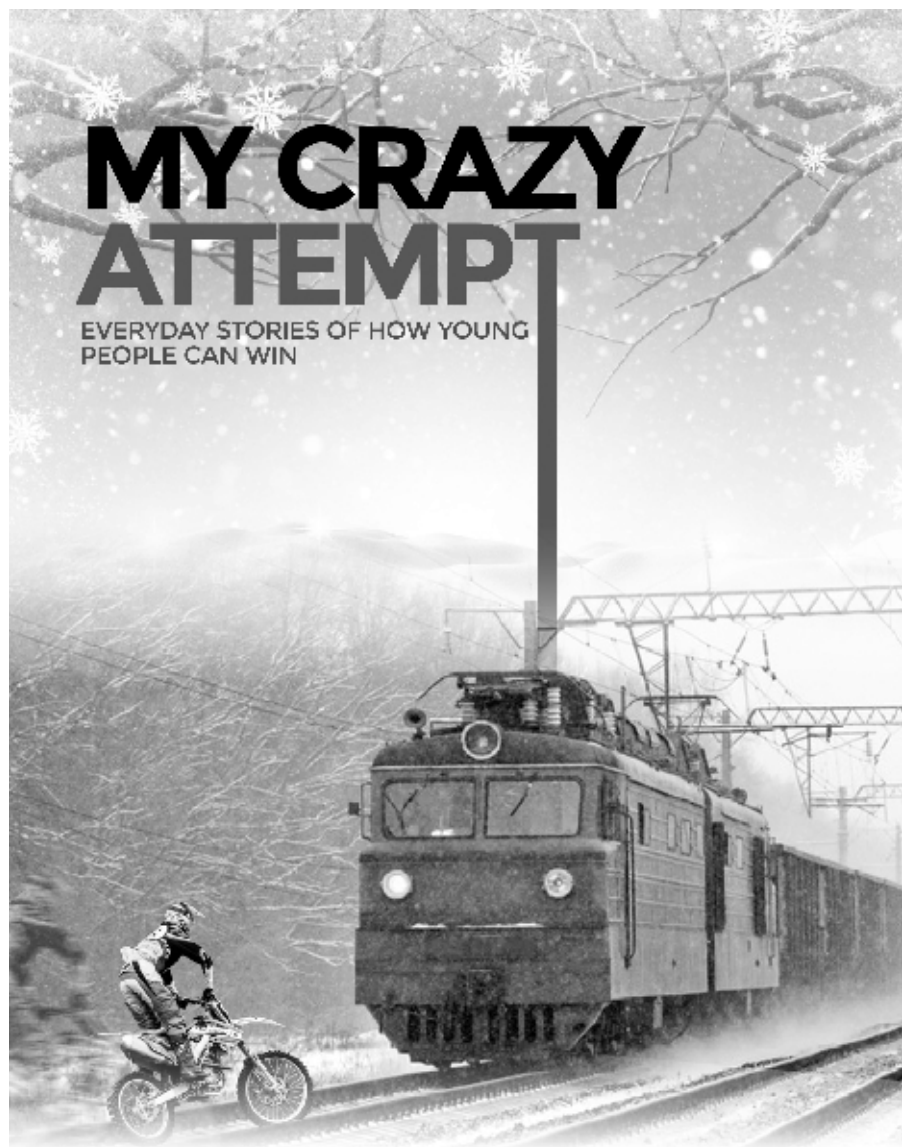


# MY CRAZY ATTEMPT

EVERYDAY STORIES OF HOW YOUNG  
PEOPLE CAN WIN



LANRE BASAMTA

## DEDICATION

To **HS**: This all about You – I owe everything to you!

To **Moxie**: My woman, mother & girl all rolled into one  
human – Never Change!

To **Arka**: Son and brother – You have made my path  
colourful – Never align!

To **Adrianne**: A jewel of inestimable value – Remain  
charming!

To **Olufunke**: I call you god – ìyá ni wùrà!

To **Samuel**: Your legend ever lives – Sleep on, Akanbi!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The idea for this book was first inspired on the 31st of December 2018. It was the culmination of my notable and productive efforts in that year towards teaching and empowering perhaps the highest number of young people I worked with until then. I had just completed a 13-week training facilitation for thousands of students at the *Ready.Set.Work* program of the Lagos State Government in October – the highest by far until then. This was alongside the near endless speaking, teaching and facilitation commitments at multiple events, workshops, seminars, as well as multiple media appearances.

Nevertheless, on that fateful Monday, I had some flash thoughts, 'what if I couldn't replicate the *highs* of 2018 in the following year'? I concluded that if I couldn't visit the campuses as usual to speak and facilitate a knowledge session, then perhaps a book could bridge that divide and make as much impact. Hence the need for this book.

But getting to decide to even write the book and the actual efforts of writing wouldn't have been possible without the direct and indirect contributions of many.

I want to specially recognize the subtle but assured contributions of my foundational teacher who in their own

ways shaped the man I have come to be. Teachers at *Command Children School, Ikeja*: 1986-1991. Teachers at *Command Secondary School, Jos*: 1991-1997. I will also like to specially recognize my students from the summer in 1997 when my informal teaching efforts started just after high school.

More recently, special acknowledgement is given to my students who were scholars of the Ready.Set.Work program of the Lagos State Government from 2016 to 2020, most of whom I was fortunate to interphase with and personally mentor. Also, my recognition to many thousands of students of the *University of Lagos, Lagos State University, Yaba College of Technology, Federal College of Education Akoka, Covenant University, O2 Academy, Daystar Skill Acquisition Program* and many others whom while I was training, were also gaining additional insights and knowledge, some of which went into the background story of this book.

Additionally, there are contemporaries and associates of mine whose direct efforts and impact have contributed to this book. *Tubosun Akeju, Taiwo James, Ugo, Julius Oyeleke, Chioma Melone, Olumide Glowville, Tobi Adekunle, Olumide Lawrence, Faith Fadipe, Wale Adetona, Femi Daniel, Seun Adesanya, Akin Alabi, Andrew, Abiola Balo Weyinmi Eyesan, Britney Osuala, Tope Adenekan, Adeoye Elijah, Harrison Emu, Akinsiwaju Sanya, and Ademola Adeoba.*

I also want to acknowledge some mentors whose direct impacts have shaped me, professionally and otherwise. **Lekan Lawal** – *(CEO M778NG)* – A simple but brilliant mind who offered me my first professional employment, based on his trust and unique understanding of my capability. **Afolabi Imoukuede** – *(Current Senior Special Assistant to The President on Job Creation)* – who offered me privileged access to his premium library even as his employee. **'Deremi Atanda** – *(Executive Director at Systemspecs)* – A truly inspiring leader and mentor who shaped me in the furnace of his leadership across almost six years of working together. **John Obaro** – *(Founder and CEO at Systemspecs)* – a most inspiring leader and Chief Executive of incredible proportion. Working for and learning from him has been the highlight of my professional career. His quiet but clearly inspiring leadership is till today, one of the most remarkable highlights of my career. **Bolaji Akinboro** – *(Founder & Ex-CEO at Cellulant)* – a uber-smart executive who I was fortunate to learn from at Cellulant. **Chiji Eke, Mike Olajide, Hasan Alao & APS Arogundade** – *(Co-Founders & Executive Directors at Sidmach Technologies)* – inspiring bosses who gave so much belief to me and allowed me enough room to fly. **Akeem Lawal** – *(Divisional CEO at Interswitch Group)* – an incredible servant-leader who is the biggest advocate of how to lead differently. His steady belief and support was crucial in navigating another phase of my career at Interswitch. **Collins Onuegbu** – *(Founder & Executive Vice-Chairman of Signal*

*Alliance*) — the first Chief Executive I was privileged to learn from even from afar. **Emeka Achebe-Okosieme** — (*Then Executive Director at Signal Alliance*) — an Inspiring boss who tutored and mentored me into technology. **Dr. Yele Okeremi** — (*Founder/CEO at Precise Financial Systems & Ex-President of ISPON*) — consummate believer in the super-inspiring industry I am proud of. **Sam Adeyemi** — (*Founder & Senior Pastor at Daystar Christain Center*) — simple but impactful teacher and mentor of more than 20 years. **Catherine Abagun** — (*Senior Enterprise Account Director, EMC*) — my Leader eternal whose life story inspires me to no end. **Deji Olowe** — (*CEO, Trium Ltd, Ex-ED SystemSpecs*) — a disruptive shock to my senses and psyche in a highly positive manner. **David Okeme** — (*Divisional Chief Executive Officer at SystemSpecs*) — who inspires in a few words but more actions. **Obafela Bank-Olemoh** — (*Senior Special Assistant to the President on Educational Intervention*) — my mentor who provided a bigger platform for me to fulfil my life's mission. His career trajectory provided a base for me to mirror and it's such an incredible honor to have him foreword this book. **Seyi Edwards** — (*COO Babban Gona*) — my leader at church who mentored me on leadership, accountability and responsibility. **Idy Enang** — (*CEO Corporate Shepherds*) — an extraordinary mentor whose career path and character are a model for me in many respects. **Femi Iyiola** — (*Partner - Covenant Liftings*) — a man who believed in me much early when the evidence to the

contract was still noticeable. **Sola Fanowopo** — (*Co-Founder/CEO eMaginations Ltd*) — a leader and brother who helps me believe that everything and anything is possible. **Meka Olowola** — (*Managing Partner at Zenera Consulting*) — a professional whose excellence at close quarters inspires me in no small measures. **Emmanuel Uzugbo** — (*Founder/CEO at Infrest Systems*) — a titan of a man whose friendship and tutelage are immeasurable in worth and value.

There are many others who I am unable to capture, due to space limitations and time constraints. Nevertheless, this book and its impact would never have been possible without their input and contributions towards shaping the man I am becoming.

Finally to my Editor — **Akinsiwaju Sanya** — who has had to deal with me for over two years working on the book and making a sense of the project, I thank you deeply and sincerely. This book wouldn't have come alive without your diligence and unrelenting drive to help me push it out.

# FOREWORD

It has been my pleasure to know Lanre Adelanwa since around 2016, when I was serving as the Special Adviser to the Governor of Lagos State on Education. Whilst I had set out to get volunteers to equip and mentor the final year students of various institutions of higher learning in Lagos State, I knew I was looking for endangered species. I had asked people to apply for a program we called '**Ready.Set.Work**' and surprisingly, Lanre happened to be one of them, and the rest, they say, is history. As time progressed, I got to know him more personally during the years he volunteered. When I visited his center, I usually loved to go to his class as he was so full of life and dedicated to his work with a high level of excellence. I discovered much later that he happened to be employed at a company I left many years back, Systemspecs Ltd. Ever since, he's really been an inspiration and one of the brilliant minds we still have in this country.

This is such a great book and has been specially written for YOU. It's targeted at young people, fresh graduates and young professionals, all who, after school, usually ask "what next?" This book is quite refreshing as Lanre has worked closely with young people for the past 17 years. It will empower young minds with the right skills set that will help them make the right decisions in life. This book is a wakeup call to self-awareness, knowledge, and self-determination. It's a map to



help the curious find answers and a guide to life's quest. Don't just read, apply these principles and see its rewards.

Some of the powerful concepts unveiled in this book are Knowledge and Attitude which through the writer's experience, convey some crucial thoughts. For instance, *My Crazy Attempt!* teaches that the combination of knowledge with the required skill set and a great attitude gives you access to leverage the power you wield in the spheres of life. It's a book filled with insightful wisdom, inspiration, humor, and real-life experiences that have been designed to help you track and document your life's journey. And like he rightly quoted "If Africa hopes to change and catch up with the world, our young people are the hope of that possibility. If we can inspire them to break the barriers and find some inspiration, perhaps a revolution can happen. Not of machetes, guns, and missiles, but of innovation and continent-wide transformation." These thoughts provoke the hope for the rising of the new generation in this nation. I know change is possible and I hope this book inspires you, just as Lanre's life's learning has inspired his writing.

In Conclusion, having worked closely with thousands of young people as a government appointee in the area of education, I know that anyone who is willing to apply the book's principles will excel, regardless of their age, race or gender. The principles in this book are universal and will work

for anyone who is willing to pay the price of diligence. I can tell from experience that this book will set our young people on the path to global impact.

To this end, I'll like to leave you with a Chinese proverb that says;

“If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain.

If you want ten years of prosperity, grow trees.

If you want one hundred years of prosperity, grow people.”

Thank you, Lanre for your contribution towards growing people.

**Obafela Bank-Olemoh**

SSA To The President –

Education Interventions.



## INTRODUCTION

*"I am writing this book to inspire, but I am also writing to entertain. I have designed the paragraphs to be short enough for an easier read and will share some amusing tales to make this worthwhile.*

*"So this crazy attempt of mine is to inspire you to find your juice: something you are passionate about, someplace that digs out the enthusiasm in you and helps you become better than you ever hoped"*

*"If Africa hopes to change and catch up with the world, our young people are the hope of that possibility. If we can inspire them to break the barriers and find some inspiration, perhaps a revolution can happen. Not of machetes, guns, and missiles, but of innovation and continent-wide transformation."*

This book is not an experiment! It is a collection of documented experiences about people who have won and continues to do so! It is the agglomeration of HOW to WIN presented through the vehicle of storytelling. It is the ideal prescription for every young person in Africa who is concerned about how to chart a path for themselves in life by building a legacy that will outlast

them.

There are 12 chapters representing twelve eternal principles of success. Each chapter epitomises as best as possible a practical think-through of the principle, spiced with its real life application story of at least one or more persons.

This is a great book to read, not just as a weekend carry along, but as a life-readiness tool which can be easily referenced for decision making and lifestyle commitments.



# **BOOK O U T L I N E**

## **Introduction — My Crazy Attempt**

- ❖ Background to the Book
- ❖ 2004 November
- ❖ Command, Jos
- ❖ Why I am Writing the Book
- ❖ Setting Expectations for Readers
- ❖ Charging them up and Getting them Excited to Read
- ❖ Target Audience and Why

## **Chapter 1 — It's All About You...**

- ❖ The Core of Every WIN is “I”
- ❖ Decision Determines Destiny
- ❖ Knowing Who you Are (Personalities & Temperaments)
- ❖ Talents vs Skills
- ❖ Distinguish yourself (Be different)
- ❖ Visions & Mission
- ❖ Identity Profiling (Personal Branding)

## **Chapter 2— How to Never Lose (Emotional Intelligence)**

- ❖ Emotions— What Are they?
- ❖ Emotional Intelligence— What is it?
- ❖ Understanding People— Everyone's Password
- ❖ Emotional Intelligence & Perpetual Success

## **Chapter 3 — Sell or Die (Personal Branding & Communication)**

- ❖ What Branding Is vs What Communication Is Not
- ❖ Why you Have to Sell
- ❖ Intentionality
- ❖ The Power in the Word —Speaking & Writing (Content, Context, Tone, Ethics)
- ❖ Branding — Hygiene, Appearance, Facial Expression, Posture,
- ❖ The Power of Questioning — Want Answers? Ask Questions
- ❖ Pitching/Selling — Targeting, Pitching, Pipeline, Qualification, Deal Offer, Closure

## **Chapter 4 - Going Far Vs Going Fast— Partnerships**

- ❖ Identifying Partners
- ❖ Teamwork in Study, Career, Business & Life
- ❖ Conflict Management: Contributor, Collaborator, Communicator & Challenger

## **Chapter 5—Facing Giants & Winning (Problem Solving)**

- ❖ The Mirage of Problems as Giants
- ❖ You Win from your Thoughts—Critical Thinking
- ❖ Decision Making

## **Chapter 6—Making that BIG Call (Job or Career)**

- ❖ Start with Understanding yourself (Self Awareness)
- ❖ Career Planning is Not Just a Job
- ❖ The Demon Called “Job Search”
- ❖ Role vs Skills
- ❖ Industry Requirements
- ❖ Companies & job posting habits
- ❖ Vacancy Sources
- ❖ CVs vs Career Profile
- ❖ Interviewing:
  - Preparations
  - The Interview Proper—To Ask or Not?
  - Post-Interview Follow-up
  - Managing Success

## **Chapter 7—The Creators—Entrepreneurship:**

- ❖ Ideate
- ❖ Create
- ❖ Operate
- ❖ Making Money—The Business of Business
- ❖ Business vs Social Entrepreneur
- ❖ People. Market. Capital. Competition. Strategy.

Technology. Partnerships.

### **Chapter 8 — Issa Goal — Prioritization & Goal Setting**

- ❖ Urgent vs Important
- ❖ SMART Acronym
- ❖ Working with Others — Group Play

### **Chapter 9 — Make a Decision (Decision Making)**

- ❖ Deciding to Decide
- ❖ Making a Commitment
- ❖ Documenting your Commitment
- ❖ Get an Accountability Partner

### **Chapter 10 — Do!**

- ❖ What Will you Do
- ❖ Start Today
- ❖ Measure Progress
- ❖ Be Flexible
- ❖ Hope & Waiting Is Not a Strategy
- ❖ Do Something

### **Chapter 11 — Getting More... (Negotiation)**

- ❖ Getting More
- ❖ Swindling the Swindlers
- ❖ Offering Pawns for Queens



## **Chapter 12—Success is a Habit**

- ❖ Document—What Have you Learned?
- ❖ What Old Habits Will you Kill?
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- ❖ Using this Book
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## **Outro—Objective Met?**

- ❖ Feedback for me?
- ❖ Social Media Contact
- ❖ Book Contacts
- ❖ What More Should I Write About?
- ❖ What More Can we All Do?
- ❖ Helping one Another Climb



## I N T R O D U C T I O N

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### **MY CRAZY ATTEMPT THAT NOVEMBER IN 2004**

It was on a clear evening in November 2004, when I had just graduated from the university and was trying to find my path. Like many young graduates in Nigeria today, the earliest post-school months are often for fun and untangling the web of life. Until this period, I hadn't had any career plan nor made any definite or structured decision about what I wanted to do with my life. I was excited about whatever came and was merely riding the wind, until this fateful day in November which had come to define my life forever.

\*\*\*

Growing up for me was nothing exemplary. My parents were among the average Nigerian middle-class during the military era. My father had a car and kept his job for about 50 years until his retirement; my mum worked for the government-run power authority, NEPA; while my siblings (three sisters) and I generally enjoyed the privilege of attending decent Military schools of the 80s and 90s. I attended Command Children

School, Ikeja, Lagos and proceeded to Command Secondary School, Jos, Plateau State, in an academic exploration that unveiled nothing much of note about my career outcomes.

Attending the university and graduating in 2004, I was pretty much an open book. I had studied Political Science and was sure the possibility of my practice was slim or next to impossible, so I really needed to find my path. Anyway, on this November day in 2004, I was returning home from a visit I can't seem to recall. I had boarded a bus at the Yaba Bus terminus, heading back to my home at Oyingbo. I promptly paid the fare as expected and sat nestled gently near the window seat at the rear row. The journey proceeded without much fanfare towards Oyingbo, my destination. About two minutes or less into the trip, I observed a handwritten notice on a whiteboard in front of a church which read — FREE JAMB LESSONS HERE, COME IN.

\*\*\*

In Nigeria, the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) is an entrance examination body that organizes an exam, the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) written to gain admission into tertiary institutions nationwide. This exam, commonly called by the organizing body's name, JAMB. This exam is popular for its difficulty and scary failure rates. Tutorial centers that offered JAMB classes

often charged a premium, as a failure in any JAMB examination often required candidates to wait for another year for a next attempt. It was, therefore, surprising and intriguing that this notice did not even offer students a discounted service, but rather a free one. In an instant, I had a flash. It occurred to me that if JAMB lessons were free, then teachers had to be paid peanuts, or they had to offer their services voluntarily. I was excited. I notified the bus conductor that I needed to alight at the next bus stop. With a growl, he prompted the driver and I literally jumped down and headed for the church.

\*\*\*

### **The Church School**

I entered the church premises and approached the admin office. After a few inquiries, I was informed that JAMB lessons were offered free to support indigent and interested students who may not be able to afford other standard tutorial centers in preparation for the upcoming JAMB examinations in May, the following year. I was excited. I offered to teach a few subjects – English, Economics and Government, without thinking much of the implications and required time investment. The Church administrators were excited and agreed to my offer. I thereafter offered to wait throughout that evening, just to evaluate the teaching quality, student size, class participation, among other things.

It didn't occur to me that the decision I made on that day would define my career and promptly influence this book. Since that day in November 2004, I have taught and directly mentored thousands of students every year. Indeed, I have witnessed many of them taken to heart, not just the academic tutelage, but also the life skill and mentorship that I offered. I have had to review many resumes, prepare many others for hopeful and targeted interviews, helped a few through the negotiation of employment contracts, pull through relationships, get married, and even ascend further through their professional career and business adventure. Life has rewarded some of those efforts as many of them are fulfilling some of the potentials we mutually discovered about them since then.

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### **Back to my Story**

For almost every day in that November of 2004, and for as long as I was available going forward, I visited the church school to teach, whether it was my class period or not. I didn't want the students idle or unengaged. I also realized that because the teachers were volunteers and largely unpaid, some of them were unavailable to fulfill their commitment, so I filled in. I taught every subject I could, and even those I wasn't considered competent to tutor. More importantly, though, I spent a sizable amount of time teaching the English language

and Economics which were standard courses for most students interested in a social science course at the university. Sometime in 2012, eight years after I taught at the tutorial center, I visited a branch of Skye Bank (Now Polaris Bank) to make some banking transactions. In those days, Skye Bank was renowned as a retail bank with many elderly customers, and usually, you had to deal with a long queue in the banking hall most of the time. I was in the queue with a frown, when a gentleman walked up to me and asked that I leave the line to accelerate my service. He didn't look familiar. He promptly introduced himself as one of my students from the church-school, and that he worked in the bank. That day became one of the most fulfilling days of my life, watching my student push through school, find a job, and was able to recognize me many years later, sharing his story of academic achievement and the commencement of his career and life success. I was truly overjoyed and I remember promising myself that I would never stop teaching.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Why Am I Writing this Book?**

So then, what's the link between the story and this book? Why have I infused my personal story and experience so much into the background of this book? Is this another attempt to teach? Of course not!

I am writing this because for almost 20 years of teaching and

nurturing, I have realized a few things. In the course of befriending, mentoring and modeling for young people, I have realized a few similarities in their journey and story. In trying to get into the university, getting into the campus, finding their rhythm, succeeding academically, graduating, finding their path — getting a job or starting a business — their challenges and fears are similar.

Almost every one of them is not aware of him or herself — their strengths, talents, uniqueness, and abilities. They don't yet fully understand concepts like *Emotional Intelligence*, *Innate Selling*, *Negotiation*, *Public Speaking*, *Critical Thinking* and even foundational ideas like *Personal Branding*.

I have watched with desperate mortification how young graduates and professionals stumble through life without purpose. I have had to speak, mentor and train many young people, who despite passing through our institutions of higher learning, even some with excellent grades, have remain morbidly unaware of their uniqueness and grossly unprepared for real life challenges. Education in Africa, and Nigeria has not significantly helped to prepare our young for life and living, and as such, private interventions like this have not only become desirably but necessary to salvage our continent.

Indeed, effective decision making, self-awareness, career

planning and other critical post-school skills are concepts that our educational system has not been able to teach. Soft skills that everyone needs to thrive in life aren't identified, much less taught. Still, we roll out hundreds of thousands of graduates every year, possibly millions, with academic degrees, but no self-awareness or even career focus.

In fact, the period around 2016-2019 was even more poignant for me on this path, as I had to leverage a career and entrepreneurial empowerment program of the Lagos State Government to work with thousands of young graduates personally. In dealing with them, many of them wrote to me personally for mentoring and advice from time to time on the same issues highlighted above. Virtually every week, since then, I have had to give advice, offer suggestions, review and share insights with these bright minds who are constantly looking for more than their degrees.

In engaging them, I have discovered that their quests are the same. They ask the same questions, express the same fears, exercise the same worries and mirror identical low levels of self-awareness. In helping them over this period, I have developed a standard curriculum of issues that matter to them. These are issues that I have aggregated from my engagements over the years. Those are the thoughts I have gathered in this book.

I have specifically written this book for the young, or rather,



the young at heart: the ones who seek to find not just their paths but themselves. This book is to help the curious find answers, it will help satisfy some of the quests they are searching for and will reward the determinations of those who read and follow its dictates.

I am not encouraging you to read simply for this. I am asking you to read this and use its learnings to better your life.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Setting Expectations for Readers**

I would like to take some time to set expectations for my readers. At this point, some may already be so curious to delve further into the book, while a few others may not be as enthused about reading the full length of it just yet. In whatever camp you fall, you must understand that this book wouldn't help you solve all of life's problems neither will it carry you over all storms.

All my life, I haven't known a book that promises or tries to deliver on any of that. What I can tell you is that you will find a few things in this book that you can relate to.

**My Story** — You will see on these pages, how I have tried — within the limitations of my knowledge and ignorance — to help young people ascend. I have done so with passion, grit,

determination and all whatnot, and the tools I have always used are two-fold — **Knowledge** and **Attitude**. I have proven with my life that knowledge is power, and that when you combine knowledge with a great attitude, you gain not just power but also wield incredible leverage over others.

What's more? You will see how in teaching this philosophy, many of my students and other examples I will reference, have escaped the traps of society, and have stealthily or forcefully ascended their career or business path to carve their niches.

**My Students** — You will also see the stories of my students, many of whom have graciously agreed to share their learnings. You will see how, over the years, their impact has grown incrementally, and how they have continued to put into practice the things I've been teaching them. As a young person, you will realize that their stories mirror yours, and that in walking their path, you may hopefully find yours, learning new ideas and picking up new habits that guarantee successes again and again.

**My Ideas** — I know people generally attach themselves to human angles in storytelling or book writing, but perhaps the most important takeaways I want my readers to have are the knowledge and ideas I will be sharing in this book. For the last 25 years or so, I have discovered an incredible passion — which is reading. In this time-span, I have studied or read for about

five hours daily on average. I have done this despite going through school, observing the mandatory 12-month post-education national service, rummaging through different businesses, being a social entrepreneur and a full-time career person in multiple jobs. Indeed, I currently maintain a library of about 500 books, most of which I have read multiple times, and with the democratization of knowledge via the internet, I read over and again every day, non-stop. This has given me incredible access into the minds of great men and women across different generations and climes. Over these decades of learning, I have formed a few thoughts about success and personal discovery.

I didn't stumble on this, nope! I critically and intentionally studied the lives of great men and women, people whose journeys have defined humanity in many ways. I have read the autobiographies of many successful men and women and identified a lot of similarities in their journeys, which I have collated into a body of personal thoughts. The stories of Jack Welch, Bill Gates, William Jefferson Clinton, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Fela Kuti, Eric Cantona, Donald Trump, Benjamin Carson, John Maxwell, John Carson, John Terry, Ben Johnson, Obafemi Awolowo, Roy Keane, and many others have helped to not just shape my life and personal journey, but have also given me foundational content and basis upon which to challenge and inspire young people.

I pray you find one of such stories compelling or one of my thoughts inspiring enough to make the best of your life. My hope is that the turning point for a lady or young man will be when they find that trigger in this book that changes their story forever.

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### **So Get Excited!**

I am writing this book to inspire. But I am also writing to entertain. I have designed the paragraphs to be short enough for an easier read and will share some amusing tales to make this worthwhile. This book is designed to include and document your thoughts and learnings from each chapter. Behind each chapter, you will find notes to aggregate your learning and document your reference. Please use it as best as possible; don't just enjoy the book or store your takeaways in your mind. Document it in this book and use it more as a reference and study material as you find your path.

So this crazy attempt of mine is to inspire you to find your juice: something you are passionate about, someplace that digs out the enthusiasm in you and helps you become better than you ever hoped.

I hope you discover enough of that juice to make this crazy attempt of mine a rewarding experiment.

## **Target Audience and Why**

I stated early on that this book's target audience is young people. It is understandable because I've been dealing closely with people in the age bracket of 16-30 years since 2004, or thereabouts. This book is more targeted towards fresh graduates and young professionals, those who, after school, are asking, "What next?" Those who still enjoy the luxury of youth and its associated idiosyncrasies. I am writing specifically to them because they are the best target for change. If Africa hopes to change and catch up with the world, our young people are the hope of that possibility. If we can inspire them to break the barriers and find some inspiration, perhaps a revolution can happen. Not of machetes, guns, and missiles, but of innovation and continent-wide transformation.

So I am focusing on them, helping them to walk the journey of self-discovery and find their path. I know change is possible, as it is one of the enduring constancies in an ever-changing world. The best person to change, therefore is the young, and if you do, they can live by this new belief and even aspire for better and improved change.

That is my hope. I hope this book inspires you, just as my life's learning has inspired its writing.

Welcome to the journey with me.

“  
*If Africa hopes to change and catch  
up with the world, our young people are  
the hope of that possibility. If we can  
inspire them to break the barriers and  
find some inspiration, perhaps a revolution  
can happen. Not of machetes, guns,  
and missiles, but of innovation and  
continent-wide transformation.*

”





CHAPTER 1

# IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU



## CHAPTER 1

“

*What makes humans different?  
What makes it appear that our lives  
are higher, more worthwhile and  
valuable than animals`? Well, the answer  
is simple — PERSONALITY!*

”





## CHAPTER 1

### IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

#### **The Core of Every Win Is “I”**

I love competing. It gives juice and meaning to life. It fires up the willing and helps the laggard find some inspiration for their aspirations. I know some people don't care much about competing; they say life is a journey in discovery and that you should never see it as a race or competition against anyone. I beg to disagree.

Let me start by mirroring their thoughts. In a way, the purveyors of this line of thought are right. Life is not a competition against others. Everyone has a different journey, a unique path to tow, and comparing yourself to anyone, often, damages your esteem and hamstring you into an endless web of dissatisfaction.

BUT... life is a competition. It is a competition against yourself. You compete against yourself every time. Allow me

a moment to delve into this further. When a child is born, their canvas is blank. The first five years of a child's life are ultra-important for painting pictures and imagining the possibility of an incredible future. Children are awesome. They have the capacity to dream the impossible and conceive the improbable. Their mind is unrestrained by the experiences and attachment that age and time bring, so they aren't held back by anything.

But with age comes circumspection. With age and time come experiences, most of which are conditioned by failures and limitations. In the furnace of these stark-naked realizations, another you is formed. This hidden, unseen, but greatly influential you begins to grow in your mind. It gives you suggestions of what is impossible when you want to dream, it caps your thoughts within the limitations of reality, and tells you to remember that you are only human when you start to assume that a lot more is possible. This is potentially your biggest enemy or greatest ally.

What is not in doubt is that you must compete against this 'YOU' every time. You have to disagree, disabuse its ideas, confront its limitations, and tell it you truly can win in spite of its whispers to you saying “no one has won here before”. Let me say that this inner voice you hear is not necessarily bad. Some of its thoughts are the results of years of study and countless hours of logical reasoning arising from critical

evaluation of facts. In fact, some of the most remarkable innovations in our world have been borne out of the considerations of the voice of your inner self, pondering on the factual accuracy of its views and thinking of how to resolve some of the concerns it expresses. However, most times, our experiences are the biggest barriers to climbing over.

I throw down some examples. Who says you can't fly? Well, experience! Because the last time you tried it, you fell like a log of wood. Who says you can't lift a hundred-kilogram weight? Well, experience. Because the last time you attempted it, you not only failed, your waist is yet to fully recover.

So you see, most people accept this version of truth, however, it may be inaccurate. They don't care about challenging the premise or assumptions. They move on to other challenges their inner self more likely agrees with. This is their safe path through life, solving problems made only for them.

But (and you will read a lot of BUTs in this book), real winners are routine breakers. They seek to challenge themselves and the status quo. Every day, they confront that silent voice in their head and heart saying otherwise, and they tell themselves, that even if they fail, at least they would have tried. **That is the beginning of winning.**

As I stated in the introductory chapter, I have spent the last 25

years studying some of the most incredible winners around the world, women and men who have made success a habit and winning their hobby. Perhaps the most crucial of my discovery is their concept of SELF. Every one of them understands that to win once might be due to luck or fate, but to win constantly and habitually, you have to understand that not all games or sports are yours to play. You really need to find your game and gain a mastery of it. This is the critical lesson from this chapter — the concept of self.

No one truly wins or dominates in life without asking the question of self. “Who am I?” is one of the most important self-questioning phrases anyone could ever ask. Your path is still not clear if you haven't asked and answered that question in a candid and assured manner. At the core of every WIN is “I”. Ask yourself today again, WHO AM I?

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I watch football a lot. I find it strange that it is called “soccer” in the United States, but let's talk about football a bit. I like to explain life with football because many young people in sub-Saharan Africa spend many hours every week watching football — particularly the English Premier League which appears to have dominated the world's attention. Anyways, back to my analogy, football is a sport played by a team of 11 players and up to 7 players on the substitute bench for an

official game. An average football team has between 20 to 25 players for a full season, which lasts an average of 10 months, and the manager or coach will have to decide which 18 players will make the team and substitute's bench every match day.

Now in a team, there are 2 main roles and 4 different positions. The roles are Defensive and Offensive roles, while the positions are for Goal-Keepers, Defenders, Midfielders, and Attackers. Over the years, I have watched thousands of hours of football footage. I have watched many World Cup tournaments, as well as European, African and even Asian Cup matches. For over 20 years, I've been watching the English Premier League, and all through this period, I have learnt that no matter how awesome a player is, they can't be everything. The first question that a player needs to answer is, "Who am I?"

Am I an offensive or a defensive player? Do I try to stop goals or attempt to score them? Are my instincts naturally defensive or offensive? Do I seek to create goal-scoring chances or are my impulses to smother them?

These questions are usually asked and answered when a kid is just finding their feet in a football academy. What you find is that as the child grows and matures even more into whatever role has been defined for them as a response to those questions, they begin to find themselves. Their career begins

to take shape, and their success becomes most commonplace. There are a few who do not truly find their correct answers until later in their careers. For example, Gareth Bale's transition from a defender to an attacker, and Virgil van Dijk's move from an attacker to a defender are memorable. What remains constant is answering the "I" question, "Who am I?"

You need to do yourself a favor and put that question down on paper today. Can you confidently answer that? Do you know yourself? Do you understand who you truly are? Do you understand your first impulses?

Can you stand tall and tell what's different between you and your siblings? You and your friends? You and everyone else that you know?

If you can't do this, then perhaps you should drop this book for a moment and take some time to grill yourself after this chapter. I am saying this because understanding the concept of SELF is at the core of success. If you don't understand the truth I am sharing in this chapter, it might be difficult to fully digest and acculturate the ideas that I will share in subsequent chapters. Do yourself this favor and ask, "Who am I?"

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## **A Short Story**

In 1991, I was barely nine years old when I secured admission into Command Secondary School, Jos, in Plateau state, North Central part of Nigeria. Until then, I had only travelled once outside my residential state in Lagos (Southwest, Nigeria) to Ekiti, a journey of about 318km. But Jos was a whole new experience for me. Jos is about 1,030km from Lagos, and a journey of about 30 hours by road using any of the prevailing and inefficient public transport services of the '80s and '90s.

I was a pint-sized scrawny little kid. When I was nine years old, I looked very much like a six-year-old with no hope of survival in a civilian boarding school, how much more a military one? Whatever inspired my parents to send me to such a school, I still can't fathom it to date. I have long forgiven them both though. Back to my story.

Right from the school interview, admissions processing, registration, and onboarding, I knew quite clearly that I was never going to survive in the school. Besides my poor understanding of the Hausa and Nigerian Pidgin languages prevalent among the students and military population, virtually everyone else was bigger than I, and I felt terribly lonely and depressed, even though my elder sister and a few cousins secured admission alongside myself. In a few days, I had become the butt of jokes and the errand boy to everyone else — even my mates. I couldn't refuse as I was whipped with

belts. The morning drills — jogging and exercises at 5 am — the blinking cold and the blizzard was beyond anything my nightmare could have conspired.

I cried every day and every night. I cried because I missed home. I cried because of the cold. I cried because I was hungry. I cried because I was beaten. I cried because crying was my only therapy. I hated the school, and classes, and classmates and everything about the school. It was a terror staying awake or sleeping. I still have some chills when I think about growing up in that environment. But Nigeria was right in the middle of Military rule, and sending one's kids to a Military school was the height of privilege in those days. I was considered privileged by my friends at home, but I hated that phase of my life.

In Junior Secondary School 2, my sophomore year of high school, I stumbled into a new discovery of myself. I realized I was never going to win if I went by the rules or expectations in my school. To start with, I was never going to gain a substantial build to stand me at an advantage against my peers. I also didn't have such a mastery of the language, nuances, and tricks of surviving within the school premises. But I stumbled on something.

I realized that most of my mates with substantial build had spent some time outdoors, while all my life, I had been



indoors. I also realized that most strong and militarily handsome guys were intellectual midgets when it came to engaging a girl they fancied, but asides from growing up with girls — my three sisters, I had also spent innumerable hours reading novels and watching movies so much so that they polished my grammar and girl-getting skills. I realized then that I was useful and strong in ways most guys weren't. I could write, I could talk, I could think and engage the opposite gender in a way most guys could never fathom. I knew I was too ugly and dirty to perhaps get a girl for myself, but I was strong enough mentally and cerebrally adept at finding my way in any maze. So I started a business in school. Selling love letters.

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The bigger boys wanted the girls. In fact, they needed the girls for their validation of 'bigness'. But they couldn't approach or speak or sound right, and so needed an intermediary to get the job done. I was the guy they spoke to. If you met a girl in class or the borehole that you liked, you came to me. I would ask all the dubious questions. What was she wearing? The color of her dress? Her hairstyle? Her shoes? What she carried? Her name and interests? All of these questions were to help me craft a believable tale in the so-called love letter, but ultimately, it made me the curious secret keeper of many guys. Suddenly, the once derided and helpless clown became a

protected asset among the power base. Everyone befriended me. Not because they liked me or that they feared me, but because I was useful to them. I realized then, even as a kid, that in whatever place you find yourself, and with whatever asset God has given you, you can win. You can WIN every time you understand and effectively answer the question, “Who am I?” because for success to be lasting and repeatable, you have to answer the “I” question.

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### **Knowing who you are (Personalities & Temperaments)**

That human beings are intrinsically different from other creatures is no news; a significant discourse that has been the subject of debates, research and curious inquiries over the centuries is what I call the “peculiar differentiators”.

What makes humans different? What makes it appear that our lives are higher, more worthwhile and valuable than animals? What makes a person's death more tragic and that of an animal, more of an occurrence. What makes us think so much of an afterlife with respect to humans, and nothing of such bothers us about animals when they pass on?

Well, the answer is simple—PERSONALITY!

Humans are not just creatures. We don't just live, breathe, eat,

poo and pee! We are persons with unique thoughts, opinions, identity, feelings, longings, and temperaments. This is even evident in the case of siblings, regular twins, and Siamese. Humans are first and foremost, people!

With each person comes a temperament. Temperament, essentially, is about emotions — tempers, feelings, fear, joy, anger, anxiety, worry, courage, etc. Everyone has these in different ratios. The understanding differs just as much as its expressions, but everyone surely has a temperament, which greatly defines their personality.

I will use two recent American presidents as perfect examples of these concepts. Donald J Trump, the 45th American president versus Barack H. Obama, the 44th. Without trying so hard to define their characteristics, you know already that they are different. A check on YouTube will validate this premise. Indeed, physically and in their personality, their similarities and differences are starkly obvious. They are both males and tall, above 6ft I believe. But while Trump is hulky and a bit overweight, Obama is lankier and appears in great physical shape. Trump is from Scottish caucasian ancestry, while Obama is from Kenya, African heritage. But that's not where their differences end.

With respect to temperaments, they are completely different individuals. I don't have to explain that to you in this book, but

a cursory review of their temperaments shows why their personalities differ greatly.

Now that we have set that background, let us delve a bit deeper. The temperament theory is the oldest personality theory used in the Western world. It dates as far back as the 5th Century BC when According to Wikipedia, Hippocrates, the father of Greek medicine, classified human health and composition in terms of four bodily fluids which are, *Blood*, *Bile*, *Phlegm*, and *Black bile*. Galen, a personal physician to Roman Emperors, later developed and codified these four temperaments. He described them in terms of *Heat* and *Cold* on the one hand, and *Moistness* and *Dryness* on the other. According to this classification, he described the choleric as hot and dry, while the melancholic is cold and dry. Sanguines are hot and moist, while phlegmatics are cold and moist.

Most individuals tend to have aspects of their personality that identify with each of the four temperaments, however, there are usually two primary temperaments that are displayed at a significantly higher level. An individual could be any combination of the following four types.

### **Sanguines**

This temperament type is primarily described as being highly enthusiastic, active, talkative, and social. Sanguines are extroverted and enjoy being part of a crowd; they find being social, outgoing, and charismatic easy to achieve.

## **Cholerics**

Individuals of this temperament tend to be more extroverted. They are described as decisive, independent, and goal oriented. They enjoy overseeing a group, since they have many leadership qualities as well as ambitions. Choleric personalities also have a logical and fact-based outlook on the world.

## **Melancholics**

Melancholics tend to be analytical and detail oriented. They are deep thinkers and feelers. They are introverted, so they try to avoid being singled out in a crowd. They are also self-reliant individuals who are thoughtful, reserved, and often anxious.

## **Phlegmatic**

People of this temperament tend to be relaxed, peaceful, quiet, and easy-going. They are sympathetic and care about others, yet they try to hide their emotions. Phlegmatics also have a way of generalizing ideas or problems to the world and making compromises.

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There has been a lot of hue and cry about the supremacy of one temperament above another. Indeed, the recognition that comes from being a school rep at debates, or the adulation that accompanies a child's open display of oratory prowess as class

valedictorian tends to support the notion that extroversion is superior to introversion. But life and time have proven to us that the sleekest talkers are not often the most successful. In fact, if success were to be defined by riches, the world's most successful men are not known to be the best talkers. *Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, Carlos Slim Helu, Roman Abramovich, Aliko Dangote, Femi Otedola*, and many others control billions and billions of dollars' worth of wealth, yet they hardly have to say much or even give a speech. It shows, therefore, that while extroversion has its undeniable advantages, introversion is not lagging in usefulness and strength in any way.

It is, therefore, important to know that we all were created uniquely with our different temperaments, which largely inform our personalities. The good side is that more often than not, our temperaments and personality show the path into our future. Our personality gives us a clue into what we will love to spend the rest of our lives doing — what jobs, passions, career and interests appeal to us. If we paid closer attention, we would know, even from a much younger age, how our lives should play out in the most ideal circumstances.

Thus, the wise lady or guy is the one who knows this. Asking yourself “Who am I?” is not enough. You need to know if you are the talker or the listener; are you one who sees colors instead of patterns? Are you someone who dreads outdoors or embraces it? One who needs people to have fun or another

who leaves people to do so. You need to know what irks or pleases you. What are your strengths, talents, and gifts? What skills come naturally to you and why?

It's a critical way to look at life — an intelligent way to predict what manner of life you should be living to attract the best value out of life. Putting it in context, your temperament answers why you do the things you do the way you do them. You may like or dislike the way some other people work and behave and wonder why you can't be like they or they like you. Indeed, it's simply your individual temperaments.

So take for instance, Ngozi looks at Segun and says, "I wish I were as task-oriented, self-confident, and flexible as Segun is." She spends time and effort trying to be like Segun, but no matter how hard she tries, she never seems to succeed at it. She has forgotten or probably doesn't know that they are of different temperaments.

Instead of spending time trying to be like another person, see how you can make the strengths of your temperament work for you to be a better version of yourself. This is key to influencing your career. Your temperament is your psychological nature that determines how you feel, think, and interact; it affects your decisions and behavior. Sanguines and choleric are extroverted temperaments, while phlegmatic and melancholic are introverted temperaments. Virtually

everyone is a blend of two temperaments. We'll take a quick look at how these temperaments function in work environments.

### **Sanguines in the workplace:**

They are self-confident

They take little or no offence at critical remarks

They are cool-headed

They are productive

Sanguines fit best in marketing, sales, PR, customer service, sports, travel, and entertainment-based roles or organizations.

If you are a sanguine who desires to improve your work output and delivery, then pay attention to the following:

Don't procrastinate

Combine routine and dynamic tasks to stay productive

Participate in social discussions

Be proactive

Be flexible

### **Cholerics in the workplace are typically:**

Full of energy and possess strong leadership skills

Quick to start new projects with passion

Persuasive and attractive

To work better as a choleric and improve work outputs, you should:

Be solution-oriented

Lead projects from start to finish



Take short breaks each day to calm your temper  
Work with people who have similar professional interests  
Cholerics usually fit best in business, law, technology,  
management, engineering, statistics, and security,

**Phlegmatics in the workplace are typically:**

The most productive employees  
Steady and cool-headed, even when working on tough projects  
Not so fast at making decisions  
Great team players  
To work better as a phlegmatic and improve work outputs, you should:  
Start working on a project in advance  
Solve one critical problem than expend energy on multitasking  
Avoid procrastination and inactivity  
Assert your opinions and discontent in public  
Phlegmatics usually fit best in education, nursing, faith-based organisations, psychology, assistant roles, and human or social services where they impact the health and wellbeing of people directly – which they love greatly.

**Melancholics in the workplace typically:**

Have strong analytical skills and intuition  
Are tactful  
Enjoy routine work

Have strong problem-solving skills  
Are wiser and more creative  
To work better as a melancholic and improve work outputs,  
you should:  
Organize your workplace properly  
Not encourage workplace distractions  
Execute your work in bits  
Not make a habit of procrastination  
Take criticism objectively  
Not let indecision and perfectionism get in the way  
Melancholics work best in research, art, science,  
administration, accounting, and social work.

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Back to the book flow!

Indeed, one of the most strategic ways to have a successful career and a happier life is by making the best of your temperament.

I remember in October 2006 when I was in Cross River State, South-South Nigeria, observing the one-year mandatory youth service which every graduate of Nigeria's tertiary education system must observe. I was getting closer to completing my service and facing up to life squarely, but I had a lot of unanswered questions — much like some of the young graduates I now mentor today. I didn't know what to do after

service. I didn't know what job I truly desired or what career I wanted to build around. There was only one thing clear to me during that period: I did not want to work in a bank!

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Back in 2003, the then Nigeria's ebullient Central Bank governor, the great Economics Professor, Charles Chukwuma Soludo, proclaimed a new policy requiring that all commercial banks in Nigeria must have a minimum deposit of 25 billion Naira with the central bank to strengthen the banking sector against potential crash. This policy was his way of consolidating the banking system and entrenching trust back to an industry that had been fragmented by smaller players, folding institutions and weak governance. In 2004, upon full compliance, 25 monster banks emerged, well consolidated with a huge cash position at the CBN and incremental need for human capital across all operational spheres. As a result, the banks inadvertently became the biggest recruiters just about when I graduated.

I remember vividly one of the banks, Intercontinental Bank, now acquired by Access Bank, had more than 20,000 applicants attended its job aptitude recruitment, shutting down the whole city. Virtually everyone but me, wanted to work with the banks. I couldn't see myself sitting behind a computer, crunching figures on the 9th floor of a bank

headquarters somewhere at one of the islands in Lagos. Not only did I not fancy figures and all, I considered working in the bank boring and unimaginative. This didn't mean much to my parents and friends, all who repeatedly tried to help me secure employment at the banks.

So in October that year, I took time off to ask the critical questions I am challenging you to ask yourself today. Take a step back, away from the glitz and grime of your everyday life. It's what I love to call a retreat. Disengage from the crowd, from friends and family, even from social media. Spend time alone with yourself and assess your personality. This is not just a desired approach; it is the best foundation upon which everything is built. If you haven't done this before, you may kindly drop this book and take a day off for self-assessment. If you have undertaken anything similar to that, then let's ride on.

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## **Talents Versus Skills**

When you finally crack the temperament and personality question, you should move immediately to talents and gifts.

Talent is anything you find yourself prodigious at. It could be as simplistic as smiling, or even as commonplace as loving food or being able to perceive and differentiate food aroma, but talent, essentially, is any God-given ability you discover

yourself with. For some people like myself, it is much easier to discover and articulate our gifts. As a ten-year-old, I realized I could read, think and write better than many others. In my late teens, I overcame my stuttering challenge and became a decent orator as a result of my years of intensive reading and writing. At 21, I was clear what my gifts or natural talents were – reading, writing, thinking and talking.

But talents are just natural abilities. Without polishing them, you either remain static or lose them after a while. While natural strengths are often fascinating and get you sufficient attention growing up, you need more than talent to stay afloat in a professional career or even a business. What is more required is a **Skill**.

A skill is essentially a polished talent. Like a few friends like to say, *A skill is a talent that has attended finishing school*. Virtually every talent requires polishing to be valuable. An amazing voice is a talent, but turning a good voice into a great musician requires a lot of polish. Same applies to painters, writers, talkers, and even food or wine tasters. Whatever your inclination or abilities, there is a critical need to train, practice, school and polish your natural abilities to make them more valuable, different and better presentable. This process can be as short as a year-long schooling or even a life-long experiment.

Every young person must be able to write down what they consider to be their strengths. You should validate this with friends and family who know you well. What do you do most differently from others? What are those abilities you've got that distinguish you a lot more from others? When you have your answers, then you have a validated list of your talents.

Next is the polishing. Does your talent require additional schooling? Does it require relentless practice, mentorship, trial and errors or collaboration with like minds? Listen guys, if you don't do this for yourself, no one will do it for you. So start right now. Take notes at the end of this chapter. What do you do best and without much effort? Let's know how best to develop that talent into a skill.

If you need help with additional insight and consultancy, please write to [booksbybasamta@gmail.com](mailto:booksbybasamta@gmail.com).

### **Distinguish yourself (Be Different)**

Now that you understand your uniqueness as defined by your abilities and skills, then perpetuate your uniqueness. Don't ever try to fit in; ensure you remain different.

One of my biggest worries is that education, which was supposed to liberate us, most times emasculates us. Instead of education helping you to find yourself, it teaches you to fit in. From school uniforms to standardized resumption and exit

times, general school calendars, same examinations, among others, education conforms much more than it liberates. As such, most graduates find themselves lagging in their path. They haven't been taught about how to be their own person — how to be different and proud, when all their lives, they have been schooled to fit in and be like the rest.

The good news is that after school, I mean after your tertiary education, you never have to fit in the rest of your life anymore. Even if you want to pursue your education further, you can choose to do so on your terms, without any sense of compulsion. What then should you do with this freedom? Perpetuate your difference. Amplify your identity. NEVER FIT IN.

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In 2017, I researched for an article I wrote on LinkedIn, titled *Personal Branding*. In the course of my research, I realized that an average person meets with about 80,000 people in the course of their life if they lived to be 70 years and above. This fact, therefore, shows that for you to be significant, for you to make much impact to be truly remembered, and for you to own your space in people's minds — without being mistaken for the other 79,999 people that the average person will meet — then you need to amplify your difference significantly.

In 1997, I was watching a Venezuelan telenovela series called *Maria De Los Angeles*. In the series, one of the characters, **Radames Basanta**, was my favorite. He was a dashing handsome and rich oligarch who commanded an array of influences unusual to many. I was pretty fascinated by him and quickly adopted a familiar name, Basamta, as one of my legal names. The intention was for my name to be a conversation starter. Back in the 90s, teenage boys often adopted multiple nicknames to go by, but I didn't just want a sobriquet then, as I had a few fancy names I was called already. I wanted a name that was different and intriguing for everyone to ask, "What does your name mean?" Or "Where are you from?"

In Africa and Nigeria in particular, names have culturally connotative meanings and relevance. Usually, you can tell a person's culture and tribe from their name. What makes it even more shocking to many is that whatever your name is, you can almost find another 100 persons with the same name, or even with the same name combinations (first and middle names) within a 100km radius. It was with such just and deliberate intention that I adopted **Basamta** as my name and started to be called by it.

Consequently, for the past 25 years or so since I adopted Basamta, I have been called by it. I have gone ahead to legally adopt the name and sworn corresponding affidavit regarding



my legal adoption. In 2015, I read the story of Cassius Clay, who eventually adopted the name, Muhammed Ali. He talked about how uniqueness was the quickest way to the top, since most people were usually trudging in the same direction. He posited that if you wanted to be noticed faster or climb higher and be seen, then you have to be intentionally different. I have watched that premise play out in my life every now and again. Please listen, I am not asking you to change your name or any of such, but I am saying you should not be afraid or awkward to feel different, be different and remain so. Don't just feel and act differently, amplify your difference.

If you are a smiler, then smile more. Let it define your name, actions, and brand. One of the leading social media personalities I fancy a lot in the Nigeria social influencer space is Pamilerin. His personality is jolliness. He is a smiler who loves to perpetuate joy and happiness, and most times, you always find him smiling. What did he do? He amplified his name and used that as his brand. His name, by the way, means "make me laugh". His repeated images and video on social media amplify his jolly heart and free-spiritedness. Brands love to associate with him because he brings a refreshing allure to their service and brand. From just loving fun, life and laughter, he has been able to carve a niche for himself and his brand through his uniqueness.

One of my students, Rotimi Adenekan, who graduated from

the University of Lagos in 2018 gave his feedback on this:

“I recall during the Ready Set Work graduation ceremony, I saw you go right behind the governor and other dignitaries to take pictures. Other facilitators remained where they were without making efforts to go closer as you did. You taught me a lesson to just always do well to be seen, to be noticed and visible.”

Please don't fit in. Stay true to your uniqueness. Remain different!

### **Vision and Mission**

Now that you have a good understanding of the underlying elements of the SELF, it is important to reach for more. More than 7 billion people share this planet with you, and many of them are currently living without impact. Many of them are living way below their abilities and are merely surviving. Besides their family members and their immediate circle of friends, those who have come to know, understand and accept them, the world barely knows that they exist, as they haven't dared to dream beyond their environment. They live for each day — eating, drinking, sleeping and staying in touch only with those connected to them.

However, one of the more incredible aspects of being human is the concept of potentials. Human beings have limitless

potentials — ability to do more than their current output — achieve more than they currently have and deliver beyond their wildest imagination. This is called the power of **Potentials**.

To release one's potential, one has to start from **Dreams**. The power of dreaming. It is still not clear if animals dream and what (if any) they dream about. But humans do dream. Not just when we are sub-consciously asleep, but also when we are wide awake but quiet, we have the ability to imagine or conceptualize the future and paint it in any colors our minds can conceive. This is the power of our **Imaginations**.

You should use your imaginations purposefully to create your future. You have to imagine what future you see for yourself and what future you imagine for the world you live in. Having a picture for your future is called **VISION**, having a picture for the future of your world and others, becomes your **MISSION**. Anyone who doesn't understand both concepts is ignorant. A person who understands but fails to craft their vision and mission is unforgivably under-utilized.

Every woman or man should not just understand the power of vision and mission, but also craft a befitting vision for themselves, with an accompanying mission, for humans are only able to release their potentials when there is a target to aspire to.

The late Dr. Myles Munroe, in one of his most iconic quotes once said, “where purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable.” This is absolutely true because where vision is absent, humans will live without purpose, and without purpose, you not only abuse God, you also misuse the life he bestowed on you.

So I charge you, find a meaning for your life. Find something to live for.

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### A Short Story

Remember my October 2006 story when I had a retreat about what my life was about and what my talents and skills revolved around? Well, my life's vision was quite clear after my retreat. In fact, I documented it as “*Making Poverty History*”. I was so clear about my life's path that I even had my website URL clearly written down in 2006. It was to be called [www.maph.org](http://www.maph.org)

As part of my drilling down in 2006, I clearly stated what POVERTY was. I defined poverty to be “*A state of lack.*” I went further to break down the different types of poverty and what I was going to be spending my life doing to combat the scourge. The three types of poverty identified were **Spiritual poverty** — which I called an absence of God/Faith, **Physical poverty** — which is an absence of basic essentialities and **Mental poverty** which is a lack of knowledge, information

and wisdom.

This pursuit has defined my life since 2006. All of my efforts have been channeled at either telling people about God, helping others to build wealth and find jobs, or contributing towards the elimination of their mental poverty through education and reading. In fact, this book was inspired as part of the MISSION to fulfill my VISION.

Since 2006, it's undeniable that I've led my life with that understanding and the impact has been remarkable, not only because of the number of lives I have been able to touch, but also because of the immense satisfaction the privilege has afforded me. Every day I drive around or visit public places, it gives me immense pleasure to see people I have been privileged to impact. Strangers who I can't recall their faces attest to listening to me in public, or on radio, or are connected to me on social media, and have been blessed by what I do.

Purpose has given my life meaning. It has given me a sense of urgency and direction. It has filled my day with things to mull over and how to improve the lot of others while also deriving immense pleasure and fulfillment from simply being myself. I'm charging you to do the same, to have dreams that are bigger than you — dreams so big that you need multiple lifetimes to fulfill. King David said in the great book, Proverbs 29 vs 18 that “where there is no vision, the people perish”. He was right. Without vision, you only live meaninglessly.

Find some meaning in your life. Find your meaning. Craft your vision and paint the mission. Without it, life is much more mundane than you imagine, and with it, the impossible suddenly becomes more achievable.

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### **Identity Profiling (Personal Branding)**

To conclude this chapter, I would like to share an important idea that captures the full concept of self. That is Personal Branding. Everything we have been talking about all through this chapter forms critical elements of Personal Branding.

To best understand this concept, let's first consider what branding it.

A brand is an idea in the mind of the consumer or public. A brand means something to people that it targets. The process of helping a brand have a meaning to its audiences is called branding. Branding can be likened to the process of keeping a promise. It is simply the brand telling, informing or confirming its promise or fulfilling an idea in the mind of its audience.

Now to Personal Branding. PB is the process of creating a choice identity and perpetuating that identity till it resonates with your target audience. Let's break down that definition. To begin the process of branding, you have to create an identity.

To start with, all of us are humans, but we have more than 7 billion humans on this planet. So for you or anyone else to mean more than just any other human, we all need to create and cultivate an identity — something we preferably want to be known for.

For example, over the years, the persona I have cultivated can be described in three words; Thinker, Disruptor & Jolly-Fellow. Now, these are not just words, they are the best expressions of who I am; they not only capture the essence of my person, they reflect my disposition to issues and my reactions 99% of the time. While defining and articulating such a brand is good, creating and perpetuating the brand is the real job to do, and it's what I call branding.

So every day, in different ways, I try to communicate that appeal. I understand that not everyone will agree or be fascinated by my brand. For obvious reasons, humans are different, but as part of never fitting in, I consciously try harder than most to let people understand my uniqueness. Online via social media and offline, I pass across a different persona — something to perpetuate my identity. I promptly adopted an additional name, changed my birthday recognition, decided to never celebrate birthdays, and subject all issues to layers of logical reasoning and critical thinking, much like a business project. This is me.

I not only let the world think about who I want to be, I remind myself of who I truly am by sticking to my brand. When I write, talk or meet with people in public, I don't hesitate to pass across my free-mindedness or my knowledge about issues that may be considered as complex or irrelevant to most of my peers.

Now, over the years, I have not only been known for this by many, I have come to be trusted by a few. I have received calls to consult or work on projects that made me millions of Naira because some people have now understood my proclivities and approach to issues, which is valuable in their ways.

So it is important not just to build a brand, but to also perpetuate it. I am not asking you to do this for profit purposes alone, I am requesting that you need a brand for recall. You need to cultivate your brand to have any potential of sustainable progress.

“I learned a whole lot from you — from your actions and mentoring. The most important things I learned from you are not what you said. They were what you did. You taught me that the drive and passion one has would set them apart. It was evident that you had a very intense inner drive, one that always just translated into success. Your activities have also shown you to be one with vast involvement with public speaking and impacting people generally, after all, it was on



one of such your quests in impacting that I met you.” — Rotimi Adenekan, my student and 2018 graduate of the University of Lagos.

Finally, I will ask you to think about football — the great sporting entertainment called soccer in America. Think about your favorite footballers, those who you remember long after they are retired. Think about Ronaldinho, Ronaldo, Zidane, Rooney, Okocha and Messi. What comes to your mind? It wasn't just their quality; it was their uniqueness.

We all know Cristiano Ronaldo's goal-scoring exploits, Messi's nimble but classy sweet left foot, Ronaldinho's geeky smile and incredible dribbles, Zidane's skill and guile, Okocha's step-overs and Rooney's shots! So you see, even though they are all footballers, we don't remember them as just footballers, we remember them as unique players who have a secure and undiluted identity in our minds. That's what personal branding does, it helps you define your identity, not just by who you are or what you do, but by HOW you do the things you do.

Finally, take a moment off at this point. Define your personal identity, articulate it, and decide on how to implement it.

How do you want to be seen and perceived? How do you want to be classified and remembered when not in the room? How

do you want people to define you when your thoughts creep into their minds?

The mind that can answer this correctly is the one that wins. Will you win?

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*No one truly wins or dominates in life without asking the question of self. 'Who am I?' is one of the most important self-questioning phrases anyone could ever ask. Without asking and answering that question in a candid and assured manner, then your path is still not clear. At the core of every WIN is 'I'. Ask yourself today again, WHO AM I?*

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