THIRTEEN: IMPROVING ON YOUR HABITS**

The results of every bad habit doesn't always show up until much later in life. These results I call them *consequences*.

I have discovered that if we keep on making bad choices about our finances, health, or money, etc, the consequences probably won't occur immediately. It takes time for cholesterol to build to the point where it causes a heart attack. Lung cancer doesn't manifest its deadly consequences with a single pack of cigarettes, it takes years. The result is still usually fatal. Some people have bought into a "buy- now, save-later" fallacy. They think that one day, they will start putting away money. They intend to do this, but it never happens.

*The secret to permanently break a habit is to love something  
greater than the habit- Byrant McGrill*

The consequences of your bad habits can be heart-breaking. You may end up in poor health or working during the years that you planned for retirement. For some people, it's even worse- destitute and broke, they end up requiring assistance to survive. To avoid these nasty scenarios, Here's what you can do:

### **List your Bad Habits**

- Write them down; you know what they are. Consider every area of your life, fitness, relationships, work, money, health, food, Communication, sleeping etc.
- Be specific- clearly define each one. For example, i hit the snooze button five times in the morning before i finally get up.
- Select one habit that you really want to change.

### **Access the consequences**

- Opposite your bad habit, write the long-term consequences if you continue this behavior. For example, sleeping late on a workday can get you off to a bad start. You are rushing, you miss breakfast, your stress levels increase because traffic is backed up. You arrive at the office tense, out of breath and still fuming at the stupid guy who stalled when the spotlight turned green. Repeated tardiness may get you fired and you are labelled unreliable.
- Think about the long term consequences of your behavior, not the outcome, tomorrow or next week.

### **Clarify your New Habit and Take Action**

- Defining a better habit is easy, Just write down the opposite of your bad habit. For example, get up on time. Do not hit the snooze alarm once, never mind five times.
- Alongside your new habit, write three action steps that will turn this desired behavior into a reality. For example, Immediately swing your legs out of bed when the alarm goes off. (I know this sounds too

simple, but it works) Have a friend phone you at the exact time you want to get up. Buy a new clock with a horrendously loud alarm bell on it and place it on the opposite side of the room. The point is - do something that will jumpstart your new behavior.

- Finally, list all of the positive benefits you will enjoy once your new habit is well established. In most cases, this takes thirty to ninety days. Getting up on time soon becomes automatic, and you won't need an alarm. You will be more relaxed and can ease into the day, instead of being jolted into it. Reducing stress affects your long-term health and being on time for work shows your integrity. You'll be thankful for making the adjustment.

The longer you have maintained a bad habit, the harder it is to break. Creating new habits especially exercise programs are difficult at the start. The first few weeks will really test you. There will be times when you want to quit. Don't! Develop a No exceptions policy and stick to it. If you do, the rewards will far outweigh any initial discomfort.

*A man who can't bear to share his habits is a man who needs to quit them-Stephen King, The Dark Tower.*

## **Keep your word**

The great bonus about self-esteem is that we have the ability to work on it. The stronger our self-esteem, the more likely we are to attract healthy relationships.

Now, an important building block for healthy self-esteem is integrity. This means matching who you are on the inside with who you are on the outside. Young children are often more integral than adults. They speak the truth, with no agenda about having to please or displease anyone else. They cry when they are hurt and they get angry when they are upset. There is no holding back or thinking about what others might or might not do.

When you are not being true to yourself, or to others, the fraud is directed back at you. Your self-esteem takes the hit.

Courage and independent thinking are essential ingredients for being authentic. But courage and independent thinking are elusive traits, and this is the reason why so few people are authentic.

Like a colleague of mine who says, "I try to impress people when I don't even respect them. I hate myself when I do that, and I often stay silent when I don't agree with what's being said."

The truth is, she needs to speak up and be honest. By silencing her truth, she has become devoid of integrity.

The more integral we are, the more self-respect we earn. In other words, our self-esteem begins to flourish.

Another crucial aspect of integrity is keeping our word. I believe this is one of the prime reasons our world is in such a state. Do you keep your word? All the time? When you break your word, you break an agreement. There is no such thing as a little agreement. All agreements are important; they are all based on doing what you say you are going to do. The outcome can be war when leaders of countries break agreement. When husbands and wives break agreements, the lawyers get rich.

Honor your commitments with integrity.

*Les Brown.*

Some people give their word without even realizing they have given it because they treat it casually. Think about how you feel when a friend breaks her word to you. If she becomes a repeat offender, what does it do to your relationships? How do you feel about trusting and respecting this person? Not very good, I'll bet. You feel let down, angry or upset. Let's turn this other way. What happens to you when you know you have broken your word? You may beat yourself or rationalize why it was acceptable, or apologize to cover it up. But you can only get away with saying sorry for so long. It damages your self-esteem.

How often? Everyday. Let's take a simple example that challenges most people. Do you show up on time? The answer is yes or no, or it depends. Being late is another way we sabotage our self-esteem and our relationships. It indicates lack of respect for someone else's time.

If you make a habit of being late, ask yourself why? Is it about control or about resistance? What are you making more important than keeping your word?

This is true, being loose with your word will gradually erode your self-respect and self-trust until it becomes a mere speck on your integrity scale.

Be conscious when you are giving your word. Focus! Treat your word as if it's all you have. Your word is your bond. It's what sets you apart in the integrity stakes. Giving your word means you are being accountable to yourself and to the people with whom you work, play and share your life.

If you want self-respect, if you want to stand out in the business community, if you want great relationships and you want to be trusted, keep your word.

## **CHAPTER FOURTEEN : MAKING CHANGES IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS**

**M**aking changes provides an opportunity to dramatically better our lives. We can improve our health, relationships, career, income, level of happiness and our hope for a more optimistic future. Making changes requires a conviction that we are making the right choices.

Really there are some barriers that will stop you from moving forward. The first step is to become aware of the barriers that are holding you back. When you take the time to observe what is really going on, you will be in a better position to make wise decisions.

*You cannot change your destination overnight, but you can change your direction-Jim Rohn*

The barriers are highlighted below:

### **Paddling in your comfort zone.**

Challenging your comfort level helps you to feel more alive, more passionate, and more confident about getting what you want. Choosing to stay in a comfort zone eventually restricts your capacity for life. Is that what you really want? Everything you will ever need to succeed or be happy lies outside your comfort zone. You may need to stretch yourself beyond your limit in order for you to attain the life you have always wanted. For change to happen, there's need to consider your relationships. If you are too comfortable with them, you may be sabotaging your true happiness and real identity. When it's time for change, then you must be willing to accept that fact and be bold enough to take the step.

### **Beware of Apathy and Indifference.**

Realizing your life is on hold because you are stuck in the comfort zone trap is quite different from another obstacle to change: Apathy. Indifference and lack of passion rob many people from taking calculated risks that will improve their circumstances. For some it's their life-load that's holding them back. They are burdened already. Change for these people is just another thing to do. Many are shut down emotionally-life feels flat and joyless. They go about the motions of living, but they are dead inside. I call

them the living dead. It's sad- dead at forty but not buried till they are eighty.

Perhaps you are thinking,there's no way i can get excited about my job. I challenge you to change that. Feeling indifferent or bored is not a good return on the many precious hours you invest at work. Our jobs need to be more fulfilling than just picking up a paycheck. Even the most menial work can be stimulating with the right attitude.

*When we are no longer able to change a situation,we are challenged to change ourselves-Vicktor Frankl*

It's not only people who are over-burdened that end up feeling apathetic and indifferent,Many working men and women would like to change their situation but they have stayed too long at the same job and eventually indifference sets in. Why not care enough about yourself to make a change?No matter how bad the situation is,know this-you can change it. Have faith and believe things can be different. Then start taking the necessary action.

### **Justifying your Actions**

Sometimes we don't want to open our eyes to reality because the truth is too painful. It's easier to justify and rationalize being stuck instead of making changes.

Have you ever known someone who could not manage her money? Her bills were never paid on time plus the credit cards were overused and abused. Yet she can justify spending the money she doesn't have because she's addicted to shopping

The perfectionist often falls into this trap. Because of their perceived notion that they are always right,it therefore becomes a burden for them to accept any fault of theirs instead they end up manipulating the people in their lives by justifying their actions.

Relationships suffer a lot more when couples,or employees do not learn to quit the justifying game and submit themselves to the change they need to become better.

Don't allow your justification to get in the way of making the changes you want or need to make. Change is a process, it may take longer than you want but at least start with a plan.

*Not everything that is faced can be changed but nothing can be changed until it is faced- James Baldwin*

*Courage is the power to let go of the familiar-Raymond Lindquist*

- Find your voice. Form an opinion and express it. Try this no matter how comfortable it feels. Don't just agree with someone unless you really do. Think about what you feel deep down inside. Know what you know. It may take work to identify your thoughts and feelings and then to express them. People around you may not always like who you are but that's part of the process. Speak up.
- Do things apart from others. Don't be afraid to be alone or do things apart from the family. You don't need people 24-7. If you do, then you need more work on pulling out of the emotional stickiness. You are more competent than you realize. Use your abilities and skills to shine.
- Set boundaries. Your main allegiance is to your spouse- not to your original family or friends. Don't tell them every time you breathe. Don't involve anyone in your business. Develop a strong couple unit.
- Don't look to others for approval. Your family taught you what they could. Now you have to decide what is right and act on it. You don't need their approval or anyone else's. Work on pleasing God. He is your ultimate authority; He's given many guidelines on how to conduct yourself in relationships.

- Think, and don't let your emotions overpower you. When stress comes, don't let your emotions run you. Use your head to manage your emotions. It's human to have them, but making decisions based on them is dangerous because they are unreliable. Learn to balance your emotions and your intellect.

Of course all this effort is necessary so as to have a strong marital relationship. If you don't define who you are before the marriage, you'll have to do it during marriage. If you do it before you get married, you'll most likely find a healthier partner. If you wait until you are married, both of you will most likely have to work on the issue. Self-definition work can be accomplished within marriage. It's just a little more difficult because you're dealing with your "stuff" and your partner's "stuff" at the same time.

The myth couples believe is that they must separate or divorce so they can find themselves. Discovering your "I" within marriage is possible with the help of a competent marriage counselor. Occasionally a therapist will recommend separation just to sort out the stickiness. But the intent is to work on self-definition fully expecting to reconcile.

Become aware of what your family taught you, then decide to keep the healthy parts and discard those that are not.

*It sucks when you know that you need to let go but you can't because you're still waiting for the impossible to happen.*

### Establish good communication as you set boundaries

Whether at work or at home, good communication is important when you are setting healthy boundaries with others. This technique will assist you in being clear when expressing what you want.

When... (describe the behavior)

I feel... (describe your feelings)

I want... (state what you want)

For example,

- When you come home from work you disappear into your office downstairs.

I feel ignored and unloved.

I want you to ask me about my day.

2. When I have an urgent deadline

I feel pressured

I want you to become more sensitive about this by not adding more to my already full workload.

Note: If you are expecting total cooperation when you first set up a new boundary, think again. You may be setting yourself up for a major disappointment. Let's face it, we know it takes time for people to adjust to a new situation. Some people are really ticked off when their brand new boundary is ignored, but unless the situation is absolutely intolerable, consider giving the other person a little wiggle room. Old habits die hard when it comes to adults. And teenagers, some have selective hearing. Often they don't remember what you said yesterday.

[Boundaries are to protect lives not to limit pleasures.](#)

[Edwin Louis Cole](#)

Obtaining agreement for a new boundary is a form of negotiation. To maintain healthy integral relationships, adults need to regularly negotiate boundaries between themselves. Focus on making it a win-win. One thing you don't want to do is isolate your family and friends by being too rigid. Like the willow tree, you need to be flexible. Getting everything you want some of the time may be sufficient. Check your position by asking these two questions:

- How important is this?
- How far do I want to take it?

## Curfew Consequences

Consequences are often the only way we can get cooperation and have our needs met. My nephew was late again. Infact ,it was well past his curfew. Being a typical aunt,I was sleeping with one ear open,listening for his safe return. By the time he noisily entered the house in wee hours,I was tired and angry. " You are grounded for a month!" I yelled.

Be careful what you set up. That consequence didn't affect him nearly as much as it affected me. Having a cranky,moody,teenager in my space for thirty-one long days was nearly unbearable.

When you set consequences,make sure that you are willing to enforce them. Be certain the impact on the other peeson is greater than on you. Don't threaten to leave a relationship if you're not ready to do so. Don't say you 'll quit your job if that isn't your intention. Making hollow threats can backfire on you later. Think through your consequences first,don't make them in the heat of the moment. Consequences often take creativity. Remember,your goal is to change the behavior. If you aren't prepared to follow through,the other person will not be motivated to change. The secret is in the follow through.

When people set boundaries with you,it's their attempt to continue the relationship with you not an attempt to hurt you.

Elizabeth Earnshaw

## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN: BALANCING YOUR PRIORITIES**

To balance your priorities in life is not an easy task. With the pressures of today's demanding high-paced world, most people struggle to attain a reasonable balance. We can easily be drawn away from our priorities when one aspect of our life consumes the bulk of our time. To a large extent, it is much like walking a tight rope. When we drift too much in one direction or the other, we become unbalanced. To sustain what we value most in our lives, we must constantly maintain our equilibrium as we move forward to achieve our purpose and goals.

Are you dedicating enough time and energy to the most important aspects of your life? Or do you find yourself focusing on one major area at the expense of the others?

You may need to make a commitment to find a balance in your life. Take a look within, do you feel consistently stressed, physically exhausted, mentally drained or emotionally devoid of happiness? Are you dropping the ball with key responsibilities in your personal and professional life? Do you neglect your own well-being for the sake of others? If your answer is "yes" to any of these considerations, you may be out of balance. Make a commitment to work through these next steps:

### **Determine Your Priorities**

Set aside time to define what you consider to be the most significant aspect of your life. Do they include such priorities as family, work, friends, self, and community? Which of these consume more of your time, energy, and resources? Which are the most rewarding to you? Overall, how do they add and subtract value to your spiritual, mental, and physical wellbeing? Focus on creating priorities that are achievable and make the most sense to you.

### **Establish And Execute an Implementation Plan For Each Priority.**

You have been blessed with an incredible amount of time and energy. In response, how do you plan to implement your priorities?

To develop your plan, establish specific strategies for each priority and tie them to your overall plan to maintain balance. If one priority is to cater for your father with a stage two cancer, how can you achieve this goal when you have a demanding work schedule? What specific steps will you take to manage your efforts? As you execute your Implementation plan, align your actions to your words.

## **Be Resolute On Your Values**

One of the ways to being happy is to realize that you *own* your life and that no one can undermine this truth. Always be prepared to walk away from any situation that will compromise your state of balance in life. That means, you may need to start over again. How frustrating that could be.

Consider it a personal victory when you have the strength and courage to protect what is important to you. Do not relinquish your power to the unreasonable demands of others.

Lebanese American Poet, Kahlil Gibran puts it, "*Our anxiety does not come from thinking about the future, but from wanting to control it.*"

When we don't set priorities, we tend to follow the path of least resistance. That is, we will pick and sort through the things we need to do and work on the easiest ones- leaving the more difficult and less fun tasks for a 'later' date. That, in many cases, never comes, or worse, comes just before the action needs to be finished, throwing us into a whirlwind of activity, stress, and regret. Do not get frustrated if you need sometime to figure out what your priorities are so you can set them straight. Be kind to yourself and remember that it is completely normal for your priorities to change overtime. Eventually, with a little bit of patience, you can figure out what is most important and take charge of your life.

*In the end, only three things matter: How much you loved, how gently you lived, and how gracefully you let go of the things not meant for you-Buddha*

## THE NEED TO BALANCE YOUR PRIORITIES

If you want to change the way you look at yourself and what you do by making a decision concerning your priorities, then you may need to consider the following suggestions:

### ❖ **Take Back Today**

Have you ever noticed that the people who have nothing to do usually want to spend their time with you? Poet Carl Sandburg said, "Time is the most valuable coin in your life. You alone will determine how that coin will be spent. Be careful that you do not let other people spend it for you."

Your greatest possession is the twenty-four hours you have directly of you. How will you spend it? Will you give in to pressure or focus on priorities? Will you allow pointless e-mails, unimportant tasks, telemarketers, interruptions, and other distractions to consume your day? Or will you take complete responsibility for how you spend your time, take control of the things you can, and make today yours? If you don't decide how your day will be spent, someone else will.

### **Ask Yourself These Questions:**

#### **1. What is required of me?**

Any realistic assessment of priorities in any area of life must start with a realistic assessment of what a person must do. For you to be a good spouse or parent, what is required of you? To satisfy your employer, what must you do? When ordering priorities, always start with the requirement questions and give it careful thought before moving on to the next question.

**2. What gives me the greatest return?** As you progress in your career, you begin to discover that some activities yield a much higher return for the effort than others do. (Anyone who hasn't discovered that isn't progressing in his career) The next place to focus your attention is on those high-return activities.

#### **3. What gives me greatest reward?**

If you do only what you must and what is effective, you will be highly productive, but you may not be content. I think it's also important to

consider what gives you personal satisfaction. However, I find that some people want to start with the reward question and go no further than that. No one can be successful who doesn't possess the discipline to take care of the first two areas before adding the third.

### ❖ **Stay In Your Strength Zone**

People don't pay for average. People don't go looking for a mediocre restaurant and middling movie when they go out at night. Employers don't award the contract to the salesman known as Mr Average. Finding your strength zone may take some time and exploration. If you don't already have a good handle on your strengths, then you may want to explore some of these:

*Trial and error: Nothing teaches you more than your successes and failures. You have got to take the risk of failing to find your successes.*

*Personality tests: Will help to clarify some of your natural inclinations and help to reveal some strengths and weaknesses you aren't aware of.*

*Personal experience: You really get a feel for how well you do something by doing it repeatedly. Just remember this: Experience isn't always the best teacher, evaluated experience is.*

*The counsel of others: Asking others to evaluate your effectiveness is not always fun, but it is always helpful. Be sure to choose people who don't have an agenda-other than to help you.*

*If it's important to you, you will find a way, if not, you will find an excuse.*

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN : AVOIDING DISAGREEMENTS IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

There are some things you can do to minimize disagreements and help work out your differences.

- **Avoid Assumptions**

Assumptions have been known to destroy an otherwise good relationship. When you have doubts about your partner's intentions, give him or her the benefit of the doubt and allow the situation to become clearer. Better still, you can ask him or her in a peaceful, loving manner.

- **Avoid referring to the past**

Do not be like the archeologist that lives by digging up the past. This is certain to trigger conflict. Every human being has aspect of his or her past that is undesirable and if your partner has shared his or hers with you, this is an act of love and trust. You will do well not to revisit such incidents or keep referring to [past](#) mistakes. Let the dead remain dead, always remembering that there has to be a *leaving before a cleaving*. If you cannot leave the post alone, you may not be able to cleave to your spouse successfully.

- **Aim at resolving not winning**

You should not see your partner as a separate person. The two of you are supposed to be one. If you understand this, then the competitive stance in argument's will be avoided. Have you ever struggled to beat yourself or push yourself aside? Besides, if you win a argument with your partner, to whom will you tell the victory story? You do not deserve a handshake, as you will have just shot yourself at the leg. Let your chief aim in any argument with your partner be on how to resolve the matter. Avoid concentrating on winning, for this will only create further strife and resentment between the both of you.

- **Make time to talk**

Leaving issues unresolved soon leads to a buildup that could be explosive. Make time to [talk](#) with your partner. See what has been bugging him or her and nip the matter in the bud. If you are too busy to spare some time for quality communication with your spouse, you will soon have all the time in the world with nobody to share it with, when he or she gets frustrated with your presence.

- **Be willing to make up**

Always be willing to make up, no matter who is at fault or what caused a disagreement. Show this by your attitude towards your partner.

Some people's face become tightened when there's a misunderstanding in the house and thereby, putting a strain in their relationship. This is wrong.

Even in troubled situations, be the peacemaker, still call your partner by his or her pet name and talk to him or her with kind words. What you have is a misunderstanding not war. If you treat it like a war, then that is real conflict, and not the unresolved issue.

- **Do not act or speak when you are angry**

You have probably heard people say that, if you speak when you are [angry](#), you will make the best speech you will ever regret. Saying things out of annoyance could spark off conflicts, and this has the potential of creating a situation worse than what triggered your anger in the first place. I am sure you will agree with me when I say this is tantamount to killing a fly with a sledgehammer.

When you are angry, your feelings have probably been hurt in some way, but do you have to go on a vindictive campaign in order to communicate your hurts. Take time to cool off and say something nice.

- **Do not take advantage of your partner's vulnerability**

Your partner can afford to be vulnerable in your presence if he or she trusts you. However, if you attack him or her with the things you know when you need to make a selfish point or gain an upper hand in an argument or conversation, you are courting disaster.

Conflict can erupt in this way. If your partner cannot be [vulnerable](#) in your presence, then your relationship is not worth the time of the day.

Go ahead and be the man or woman who is loving and considerate towards their partner.

- **Do not be insensitive**

The disapproval of a situation in a relationship may result in one party making certain requests. At first, this request is usually polite, or made with minimal signs of irritation. When this request is ignored, it is often interpreted as either a challenge or a rejection.

Either way, the result is confrontation. Be [sensitive](#) to your partner's concerns.

- **See the positive side of everything**

Life is always as you choose to see it. To the pessimist, the glass will always be half-empty, while the optimist sees the glass as half-full.

Somebody once said, 'nothing is bad as they say it is. It can only be as bad as you want it to be.' Perhaps, this is a partial truth, but your partner's actions can actually have the interpretation you give to them. If you believe he or she means well, you will rarely have problems with the things he or she does that you don't agree with. [Critical](#) eyes will always see faults, even when there are none. Always strive to be positive, at least until you can identify a repeated pattern of unwholesome behavior. This way, you will be saving yourself disagreements in your relationship.

- **Personalize your resentment**

When there is a disagreement, do not launch an all-out verbal attack at your partner. Watch how you express your innermost desires. Make 'I' statements: for instance, instead of saying, 'It is only an irresponsible man that will stay out late at night,' say something like, 'You know I always get so worried when you stay out late at night.'

Making 'I' statements affords you the opportunity to take responsibility for your perspective and feelings in such a way that the focus is on you (as if

you are really the problem) and not on your partner. This removes the tone of accusation, [criticism](#), and attack from your statements.

- **Communicate your feelings**

In the heat of a bad situation, do not be the evasive party by taking an 'I don't want to talk about it' position. No matter who you imagine is at fault, call a [truce](#) and enter into dialogue. Talk about it. One of you may be surprised to discover that he or she is overreacting and that the situation is not exactly what he or she imagined it to be. By the time you have talked in a peaceful atmosphere, new facts may have come to light. You may even laugh at your mistakes. A bad situation won't get out of hand unless you can talk about it.

- **Compromise**

In every dispute, all the partners involved hold on to a particular position or idea as it suits them, sometimes selfishly.

A dispute between you and your intended spouse is no exception. When you hold on tenaciously to your point of view and your partner does the same, there is bound to be a stalemate. The conflict continues, even against your best wishes. You are hoping that your partner will give in to your position while he or she is expecting you to do the same. There should, however, not be competition between the both of you. The real [competition](#) is out there. Be mature about this, let go of some of your desires, meet your partner half way. Rationality dictates that he or she will do the same. A [compromise](#) means accepting a little discomfort in the interest of peace.

- **Process your anger**

There's a verse that starts with, 'When a man loses his temper, his reason goes on vacation.' It may shock you to learn that when you are angry, the difference between you and a mad man is not of kind but of degree.

There are many ways to handle anger- acceptable and unacceptable. You could choose to [suppress](#) your anger, in which case, you are angry, and instead of letting it out, you deliberately try to control it. You want to maintain peace on the inside. Or you can express your anger by throwing tantrums around. You can also [repress](#) your anger. In this case, you do not

want to accept that you are angry, probably because you believe that it is a sin. Pretending not to be angry, rather than solving any problems, only defers the doomsday. When you finally explode, you will be dazed at the depth and scope of your anger. Suffice it to say that all these are unwholesome ways of handling anger, and when anger is denied or mishandled, it is bound to come out in indirect spasms. You must learn to process your anger.

Processing your anger entails, first of all, acknowledging the fact that you are angry, then taking time to simmer down by doing something that takes your mind off the object of your annoyance. Reflect on the issue rationally, seek information on the situation, then approach your partner and talk about the issue in a civilized manner. In other words, refine your anger. Always bear in mind that nothing will cook your goose faster than boiling-hot temper.

- **Pray**

The quickest way to get back on your feet is to get down on your knees. Even the worst conflict are as a result of raging emotions and I must remind you that you do not own yourself, nor can you choose the wavelength of your emotions. You can only control it with a lot of help from him who put it there.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN : ACCOMPLISHING YOUR LIFE'S GOALS

We all want to achieve something in our lives,we all have goals that we set. Yet,oftentimes,we forget. But what does it take to really achieve anything? How can you go about accomplishing a goal that you have always wanted to accomplish? In the past,if you have set some goals and you did not follow through,there is a reason for it.There is a reason we throw up our hands in silent resignation. Most of us simply want something and we have to work tirelessly for it.

Goals are important in life because they give you a sense of purpose and a sense of purpose gives you a reason to wake up in the morning with energy and enthusiasm.

If you are not focusing on yourself and your goals,now is a good time to kick off.

To work towards your dream,you have to follow the three 'W's' highlighted below:

The first is What?

You have to know what your goal is. It has to be specific because there is a mental shift that occurs in your mind when you specifically lay out what goal you want to achieve.

The Second is When?

You have to know when you want to achieve your goal and it should be realistic. When you are realistic, and the goal is attainable, you are much likely to build momentum and strive for those more lofty long-term goals.

The last but not the least to goal achievement is the Why?

If your reasons for wanting a goal are merely superficial, you will find yourself giving up when the going gets tough. On the other hand,if the reason you want to accomplish your goals are important to you in life, then you will find yourself following through.

You must, however, find the connections in the goals you have set. Like setting a goal for becoming slim and getting fit. The two naturally fit together,so it's easier to plan around it.

### [Stay focused on your goal](#)

The hardest part of achieving a goal is staying true to it. It's easier to get distracted or to lose the enthusiasm especially in this 21st century. In staying focused, you must discipline yourself enough to enforce the *shift* mode. Once you are almost forgetting on your goals, you can practice taking a shift in your conscious state from where you are presently to where *you want to be*.

### [Write down your goals](#)

Writing down your goals gives you a reminder on what needs to be done. While you would want to write it down, ensure they are written on a journal or diary instead of a piece of paper that could disappear under a mountain of other bits of paper after a few days.

### [Set Reviews](#)

Reviewing your goals is very crucial. This can help you to see how you are faring and what still needs to be done. You can choose to review it on a weekly basis which makes the goal look more appealing and have substance than reviewing each day. Whichever way, find the one that suits you and stick to it till you achieve each one of them.

*The trouble with not having a goal is, you can spend your life running up and down the field but never scoring a goal -Bill Copeland*

## **KNOW WHAT TRULY MATTERS**

Whether you try hard to fit in or you try too hard to stand out, it is of equal consequence: You exhaust your significance.

### [Criss Jami, Healology](#)

Which is more important to you, success or significance in what you do? To me, significance is more important. Success rewards my bank account, but having significant, meaningful work rewards my spirit. I know as I serve others, doing work I

love, that success will follow. You have heard this phrase before, "Do what you love and the money will follow." It's true.

We have to be bigger than the things we suffer.

### Shelly Crane

One of the secrets to living a fulfilled life is shifting your focus from acquiring material success to being of service to others. There are many opportunities to do this as a teacher, mother, doctor, entrepreneur, cafeteria worker, you name it. Martin Luther King Jr said, "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't need a college degree to serve, you only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love."

Enjoying a significant, successful life will have you bounding out of bed in the morning excited about going to work. This is work you love and are passionate about. It's capacity is much greater than you are. As you step out in faith, you have the confidence of knowing it will never be more than you can handle.

*Your Spirit already knows your Purpose and wants you to fulfil it*

Have you ever considered what your purpose might be? It is your legacy, the calling of your life, and ultimately why you are here on earth. Take the blueprint of who you are, with your gifts, unique talents, and personality and align them with the passion of your spirit. This is the foundation for your purpose.

Don't panic if you have not yet found the calling for your life. Perhaps you are not ready yet. Either the timing is not right or you have been distracted with other things. Rest assured that a plan is unfolding for your life- you just need to seek it and it will find you.

"How do I find my purpose?" is a question I am often asked. Here's what worked for me. Do you know when the water on a lake is perfectly calm and you can see clearly to the bottom? You need to find that type of clarity within you. Find quietness for yourself. Commit some time for reflection and meditation.

This is essential when you are seeking clarity in any area of your life and more so, if you are seeking purpose. Finding your purpose is about seeking your spirit. Pray and ask for guidance.

Pay attention. Listen to your intuition and your faith. Watch for coincidences—those phone calls out of nowhere. Journal the answers to these questions. What am I most passionate about? How do I want to be remembered? What legacy do I want to leave behind? Consider writing your own eulogy to clarify your thinking even more. What do you want your family and friends say about you when you are gone? Sometimes through the dark nights of our soul, we start seeking and sometimes we are inspired at just the right time.

I encourage you to find your heart's desire, find your calling in life. There is a well of passion deep inside you waiting for you to tap into it. Have faith that you already have what you need to move forward; your spirit will guide you when it is the right time.

Without God, life has no purpose and without purpose, life has no meaning, without meaning, life has no significance or hope.

[Rick Warren, Purpose Driven life](#)

## **PLANNING YOUR GOALS**

Ever been in a situation where you really wanted some stuffs done and had set a timeline for its actualization while you also looked forward to it as each day unfolds but in the long run, you find yourself clinching your fist and hitting it on any flat surface you see around simply because the time you had set for the goal is barely a day or two days to go and it's all looking as though it can never become achievable. You become troubled and began to ask yourself why you didn't set a plan at the first instance. Such situations are common especially in this twenty-first century where you are always trying to balance your life but time is never your ally.

Really,if you need to set goals,first, they need to be achievable ones,but more importantly, is to put up a plan inorder for its fruition and this is not a difficult thing to do.

Here are some useful tips to keep handy when it comes to putting up a plan for the next goal you hope to achieve:

- *Be Disciplined*

When we set a timeline for any project or activities,it means we are going to ensure we work towards the timeline by being disciplined. It is only when we are disciplined that we can get things done as at when due.

To be disciplined is to remove any temptations that may come our way. Though this may seem uneasy but it's the sure way to go. Temptations can come from families,friends,co-workers,social media, and neighbors. We must endeavor to put a check on them.

Discipline can also be applied to your finances. This is very crucial because I have seen cases of people who set goals which involves some form of financial considerations and at the long run, they were unable to achieve anything.

[Warren Buffet](#) puts it this way, "We don't have to be smarter than the rest, we only have to be disciplined than the rest."

Sometime ago,I had set a three-month time line to shop for some gift items for a distant relative.I had the savings intact and was looking forward to the day. Days rolled into weeks and weeks into a month, two month, and of course, the third month came. Behold, I checked into my savings and there are few notes left. It could not serve the purpose any longer. My belief was that I still had enough time ahead and so I had dipped my hands into the savings not knowing that managing the discipline of time and finances is key to achieving success at any level. It was a moment of regret and I bit myself over and over again.

Inorder for you to avoid this type of mistake in the future,and simplify your life,endeavour to consider doing the shopping ahead of the timeline and not think of saving the money because waiting till the final day sometimes,may not be cool.The future is not *there* but *here*. Make the moment count.

- *Be Contented*

If you are someone who always love to wait on people before you get things done,then you may be making a grave mistake.

If truly what you hope to achieve is crucial to your happiness or fulfillment, then you may need to have a rethink when it comes to raising expectations on things or people. If they were unable to meet up to your expectations,will you consider a suicide,or perhaps start calling names? Or will you blame yourself for failing to admit that people make promises but not in all cases,will they be able to meet up. It's a two-way traffic.

For me,life becomes easy when you know that you are in control of the outcome of events in your life and not the people in your life.

Having a healthy expectation on yourself is a preferred option. By this,you have the believe that all things been equal,the goal ahead of you can be achieved without the necessary involvement of people. This is what I call the value of self-power and self-belief.

Go ahead and work with what you have. If it's shopping for an important event,you could decide to shop for them little by little and as you do this,gradually,the small things begin to look really big. That's the miracle of starting *anyhow, and anyway*.

- *Stay Confident*

Sometimes thinking too much about the outcome of our goals can be unhealthy. While the goals are set, and tangible plans made for its actualisation,it's okay to remain calm and believe for the best. Our beliefs changes everything.

Simply closing your eyes and meditating on the positive side of things will help you deal with anxiety.

As Writer, and Former British Prime Minister, [Winston Churchill](#), once said, "Plans are of little importance, but planning is essential."

Go ahead and set the planning in place inorder to achieve a better result.

*A goal without a plan is just a wish- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN : HOW YOU CAN BE PRODUCTIVE IN LIFE

Are you compromising your balance, your relationships, and your own happiness by insisting on impossible-to-meet standards? If yes, this could lead to high level of stress invariably leading to major diseases. When all is said and done, you will discover it's your relationships which matter most. You need to ensure you nourish those more than anything else. Besides, when kids look back on their lives they rarely say they are glad the floors sparkled. Instead, they are happy because Mom let go, and allowed them to use the couch pillows to build forts on the floor. Moreover, high stress levels are a serious problem. Managing stress is essential for maintaining balance and having a healthy body. To conserve emotional energy, you need to become clear about which situations you can, and cannot change. Most working individuals struggle with something called spillover. This occurs when an area of your life affects another, and it creates stress. The bad thing about negative stress is that the buck stops with your body. Your healthy habits, such as exercise program and nutritious meals are usually the first to suffer when you are struggling to cope with a heavy workload. When you are always over-committing, juggling more and more balls, your body finally says, "Enough, I can't handle this anymore. Say for example, your job involves inflexible hours, a high-pressure environment a lot of travel, the negative spillover can affect your family life. On the other hand, having a sick child, finding convenient daycare, dealing with an unsupported partner or looking after elderly parents can have a spillover effect at work. It's difficult to focus on doing a good job when other urgent matters are demanding your energy and attention. For most people, spillover is a fact of life. No magic wand will erase it. The best you can do is to learn how to manage each situation, and put a lid on the stress. It helps to keep everything in perspective, and to trust intuition. In a healthy body. To conserve emotional energy, you need to become clear about which situations you can, and cannot change. Most working individuals struggle with something called spillover. This occurs when an area of your life affects another, and it creates stress.

Some people think that taking time for themselves will affect their performance. That's right, it will-for the better. Some companies even insist their employees do this because they know the benefits that rejuvenation can have on the bottom line. Creative ideas most often originates during down time.

Many people drive themselves beyond reason, all the while insisting that everyone else, even the dog, gets exercise, eats well, and has lots of rest. Keeping yourself healthy, nourished and rested is a huge benefit, even if you are neglecting other areas of self-care. Know your physical limits. The beyond exhaustion point is too late. Avoid the lame excuses: "But I don't know how to relax," or "I can't relax with so much to do." Taking enough time is a learned behavior. It involves discipline and practice. The busy stuff of life will always be there. You must learn to hit the stop button each and every week.

Some days when you walk through the front door at home, your spouse, the kids and the dog are all eagerly waiting to launch themselves at you with news and requests, even before you've taken off your cloth. But if you've worked a full day and your head is still buzzing with meetings and deadlines, you need a mechanism to switch off the office. Here's a good strategy to help you ease out of one role and into another.

The 15-Minute crossover is an agreement with everyone that allows you fifteen minutes to unwind, change your clothes, take a few deep breaths and have something refreshing to drink, or whatever works for you. Then you are better prepared to step into the role of wife, mother, or husband again. If you are able, push the time to twenty or thirty minutes and slip in a mini-nap. It makes a world of difference. Even if you don't have a full house when you come home, you should still take fifteen minutes to unwind from the pressures of the day. Don't allow busyness to determine the quality of your life. Take care of you first and everything else will fall in place.

If you have younger children who are eager to see you, the 15-Minute crossover may not be practical. Here's another option. Before you pick them up from school or before you walk through the door at home, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Allow yourself to become grounded. Actually feel your feet on the ground. Now mentally flick an imaginary switch and shut off all thoughts of work, then smile.

Focus on your children. They are the most important reasons for living, and they are eagerly awaiting your arrival. Now you are ready!

Do this each time you are feeling overwhelmed. With practice, it will become easier. Remember to smile. This changes your physiology and releases those "good feeling" hormones.

*All that is important comes in quietness and waiting-Patrick  
Lindsay*

Now,there's no way you can be productive when your stress level is overly high on a regular basis. Once you are able to reduce the stress levels to the bearest minimum,then change is expected.

Inorder for you to be productive in life,here are important and practical steps to take:

- [Focus On Your Goals](#)

As you set achievable goals for yourself,you will need to avoid distractions from within and without. By saying within,I mean,you need to watch out for those inner critical,condemning,and judgemental voices that screams at you each time you are about to take a leap in any life's endeavors. Once you are able to have control over what is within, it becomes easy to handle the external forces because when you have the right belief system coupled with self- confidence and self-belief,then,there is absolutely nothing to fear externally.

However, the outside world has its own misgivings. The people in your life ranging from your social networks,family,and friendships has a lot to contribute interms of the advice or suggestions they give you. I'm not saying they are always faulty,all am saying is that sometimes you need to have a 'me' time so you can listen to yourself and follow your heart because it knows well.Even if you will need to take on their advices,it is best to do an evaluation to see what works best for you in the long run.

[Work On Your Over -Thinking Mentality](#)

Overthinking is distractive, and burdensome and could lead to faulty or bad choices if not controlled. When you make a decision on something important, give it time and focus on something else.This is calming and beneficial to your mental wellness and also help you to manage or control your energy instead of dissipating it on issues that aren't of benefit to your life.

Learn to think less. Instead choose meditation. *Meditation* helps you to achieve a mentally clear and emotionally stable state at all times. Also, listening to music is a good option. It is good for your body and soul. It refreshes you from within and rejuvenates your mind.

### [Minimize Your Social Engagements](#)

In order to attain an incredible productivity level, there is need for you to reevaluate your social engagements. As you grow older, you may need to begin to focus on engagements that will complement your values and priorities and see to it that you make a balance where necessary. One of the determinants of *productivity* is self- discipline and self- control. You need to watch out on this.

### [Find Time To Relax](#)

One of the ways you can stay healthy and achieve productivity in your endeavors is to always find time for relaxation.

Relaxation does not exclude visiting the spa or having a massage, it is actually a good way. You can practice yoga techniques, take a walk, or listen to your favorite music. All these put together will definitely soothe your nerves and help you to be reenergized.

To be productive, you need to have a balanced state of mind and by doing the things I highlighted above, you can be certain of an intense productivity level.

As you begin a new year, it is absolutely a good time to re-strategize and be disciplined enough to work your goals through by being intentional and committed to what truly matters to you so that you can be productive and achieve true fulfillment in the long run.

## **CHAPTER NINETEEN : INVESTING IN YOUR TIME**

**A**re you wasting time on pebbles and sand? Do you spend two or three hours per evening scrolling through all your social media channel feeds, or you sit glued to the television for three hours? Think about it, what else could you spend that time on? If reading a book is important to you, then turn the television off for just one evening per week and spend the time reading a book. Ultimately, prioritizing the use of your time saves you both time and energy.

Television and the internet can be a huge time wasters. It is easy to get sucked into the latest dramas, events, diaries of people and so on. However, if you are serious about focusing on your priorities, whatever they might be, looking for ways to increase your income, learning new skills, attending conferences that will enhance your skill set or perhaps, being better organized, you will need to log out of your social media or turn off the television. If you do not give some thought to your priorities for yourself and your life, you will fritter away the time and resources that are available to you right now.

Once we understand and embrace the relationship between balance and priorities, then we are ready to place our priorities at the center of our existence and our lives in a balanced orbit about these priorities.

I have observed that stress is not a 'bad' thing neither is it a 'good' thing. It is value-neutral. Having no stress in our lives- no changes, no challenge, no novelty, no responsibility, is literally fatal.

Having only minimal stress is boring while experiencing extreme stress can lead to illness and disability. What we are looking for is the right amount, the perfect balance.

According to a recent Pew survey, time is the highest priority identified by people today. Sixty eight percent of those surveyed said that having enough free time to do things they wanted was a very important priority in their lives. In contrast, only 12 percent said that " being wealthy" was a very important priority.

If you had gone beyond the threshold of your stress limits and depleted the margin in your life, then you will easily feel overloaded. Fatigue begins to build as you continue and it leads to exhaustion.

Clearly, this cannot be sustained without associated dysfunction.

To recover balance in life you will first need to regain a sense of control.

Priorities can be the gyroscope that keeps returning you from chaos to balance in a world that constantly attempts to abuse your value propositions.

Ask yourself, "Do I have enough flexibility to adapt but not enough firmness to keep the boundaries from crumbling?" The goal is to keep reaching for new discovery and achievement while keeping perspective on the important things of life.

Consider [Steve Jobs](#), American Business Magnate remark at Stanford University 2011 commencement ceremony:

"Remembering that I will be dead soon is the most important thing I have ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life because almost everything—all external expectations, pride, fear of embarrassment of failure—these things just fall away in the face of death leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked."

An imbalanced life implies stress, disquietness, and agitation while a balanced life seeks serenity, calmness, and moderation. Speed belongs to the former while depth belongs to the latter.

Lebanese American Poet, [Kahlil Gibran](#) puts it this way, "Our anxiety does not come from thinking about the future, but from wanting to control it."

When we do not set priorities so that we can spend our time well, we tend to follow the path of least resistance. That is, picking and sorting through the things we need to do and work on the easiest ones, leaving the more difficult and less fun tasks for a 'later' date. That in many cases, never comes, or worse, comes just before the action needs to be finished, throwing us into a whirlwind of activity, stress, and regret.

Do not get frustrated if you need some time to figure out what your priorities are so you can set them straight. Be kind to yourself and remember that it is completely normal for your priorities to change overtime. Eventually, with little bit of patience, you can figure out what is most important and take charge of your life.

*The key is not in spending time but in investing it-Stephen Covey*

## CHAPTER TWENTY : TRANSFORMING YOUR LIFE THROUGH YOUR BELIEFS

Beliefs are one of my favorite subjects. If there is one thing that keeps most people from having everything they want in their lives, it is what they **belief** about themselves, their abilities, and the world in which they live. Everything that you do in your life and everything you have accomplished or will ever accomplish is directly governed by your beliefs.

### Where Do Beliefs Come From?

A belief, quite simply, is a thought that you have held or something that you have told yourself over and over throughout your life. Beliefs starts at a young age. If we try something for the first time and we fail, we label ourselves a failure. For example, if at the age of 10 or 12, I attempted to play basketball but because of my age and size was not good at it, I may have created a belief in my own mind that I cannot play a basketball. This may be untrue, because **beliefs** rarely are.

A common example is the person who once tried to own a business but was unsuccessful. They created a belief that they are not meant to be in business and therefore never tried it again. *This is really sad when you consider that almost every successful person has experienced one failure or the other.* The difference is in the way they viewed them and the beliefs that they created from the experience. One person may see a business "failure" as a sign that they cannot be a successful business owner, while the other person will only view it as temporary set-back and turn it into a learning experience.

### Other People's Beliefs

Perhaps the most limiting and destructive beliefs are those we are given by other people and society in general. There is something called a "global belief" which is what happens when a whole section of society agrees that something is true.

Many of the long held global beliefs that were later proven to be false are things like "Man was not meant to fly."

In the case of *Roger Banister*, the first human being to run a mile in less than four minutes, it was, "Man cannot run a mile in four minutes." This

belief was in place for thousands of years before Mr Banister came along and shattered it. Many times, a child is told, "You can't do that, you are too small." And believing the adult, the child carries this belief with him or her throughout his or her life. The child begins to apply it to everything that is a challenge. He or she says the words like, "I'm way too small, I can't possibly do this." This has become a limiting belief that can ultimately crush his or her life's fulfillment if the belief is not removed.

## **How Your Beliefs Determine Your Results**

Most people would agree that we have unlimited potential. Why then do we fail to see this in the results we produce? This is where beliefs come into play. The result you produce is determined by the actions you take. The problem is, most of us have a limiting belief in our ability to accomplish a particular task. We only tap into a small portion of our potential, take limited action and produce a poor result.

An example is the dieter who tries eating healthier for a few days but then gives up because they believe they cannot successfully lose weight. In reality, it was their limiting belief in their own ability that caused them to take such a rash decision in the first place.

Fortunately, the opposite is also true. If you develop a belief you can do whatever you set your mind to, you will tap into more of your limitless potential, take a massive amount of action, and produce even greater results.

## **The Courage To Change**

It is not always easy to change. Often, it means doing new things and letting go of beliefs you may have held onto most of your life. If you really want to live the life you deserve, it's essential to let go of those beliefs that are not supporting you. We have all said at one time or another, "That's just the way I am." This is like the severely overweight person who says, "I have big bones." This is nonsense! Anyone can change their beliefs about themselves.

## **Removing The Illusion**

Any belief you have about yourself is the combination of several things. It is something that you have told yourself over and over again or others have told you over and over again till you believe it to be true. The driving force

behind our beliefs ,and perhaps the strongest determinate are the references that we have created to support a given belief. For example, if a person has gone on a diet and lost not more than a few pounds, very often, they will create a belief of "not being able to lose weight." Their failed attempt becomes the reference that supports their belief. They say things like, "See, I tried but I just can't do it."

One way to begin to shift your limiting beliefs is to question the references which are supporting them and replace them with new ones that will empower you to create what you want. Reference are like the legs on a stool, they support the belief. If you begin to break down the references,you weaken the belief the same way that you would weaken the stool if you began to break the legs.

### **Moving Through The Gap**

There is always a gap between your present circumstances and the one you want to experience. It's human nature to desire expansion and growth.It's perfectly natural to want to experience more,while at the same time,being happy and grateful for all we have received in our lives.

### **Overcoming Resistance**

Where a lot of people have problems with setting and achieving goals is that the gap between where they are and where they want to be is so huge their mind cannot believe it is possible to have what they want.

Obviously, writing goals and repeating affirmations about what you want will eventually attract it to you, but more often than not, people give up before they reach their goals because their internal belief is strong that it overrides their desire.

### **Bridge Beliefs**

So how do we get passed this? It's quite simple. Consider your current reality as a starting point. For example, "I have no money," is a belief shared by most people.

Of course, when people say they have "no money," they really mean they have just enough to get by with their living expenses. I've been in a

situation where I literally had "no money" and believe me, it is a very different situation.

Let's supposing your goal is " financial independence." In order to have financial independence, you would need to believe that you have lots of money. Can you see the huge gap between these two realities? On one side of the gap, I have no money, and the other side of the gap,I have lots of money. Trying to shift from a belief of, "I have no money," to a belief of "I have lots of money," is like trying to jump the grand canyon on a motorcycle.

A more effective method of achieving what you want and creating a new reality is to gradually move toward it by shifting your beliefs a little at a time. Fr example,a new belief you could use from, " I have no money," might be " I have just begun a part-time business that will increase my income. "

While this is not the desired outcome of ,"I have lots of money," it is further along than the original, low energy belief and will begin to move you in the direction of your dreams. As your "current reality" begins to shift, you can create another bridge belief that is even closer to your desired outcome till, one day, your desire and your reality are the same and you have whatever it is you want.

## **Taking Down The Walls**

One way you can begin to remove your walls or blocks is to use a powerful question. Powerful questions are something used by coaches to help people move through whatever is hindering them.

For example, you could ask yourself something like, "How could I accomplish what I want with the resources I presently have?"

When I applied this question, "What resources do I presently have? to my idea of producing and hosting a television or radio programme a year ago, I realized that while I may not have been in position to produce a show, I did have the resources necessary to create a blogsite/website where I could share my creativity which eventually opened other doors of opportunity till date. All this is the result of asking a different,more empowering question.

So often,we erect these huge walls that limit our progress and keep us from our dreams. By using a different question,you can uncover the alternative methods to accomplish your goals.

American philosopher, [James Williams](#) once said, "Believe that life is worth living and your belief will help create the fact."

## **Develop a positive outlook to life**

Now,here are practical and proven ways to help you live a positive life.

### **Ignore what others say**

Whilst we want others to like us and we try to impress many people,it is so important for you to ignore anything you believe other people may say or think about you.People who react or speak negatively about you do not deserve your time so do not let them have your thoughts and cause you anger or concern.

Worry about loving yourself instead of loving the idea of other people loving you

### [Imagine a positive environment](#)

Our imaginations are a powerful thing that can help create visual images that can either make us happy or sad. If you are feeling like someone or something is making you uncomfortable or sad,close your eyes or do something that helps you to step back and imagine something visual that makes you calm and happy. Grab that positive thought and turn it into an action when you react to the situation at hand.

Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow -  
Helen Keller

### [Use positive language](#)

This does not apply to when talking to people alone,it also applies to your inner thoughts. Tell yourself regularly that you are powerful and capable and when you start to think something negative,remind yourself of only positive things.This same does no where apply when talking to other

people. Even if those people are being unkind to you, you need to ensure you respond with positive words. Not only will you be a bigger and better person as you have not lowered yourself to their level. You will only see an expected reaction from the people who have spoken to you badly as they will not be expecting you to respond in this way.

<https://actionnetwork.org>

### [Smile](#)

This may sound like a simple and obvious instruction, but it is something that we often do not remember and we can be affected if we are not smiling regularly. Just by smiling, our positive energy will start restoring itself and will begin to take effect on how we feel. It helps to begin the process of thinking positively.

### [Be Constructive with your thoughts.](#)

There will be times when you will want to think negatively. During those times, you should take that negative thought and embrace it then turn it into a constructive one. Think, "OK, I am not happy at this moment, how can I change that and make the situation better, What can I do to change this feeling to a happy one?" If you go back to thinking negatively, continue repeating this process to start training your brain to think positively.

Positive mind

Positive vibes

Positive life

### [Visualize achieving your dreams](#)

You can imagine how you want to achieve your goals and dreams. Even if you are not sure whether those goals and dreams are within reach at this particular moment in time, you have the right to think about them as they will create a positive outlook and state of mind. Everybody had something they strive towards. Believe me! You have every right to imagine your successes in the future as long as you remind yourself to live in that moment and be positive when you are thinking about those wishes.

### [Turn your failures into life's lessons](#)

The honest truth is that no one is perfect and we all make mistakes. What is important is that we do not see these mistakes as something to prevent us from moving forward. We all have the capacity to turn what we see as personal failure into something positive as failure can only aid us in growing as a person emotionally and physically. When you have moments of doubts after something may have happened that you are not happy about, pause and think about what you can do next time to learn from the situation. Furthermore, even if you are not able to do what you have decided would have been a better approach, you will be able to start building that positive mentality that will help you make better decisions in the long run.

When life puts you in a negative situation, don't say "Why me" say "Try me"

It is very important for you to have an approach that is reflective rather than self-deprecating as this will help you begin to see yourself in a more positive light. It is very easy to fall prey to negative thoughts and to criticize yourself and others when in a situation that makes you unhappy, but this train of thought will only bring you pain and anger in the long run. More importantly, it will add to any stress or anxiety you may experience.

Negative thoughts can drain your energy and our flow of energy is what helps us to lead a harmonious life..

It's time to make a change

If you really want to change your life, you have to [change](#) your life. What this means is that if you want to make changes and experience your life at a different level, you must be willing to change.

[Once you begin to change your beliefs about what is possible for your life, you must be willing to do whatever it takes.](#)

This usually requires you to change some of your habits and activities.

When my life was hitting the lowest point, it became clear to me that I would have to make significant changes if I was to have the kind of life I wanted.

It was clear to me that I was going the downward slope and if I did not change, I would probably die (due to frustrations) or worse- continue to live

in the hell that my life had become. I was in so much spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional pain that I would have done anything to change my life.

I changed my habits, I changed where I lived. I became the [go solo](#) girl. I reconnected with my spiritual side and all that goes with it.

Once, I wanted to publish my book on print, I procrastinated and would sit on the computer trying to see if I could get anything done myself but I realised I had been wasting a lot of time that I needed to get up and go out in search of a good publisher who would do justice to what I desired. I made that move and it yielded a positive result for me.

Really, I needed to change for me to see the change I wanted.

Everyone thinks of changing the world but no one thinks of changing himself.

Leo Tolstoy

I realise with the passage of time that nothing changes if you don't really make that [change](#).

One definition of insanity is doing the same thing and expecting a different result. If you want to weigh less, and be healthier, it is necessary to embark on a regular exercise [program](#) and make healthier food choices. Always begin by having a physical check-up and consultation with a health practitioner to help you establish a program. If what you want is financial independence and security, you will need to change your relationship with money. You may need to learn more about finances and investments, change your spending habits, or some combination of both. You may want to begin your own part or full-time business.

Taking a new step, uttering a new word is what people fear most.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*

The person who wants a better relationship with their spouse or children might need to change the way they relate and communicate with them. The parents who want a better relationship with their child, but is busy working

may want to reevaluate their priorities and make some changes in their schedule to allow more time for their children.

This is one of the main reasons so many people are starting their own businesses and working from home.

What changes will you make? Do you spend your spare time surfing the internet or watching television when what you really want is financial freedom? Doing that will not get you there. Perhaps trading a night of television to take a class in a new skill or subject will move you closer to your dream life.

What immediate changes do you need to make today? Start by listing them out and let the change begin.

[Spiritual.](#)

[Self development.](#)

[Health and fitness.](#)

[Family, friends, and social relationships.](#)

[Social and material.](#)

[Money and Investments.](#)

[Career and business.](#)

### [FURTHER READING](#)

1. [Signs of healthy and low self- esteem](#) by Kendra Cherry and Steven Gans M.D
2. [Power of focus for every woman](#) by Fran and Les Hewitt.
3. [Make each day count](#) by John C. Maxwell.
4. [How to choose a life partner:165 questions to ask](#) by Pastor Bimbo Odukoya
5. [Maximizing your potentials](#) by Myles Munroe



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, Omobola Stephen is a writer, and a relationship coach.

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She also shares practical and real-life topics on life and relationships on her podcast platform, [Life well lived by Omobola Stephen](#) which can be found on popular distribution platforms.