



INSPIRING  
WOMAN  
AFRICA

EDITION 2, 26TH AUGUST, 2025

# HRM, OLORI ATUWATSE III

CULTURE CUSTODIAN PASSIONATE  
ABOUT **INNOVATION**





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# Welcome!

Dear Readers,

"How are you?" Please ask someone today and be patient enough to hear their response. And when you ask, ensure you truly mean it. I had a zoom meeting recently and the leader of the meeting couldn't make it. It was quite unlike the person. I reached out later and I am glad I did. So, before you get upset with someone you didn't hear from, ensure the first question you ask is "How are you?"

It is great to have you here with us at IWA for this exciting edition. We are honoured to have HRM, Olori Atuwatse III, the distinguished Queen Consort of the Warri Kingdom and a culture custodian passionate about innovation, as our cover personality for this week!

Olori Atuwatse III is a transformative leader dedicated to community empowerment, women's advancement, and sustainable development across Africa.

As the founder of Elevate Africa, Olori Atuwatse III leads a strategic platform that connects African leaders, innovators, and changemakers across the continent and diaspora. Her work actively reshapes the African narrative through high-level convenings, fellowships, and media initiatives.

The celebration of four years of His Majesty, Ogiame Atuwatse III, CFR's reign has just concluded. We wish His Majesty and Olori well, even beyond this year's celebration.

We have juicy articles for you in this edition as shown in the content section. Look through to see our line-up. We guarantee every second spent in this edition will be worth your time.

Have a great one and see you next week!





COVER INTERVIEW

# HRM, OLORI ATUWATSE III

CULTURE CUSTODIAN  
PASSIONATE ABOUT  
INNOVATION

Kemi Ajumobi

**O**lori Atuwatse III, the distinguished Queen Consort of the Warri Kingdom, is a transformative leader dedicated

to community empowerment, women's advancement, and sustainable development across Africa.

As the founder of Elevate Africa, Olori Atuwatse III leads a strategic platform that connects African leaders, innovators, and changemakers across the continent and diaspora. Her work actively reshapes the African narrative through high-level convenings, fellowships, and media initiatives.

Her commitment to development is further demonstrated through her role as co-founder of the Royal Iwere Foundation, which operates place-based initiatives including EstablishHer, Love Gardens, Teacher's Training Programme, and the Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbo STEM and Innovation Lab. These programmes provide comprehensive education, skills training, and economic empowerment opportunities to underserved children and women across the Warri area, advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

A passionate advocate for girls' education and women's empowerment, Her Royal Majesty pioneered the Women Allying Women initiative, creating a network of leaders and allies committed to collective empowerment. Her extensive coaching background drives her mentorship approach as she equips young people with

**"You don't wait to feel perfect before you lead; you lead by showing up with the light you already have and helping others recognise theirs."**







practical skills for meaningful economic and social participation.

An accomplished entrepreneur and board member across various enterprises, Olori Atuwatse III combines business acumen with her advocacy for the arts and culture, leveraging Africa's rich heritage as a form of soft power to promote the continent's advancement and reshape global narratives.

Beyond her philanthropic endeavours, Olori Atuwatse III serves on the High-Level Advisory Committee on the Nigerian Federal Government's Women's Economic Empowerment and Gender and maintains active membership in professional organisations including CIARB Nigeria. She holds an LLB from the prestigious London School of Economics and Political Science, and she is called to the Nigerian Bar.

She is a sought-after thought leader and speaker who has addressed prestigious platforms including the University of Oxford Saïd Business School, Global Reputation Forum, the African Achievers Awards, the 6th USAFRICA Business Week during the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Lagos State Teachers Education Summit, and the Warri Legislative Arm-House Committee on Education.

Her exceptional contributions to society have earned her international recognition, including the 2024 Joyce Banda Leadership Award, Freedom of the City of London, the US President's Lifetime Achievement Award, the 2024 Most Influential 100 Hall of Fame Award, and Avance Media's 2024 100 Most Influential African Women, among many others.

Olori Atuwatse III is happily married to His Royal Majesty, the Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III CFR, and they are blessed with three children.

#### **Share the journey that led you to become the Queen Consort of the Warri Kingdom and how it has shaped your mission**

When we married, my husband, Ogiame Atuwatse III, was a prince. So, I knew that queenship might be part of my future, although I didn't know when. Even then, both of us were committed to transforming lives with

**“This October, we’re co-hosting “Africa: The Next Chapter” with the Government of Botswana. At that convening, our aim is for Africa’s leaders to collaboratively craft a manifesto for our continent’s future”**

whatever resources we had. By the time he ascended the throne as the 21st Olu of Warri in 2021, I didn't need to think about what my role as Queen Consort would be. I instinctively understood that I had been given a larger platform to do what I had always done: help people unlock and live their extraordinary potential, whether relationally, economically, or in discovering who they truly are. The crown simply enabled me to expand my impact through initiatives like the Royal Iwere Foundation, which has now reached over 10,000 people across 227 communities in Warri. We just celebrated 4 years of His Majesty, Ogiame Atuwatse III, CFR's reign and we are grateful to God for the journey so far and what is to come.

#### **What inspired your commitment to community empowerment and women's advancement in Africa?**

Humanity inspired me. It's quite difficult to look around and recognise how underserved certain individuals and communities are, without feeling a strong urge to change that reality. There's a saying that talent is evenly distributed but opportunity isn't, and I truly believe that. I've seen incredible talent in underserved communities and overlooked people – often women – who have extraordinary potential but lack access to the platforms and resources that could unlock it.

Every day, my aim is to make opportunities







because I am absolutely certain that African communities, our countries, and our continent simply cannot progress without empowering everyone possible. When we leave talent on the sidelines because of gender, geography, or circumstance, we're not just failing individuals — we're restricting our collective potential.

**How does Elevate Africa actively reshape the African narrative, and what unique approaches do you utilise to connect leaders and changemakers?**

Elevate Africa was born from the realisation that if we Africans don't leverage our solutions and tell our own stories, someone else will — and they'll rarely get it right. For too long, Africa's narrative has been shaped by external voices that focus on our challenges while ignoring our innovations and resilience. Elevate Africa is deliberately changing that through three transformative agencies: Convenings, Fellowships, and Media, all working together to spotlight African solutions to African and global problems. Our unique approach focuses on actively seeking out innovators — both recognised and unknown — based on their work's quality and potential; bringing together high-level leaders to shape our continent's future with actionable commitments; incubating innovation and connecting changemakers with resources and networks; and amplifying all of this through our media arm. By integrating these elements into one ecosystem, we ensure that solutions are implemented, stories are told authentically, and over time our continent reclaims its narrative.

**What are some key outcomes or success stories from Elevate Africa that you are particularly proud of?**  
I'm particularly proud of how

our inaugural Elevate Africa Convening in 2024 brought together presidents, policy-makers, and industry leaders from across the continent. The convening culminated in tangible recommendations, including innovative approaches to education, enhanced public-private partnerships, and strategic pathways for increasing intra-African trade. Our Fellowship has been equally transformative, connecting Africa's brightest minds across sectors — from Joseph Ogwal, who has revolutionised agriculture by supporting over 30,000 farmers through Agro Supply, to Maya Fakhfakh, who is pioneering AI-driven women's health solutions across underserved African communities. Right now, what excites me most is that we've secured Botswana as our partner for the October 2025 Convening, "Africa: The Next Chapter." This continental leadership gathering, co-hosted by their government, will feature

a Presidential Roundtable led by the President of Mauritius.

For me, our biggest success is not about the names or numbers; it's about how we are creating long-term platforms for Africans to chart our continent's future together.

**How did the Royal Iwere Foundation begin, and what are its core objectives in the Warri area?**

The Royal Iwere Foundation was born from a strategic rethink of the Warri Kingdom. The king and I recognised our responsibility to institutionalise impact at scale. Thus, rather than operate individual, short-term projects, we created RIF as the vehicle through which we could systematically transform lives and change prevailing narratives within our region.

Our core mission is to provide physical, mental, and entrepreneurial support to indigenes of Warri Kingdom, thoroughly

**"A society or business that excludes half its population from decision-making has essentially capped its potential."**





equipping them with viable means to thrive in society. We focus on education and skill development, healthcare, economic empowerment, environmental conservation, and technology and innovation. Every RIF programme aligns with our belief that when you change a life, you change a community, and when you change enough communities, you transform an entire region.

**Could you describe the EstablishHer initiative and the impact it has on women's empowerment?**

I could talk about EstablishHer all day because it's such a joy to witness something that simultaneously restores agency, builds practical skills, and transforms mindsets. EstablishHer is our entrepreneurship programme that supports women – market traders, micro-business owners, the very backbone of our local economy, who've never seen themselves that way. We begin with intensive training covering leadership, emotional intelligence, family dynamics, and business fundamentals. Our facilitators, who speak both English and Pidgin English, break down complex concepts into relatable, actionable wisdom that meets women exactly where they are. The transformation we see is remarkable. Women who once thought they could only engage in subsistence trading now see themselves as entrepreneurs and leaders. But beyond individual success stories, EstablishHer creates a ripple effect because participants move into community development roles, becoming mentors themselves and hiring others. In essence, we're building an ecosystem where empowered women empower others.

**What role does education play in your development initiatives, particularly with the Teacher's Training Programme and the STEM and Innovation Lab?**

Education sits at the heart of everything we do at the Royal Iwere Foundation because it's the one force that can break cycles of poverty and unlock potential. Whether we're training women through EstablishHer, establishing Love Gardens in schools, or running our various skills programmes, education is the thread that connects them all. When it comes to children's education, we believe that teachers are the archi-

fects of our future, so we must prioritise their development. Through our Teacher's Training Programme, we train educators on global best practices and encourage them to uphold the teaching profession with dignity. Similarly, we believe that every child deserves access to tools that allow them to innovate, explore their inherent talents, and discover what's

truly possible for their lives. Thus, our Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbo STEM and Innovation Lab, established in partnership with CleverMinds Educational Foundation, ensures that children in Warri have access to innovative STEM education, entrepreneurial skills, and psychosocial support.

**"There's a saying that talent is evenly distributed but opportunity isn't, and I truly believe that."**





**Tell us about the 'Women Allying Women' initiative. How does this network empower women and promote collaboration?**

For too long, women have been conditioned to see each other as rivals, to compete for the single seat at the table rather than demanding more space. Women Allying Women challenges that scarcity mindset. Our network makes it clear that we shouldn't aim to be the only woman in the boardroom or the first woman to break a specific barrier and then close the door behind us. True success means actively creating and expanding pathways for other women. So, this initiative fosters mutual empowerment by promoting opportunities, making introductions, providing mentorship, and simply refusing to perpetuate the harmful narrative that women can't work together.

**As a mentor, what practical skills do you prioritise to prepare young people for economic and social participation?**

As a mentor, the first thing I focus on

is identity work – helping young people know themselves, build genuine confidence, and discover their purpose. When you're grounded in who you are and what you're called to do, you won't be driven by every wind or trend. You will make decisions from a place of clarity rather than confusion, and that makes you strategic in approaching opportunities and challenges.

Whether it's financial literacy, digital skills, or communication abilities, young people who know themselves can be intentional about their development rather than scattered. Behind this empowered woman is a girl who chose to own her light, and that's exactly what I'm helping young people do – own their light so they can shine it purposefully in whatever space they occupy.

**In your view, what are the biggest challenges facing young women in Africa today, and how can they be addressed?**

The biggest challenges facing young women in Africa today stem from both external barriers and internal limitations that society has placed on them. Externally, we're dealing with limited access

to quality education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. For example, in Nigeria, women earn about 23% less than men for similar work. But what breaks my heart more is the internal challenge – too many brilliant young women have been conditioned to doubt their own capabilities, shrink themselves, or see other women as competition rather than allies.

We need policies that ensure equal access to education and economic opportunities, but we also need programmes that build confidence and teach young women to recognise their inherent worth and potential. We need more platforms that amplify young women's voices, more funding that flows directly to women-led enterprises, and, crucially, we need successful women to actively create pathways for others. Our women are very talented; we just have to remove the barriers that keep their talents hidden.

**How do you leverage Africa's rich heritage to promote advancement and reshape global narratives?**

As a traditional leader and culture custodian passionate about innovation, I see Africa's heritage as our key advantage. Our traditions hold sophisticated systems of governance, innovation, and community building that the world urgently needs today. The issue, as I mentioned earlier, is that for too long, others have told our story, emphasising what we lack instead of celebrating our contributions.

Through Elevate Africa and initiatives like the Threads of Africa Fashion Prize, we're showcasing African excellence in its full context – not as exotic curiosities, but as sophisticated solutions and innovations that have always existed. When we launched Threads of Africa, we had over 520 submissions from across the continent, each design celebrating our diverse cultural heritage whilst pushing creative boundaries. That's how we leverage heritage – by showing the world that African tradition and innovation aren't opposing forces, they're the same brilliance expressed across time.

**What role do you believe the arts and culture play in economic empowerment and societal change?**

Soft power! Arts and culture are soft power in action. Look at how Korean dramas sparked global demand for

**“Elevate Africa was born from the realisation that if we Africans don't leverage our solutions and tell our own stories, someone else will, and they'll rarely get it right”**







Korean food, language, and tourism, or how American music and films sell entire lifestyles. These countries have leveraged their arts and culture for both influence and income. If we are intentional, Africa will do the same. The world is already engaging with our culture: Afrobeats constantly tops international charts, our fashion influences global trends, and our fiction wins global awards. However, economic empowerment will only come when we also own the systems that invest in, distribute, and amplify our arts

products, and services more inclusive and effective. If we're serious about continental growth, then we must be serious about women's representation in leadership.

**What strategies do you believe are most effective for advancing gender equality and women's rights in Africa?**

We need policies that guarantee equal access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, and we need successful women to actively mentor and

many conferences end with impressive declarations that gather dust on shelves. Real change happens when we allocate resources, establish pathways, and hold ourselves accountable for measurable outcomes. Across Africa, our credibility must begin to rest on what we deliver, not what we promise.

**Can you share a defining moment or experience in your life that significantly impacted your approach to leadership?**

It hasn't been a single dramatic moment but a series of quiet ones. The first occurred years ago during a tough post-partum season. I had a private wake-up call that made me ask, "If today were my last day, what would my legacy be?" Since then, many things have acted as gentle reminders of the same lesson: you don't wait to feel perfect before you lead; you lead by showing up with the light you already have and helping others recognise theirs.

**What are your future plans for both Elevate Africa and the Royal Iwere Foundation?**

For Elevate Africa, we're exponentially increasing our impact. This October, we're co-hosting "Africa: The Next Chapter" with the Government of Botswana. At that convening, our aim is for Africa's leaders to collaboratively craft a manifesto for our continent's future. We're also broadening our Fellowship programme to include more innovators across various sectors and strengthening our media arm to ensure African stories reach global audiences through our own platforms.

With the Royal Iwere Foundation, we're deepening our roots whilst extending our reach. In the coming months, Establish-Her will impact more communities, and we'll continue running initiatives that address the evolving needs of our people. Ultimately, the goal is to create a replicable model of community transformation that other kingdoms and communities across Africa can adapt. So, both organisations are building towards the same vision: an Africa that tells its own story, solves its problems, and leads from a position of strength. A transformed Africa that works for future generations.



"Our core mission is to provide physical, mental, and entrepreneurial support to indigenes of Warri Kingdom, thoroughly equipping them with viable means to thrive in society"

and culture. Then, and only then, will we be able to use them as a proper tool for societal change because we will control what stories get told and how they get told.

**How important is it for women to be represented in leadership positions within government and the private sector?**

A society or business that excludes half its population from decision-making has essentially capped its potential. Experts say that if the gender leadership gap is closed, by 2043, Africa could lift 53 million people out of extreme poverty and boost GDP per capita by 5 per cent. That's because when women secure meaningful – not tokenistic – leadership positions, we bring different perspectives and priorities that make policies,

create pathways for others. Additionally, we need male allies who recognise that gender equality isn't a zero-sum game. When we combine legal frameworks with supportive systems and strategic partnerships, we won't just advance individual women; we'll also transform entire societies.

**What message do you love to communicate to leaders and changemakers through your engagements at prestigious platforms?**

I tell leaders that the solutions Africa needs already exist within our communities. We just have to recognise, resource, and amplify the brilliance that's already here.

I also challenge leaders to move beyond conversations to tangible actions. Too



**WOMAN EXECUTIVE**

# My Journey with Impostor Syndrome

By Wola Joseph-Condotti

I have sat at tables I once dreamt of. Held titles I prayed for. Led teams, companies, and conversations that mattered.

**Y**et, I have also stood in front of a mirror, adjusting my jacket before a big meeting, wondering silently: “Will they find out I do not know everything?”

That quiet, nagging voice, one that questions your worth despite evidence to the contrary, is what we call impostor syndrome. And if you have ever felt it, you are not alone.

Impostor syndrome doesn’t discriminate, it comes for the perfectionist and the procrastinator. The woman with the Ivy League degree and the one who hustled her way to the top. It shows up just after the promotion, just before the big pitch, or moments after applause.

And here is the truth: I have felt it, too. Even as Group CEO. Even with years of experience under my belt.

## The Moment It Hit Me

I remember being invited to speak at a global leadership summit, alongside CEOs I had admired from afar. I accepted graciously, and then spent the next few days wondering if I had anything valuable to say. Not because



“The next time the voice of doubt tries to question your place, remind it: I did not stumble here, I was sent.”

I lacked knowledge, but because I suddenly feared I might not “belong” in that calibre of company.

Never mind the years of work, the results, the credibility. In that moment, I was no longer measuring myself by my truth, but by an invisible standard I felt I had not quite met.

That is the trick of impostor syndrome. It disconnects you from reality and ties your worth to how well you can mask your fears.

## Where It Comes From

We often think impostor syndrome is

a personal flaw. But more often than not, it’s a by-product of systems and spaces not built with us in mind.

When you are “the only” in a room (only woman, only African, only young person) it is very easy to internalise that sense of misfit. Add in perfectionism, high expectations, and a culture that rarely allows women to be both powerful and imperfect, and you have fertile ground for self-doubt to grow.

But here is what I have learnt: Impostor syndrome thrives in silence, but loses power in truth.

## What Helps

For me, three things have been transformational.



### Competence

Preparation is a confidence builder. The more I know my stuff, the less room there is for doubt to take the driver’s seat. I walk into meetings grounded not in arrogance, but in mastery.



### Community

Safe spaces with other women who lead and understand. Conversations where we admit we don’t always have it all figured out but we show up anyway. These moments remind me I am not alone, and neither are you.



### Calling

Most importantly, I anchor myself in the truth that I was called to the rooms I enter. That I am not an accident. That God does not promote by mistake. When I lead from that awareness, the fear begins to shrink.

## Redefining Enough

Impostor syndrome whispers, “You are not enough.” But I have learnt to answer: “Enough for whom?”

Sometimes, we must release the need to meet every unspoken expectation. Leadership is not perfection. It is obedience. It is showing up even when you feel unsure. It is trusting that the very things you think disqualify you may be the exact reason you are needed in the room.

You do not have to know everything to be effective. You do not need everyone’s approval to walk

in purpose. And you certainly do not need to “prove” what has already been made evident.

## My Final Thoughts

If you are reading this and you have ever felt like a fraud despite your competence, pause and breathe. You are not alone, and you are not an impostor. You are a work in progress. A leader in motion. A woman walking out her calling in real time.

So, the next time the voice of doubt tries to question your place, remind it: I did not stumble here, I was sent.



## By Wola Joseph Condotti

Group MD/CEO of West Power & Gas Limited

Wola is the Group MD/CEO of West Power & Gas Limited, the parent company of Eko Electricity Distribution PLC (EKEDP) and six other affiliate companies with interests in both conventional and renewable energy sectors. In addition to this role, she serves as the Director of the Power and Renewable Division at the Women in Energy Network (WIEN) in a non-executive capacity.

Prior to her current role, Wola was the pioneer Chief, Legal & Company Secretariat at EKEDP. During her tenure, she also held multiple key positions simultaneously including Head of Regulatory Compliance, Chief Human Resources and Administration Officer, Supervising Chief of the Customer Service Department, and Data Protection Officer. Her previous experience includes roles as General Counsel/Company Secretariat Lagoon Home Savings and Loans, and Legal Associate at Banwo & Ighodalo.

Wola holds a law degree from the University of Ibadan, an LLM in International Finance Law from Harvard Law School, and an MBA from INSEAD Business School. She is also an International Finance Corporation (World Bank) Board Evaluation Certified Professional and Corporate Governance Trainer.

Wola’s achievements have earned widespread recognition. Most recently, she received the inaugural Leadership Excellence Award of the Year at the Legal Era Africa Awards 2024, becoming the first-ever recipient of this category. The award celebrated her historic transition from General Counsel to Group MD/CEO, a milestone applauded for redefining leadership pathways in the legal profession.

She is a member of the Institute of Directors and the Society for Corporate Governance Nigeria. Additionally, she is an associate member of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators of Nigeria, and Women in Management, Business, and Public Service.



## GENDER INSIGHTS

## Women: From Breadwinners to Wealth Builders

It was a sunny Tuesday afternoon in Lagos when I met Funmi, a vibrant woman in her early 40s.

Abiola Adediran

A single mother of two, Funmi runs a thriving catering business that started as a side hustle. Over the years, her passion for cooking and her entrepreneurial spirit transformed her small idea into a respected brand. Today, she's not just providing for her family; she's securing her financial future and leaving a legacy.

Funmi's story is one of countless examples of Nigerian women redefining the concept of wealth in their families. For decades, women have been celebrated as nurturers and caregivers. Now, more than ever, they are stepping into roles as wealth creators, managers, and protectors.

Traditionally, many women took pride in their ability to support their families financially. But the landscape is evolving. Today's women are not only breadwinners but also wealth builders, ensuring that their contributions lead to long-term financial stability.

Data supports this transformation. According to the AfrAsia Bank Africa Wealth Report 2021, women now control 40% of wealth in Africa, and their economic influence is growing rapidly. Women are not just working hard; they're working smart—investing, saving, and planning for the future.

Across Nigeria, more women are entering the marketplace and excelling as entrepreneurs. The rise of digital platforms has also created opportunities for women to engage in e-commerce, consultancy, and remote work. With more women gaining access



resources, workshops, and books can be great starting points.

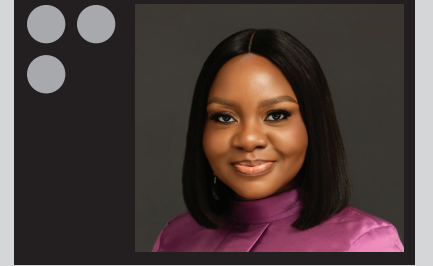
Learning to diversify investments across asset classes by exploring options like real estate, stocks, bonds, and mutual funds can help to spread risk and increase the potential for growth.

It's important to embrace collaboration by building a network of advisors, including financial planners, legal experts, and tax consultants. These professionals can guide you in making the best decisions for your wealth.

Beyond building and growing the wealth portfolio, just like Tola, it's important to consider estate planning to protect your wealth. Create a will, set up trusts, and establish clear instructions for the distribution of your assets. Also educate your children to become responsible wealth owners by teaching them about saving, budgeting, and investing early.

We've seen remarkable examples of women driving change in Nigeria and beyond. Think of Folorunsho Alakija, who turned her entrepreneurial spirit into a multi-billion-dollar oil empire. Or Ibukun Awosika, whose leadership as the first female Chairman of the Board at First Bank paved the way for many women in finance. These women remind us that the possibilities are limitless when you take charge of your financial journey.

Wealth is not just about numbers in a bank account. It's about creating security, fostering growth, and leaving a legacy. Whether you're just starting your career, managing a business, or nearing retirement, now is the time to take control.



Abiola Adediran

Partner at Genea Family Office

Abiola Adediran is a Family Business Advisor and one of Nigeria's finest corporate finance and business strategy experts with nearly 2 decades of work experience that cuts across investment banking, consulting, private equity, wealth and family office management.

She was the Group Chief Financial Officer of Coronation Group, a leading investment management group in Africa. She was very instrumental to the set up and running of Tengen Family Office (a Single-Family Office) which served the interests of the families represented.

Prior to that, she was a Manager at KPMG Professional Services, and is currently a Partner at Genea Family Office, an independent boutique multi-family office. She is also the Founder and Managing Consultant of Midridge International, a pan-African strategy consulting and financial advisory firm supporting and facilitating the growth of businesses across Africa.

Abiola Adediran is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, a certified Management Consultant, a PRINCE2-certified Project Manager from APMG International, UK and she holds an MBA with specialism in Finance from Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University, Scotland. She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Directors of Nigeria (CIoD).

Abiola currently sits on the board of growing businesses as well as serves as a mentor to various leading entrepreneurship organisations in Nigeria. She is a member of the Forbes Business Council and is happily married with two adorable children.

to higher education, they are better equipped to make informed financial decisions.

While societal norms once limited women's financial autonomy, many women are now challenging those expectations, proving their capability to lead in business and manage wealth effectively.

Women often play a central role in family dynamics, making them natural stewards of wealth. They think long-term, considering how financial decisions will impact children, siblings, and even communities.

One of the most inspiring traits of women wealth builders is their focus on

planning. Many women approach wealth with a sense of purpose, ensuring that every naira is allocated thoughtfully. Take, for instance, Tola, a pharmacist and mother of three. When her father passed away without a will, her family faced a lengthy legal battle over his assets. Determined not to repeat history, Tola decided to set up a family trust and started estate planning early. She also educated her children about money management, ensuring they're able to carry forward her financial legacy.

More women can build and protect their wealth just like Tola, by understanding the basics of financial planning—such as budgeting, investing, and saving which is the first step and using free online





## FINANCIAL AdviseHER

## Common Money and Non-Monetary Sense Advice Every Woman Needs Today

For decades, society has underestimated the power of women, sometimes boxing us into supportive roles rather than leadership positions.

By Sola Adesakin

Yet history, and even daily life, shows us that women make things happen. We build families, nurture communities, and increasingly drive innovation, business, and leadership across the world. But to thrive in today's fast-changing world, women must rise for themselves, not just for others. Beyond what tradition or culture expects, there are certain timeless but often overlooked principles that can help women step into their full potential. Here are some

**“The wealth gap is real, but women can close it by being intentional about learning and practicing financial discipline”**

of those “common sense yet not so common” pieces of advice every woman should take seriously.

**01 . Leverage is Power—Use It Wisely** In life and business, leverage is everything. Men have long understood this and used it to grow wealth, scale businesses, and build influence. Women must embrace the same mindset. Leverage means using resources, people, networks, and tools around you to do more than you could alone. You do not have to do everything by yourself. Build partnerships, collaborate with other women, invest in supportive relationships, and use technology to multiply your efforts. Whether at work, at home, or in business, leverage can save time, reduce stress, and create bigger opportunities.

**02 . Money Is Not a Man's Language Alone** Financial responsibility is not gender-based. Women must stop leaving money matters to men—be it husbands, fathers, or brothers. Every woman, regardless of age or marital status, needs to understand how to make money, manage money, and multiply money. Financial literacy is empowerment.



It ensures you are not left vulnerable and that you can make informed decisions about your life. From budgeting to investing, women must rise up to take charge of their financial future. The wealth gap is real, but women can close it by being intentional about learning and practicing financial discipline.

### 03 . Your Voice Is Your Power—Don't Keep Quiet

For too long, many women have been conditioned to “be seen and not heard.” In meetings, boardrooms, and even family settings, women sometimes silence themselves. But your voice is one of your most powerful tools. Speak up with confidence. Ask for opportunities. Challenge stereotypes. Negotiate your salary. Share your ideas. Silence has never created change. Progress begins when women articulate their thoughts and take up space in conversations that matter. Don't wait for permission to contribute—your voice may be the missing link in moving things forward.

**04 . Self-Care Is Not Selfish** Many women carry the weight of family, career, and community on their shoulders. While sacrifice is admirable, neglecting yourself is not. Burnout does not serve anyone. You cannot pour from an empty cup.

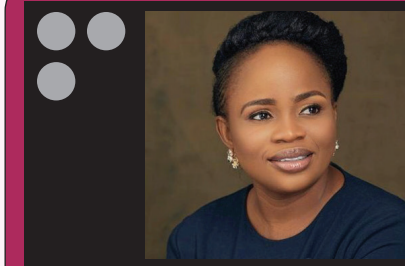
Self-care is not selfish—it is survival. It means setting boundaries, resting when you need to, and prioritizing your health and mental well-being. A stronger, healthier you can give more and lead better.

### 05 . Relationships Are Currency—Invest in Them

Your network is one of your greatest assets. Women who thrive often do so not only because of their competence but because of their connections. Be intentional about the people you surround yourself with. Seek mentors, peers, and mentees who challenge and uplift you. Relationships open doors that talent alone may not. The right association can save you years of struggle. Invest in people, add value to them, and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

### 06 . Believe in Your Own Worth—Unapologetically

Perhaps the most important advice of all: believe in yourself. Many women battle impostor syndrome, questioning if they are good enough or deserving of success. But you cannot rise higher than the limits you set in your mind. Stop apologising for your ambition. Stop dimming your light to make others comfortable. Step into rooms like you belong—because you do. Believe in your gifts, own your achievements, and give yourself permission to dream big. Women have always had power, even if it has been undermined. The challenge today is not in whether society gives us a seat at the table, but whether we are willing to take it. By embracing leverage, financial literacy, bold voices, self-care, strong relationships, and self-belief, women can create impact that lasts for generations. Common sense, yes. But unfortunately, not always common practice. It's time for women everywhere to rise—not just for others, but for themselves.



### By Sola Adesakin

Founder and Lead Coach,  
Smart Stewards

Sola Adesakin is a highly respected wealth coach and chartered accountant with over two decades of transformative impact in the finance industry. As the visionary founder of Smart Stewards Financial Advisory Limited and Smart Stewards Advisory LLC, she has revolutionized the financial wellbeing of countless individuals and businesses across 40 countries. Her methodical approach to ‘make-manage-multiply’ money principles has elevated many from financial stress to prosperity, and mediocrity to exceptional achievement.

Sola is a strong supporter of SDG5 and SDG10, as she seeks to close the gender gap and reduce inequality through financial education, financial technology, and access to funding. Sola's dedication to achieving gender equality and reducing inequality is evident in her work as an alumna of the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs, an initiative of the US Embassy in Nigeria, and the Cherie Blair Foundation's Road to Growth Program. She is also an alumna of Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women program and a member of the Select Global Women in Tech (SGWIT) Mentorship Network of the United States of America. Through the FRUIT Foundation, which she serves as Founder and CEO, she has partnered with the US consulate in Nigeria to champion the economic empowerment of women, assisting them to start and scale their business ventures.

Her impressive academic credentials include a BSc and an MBA degree from Oxford Brookes University and Edinburgh Business School, respectively. She is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants of the United Kingdom (ACCA), and a member of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA). In addition to her impressive credentials, Sola Adesakin is also a Certified Financial Education Instructor™ and a member of the Personal Finance Speakers Association.



MADE FOR MORE

## No Glorification In Playing Small - Here's What to Do About It

By Ifeoma Chuks-Adizue

There are a few quiet lies many African women have been taught to believe such as..  
“Stay in your lane.”  
“Tone it down.”  
“You can’t have it all, especially as a career woman.”

And so, brilliant, high-performing women shrink. They silence their gifts, delay their dreams and tell themselves they’ll act when the coast is clear and the load is lighter.

But what if that moment never comes? Or worse, what if it comes, but the people you were sent to have already moved on? Here’s the truth - Playing small isn’t humility, it’s sometimes disobedience in disguise.

Have you done something amazing but downplayed it? You’re playing small.

Do you carry a life-changing message but keep waiting to feel ready? You’re playing small.

Have you helped many in private but never built a platform to multiply that impact? You’re playing small. God is not glorified when you hide the fire He placed inside you.

He didn’t give you gifts, ideas and burdens for decoration. He gave them for impact, multiplication and destiny.

He is glorified when you show up fully, both in boardrooms and in purpose rooms.



# MOTIVATION

He is glorified when you stop ignoring divine nudges and go ahead to build that business, launch that platform, write that book or mentor others...all while thriving in your career and home.

I know the question on your mind.. “But how? I’m already working so hard just to build a great career while holding down my home.”

My answer is simple: if you’re feeling that tug that there is MORE to you than the world currently sees, you’re not alone. What you need is knowledge on how to move forward and the courage to begin.

Here are three bold steps to stop playing small and step into purpose, without quitting your 9–5 or sacrificing your peace.

### STEP 1: ACKNOWLEDGE THE MORE IN YOU

That tug in your heart? That dream you’ve shelved? That idea you know could bless others? It’s not noise. It’s instruction.

Ask yourself: What assignment am I ignoring? Who is waiting on the other side of my obedience?

True humility isn’t hiding. Sometimes it’s simply saying: “Lord, here I am. Use it all.”

### STEP 2: RECOGNISE THE GIFT YOU KEEP TUCKING AWAY

What do people always seek your help with? What do you do repeatedly with excellent results, both in and out of work?

That’s not just skill. That’s potentially a framework, a course or even a movement waiting to be born.

If it has worked only for you, it may be time to share it. You lose nothing by trying.

If others have also seen results from it, then you’re sitting on something the world needs and it’s time to scale it.

### STEP 3: BUILD SYSTEMS, THEN TAKE ONE BOLD STEP

You don’t need to burn out to birth your purpose.

You need systems and structures that carve out time, leverage support and honour your current season while you nurture your dream.

Then, act. Not by doing everything at once but by taking one intentional step each day. That’s how legacies are built.

In the eyes of the world, what you desire may seem crazy.

But it’s time to stop letting others dictate what career women can and cannot do and let God decide instead.

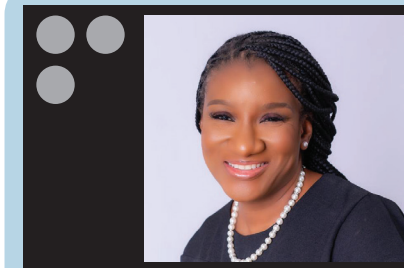
If He says you can do all things through Him, then you can.

You can deliver top-tier results in your job, keep rising in your career, build purpose-driven platforms that bless others and still enjoy a joyful home.

...and that is the heartbeat of this column - to help Career women of African descent who desire MORE to identify, unlock and purposefully unleash their God-given potential within and beyond the workplace.

Women who long to lead beautifully in the office and in destiny. Women ready to multiply their impact, income and influence for good. Women determined to make God proud. Are you one of us? Then don’t miss our weekly articles.

Together, let’s build Africa - one purpose-driven woman at a time.



### By Ifeoma Chuks-Adizue

Managing Director Africa at Global Citizen

Ifeoma Chuks-Adizue, fondly known as Iphie, is a seasoned professional with a rare mix of experience in brand management, sales, media and over 20 years’ experience building global brands across Africa.

Iphie is the Managing Director Africa at Global Citizen - an international advocacy organisation focused on ending extreme poverty now.

Prior to this role, Iphie was the Executive Director Commercial at CAP PLC, makers of Dulux Paint where she led the Sales and Marketing teams to quadruple the business in 4 years.

A graduate of Economics from the University of Jos, Iphie started her career with Procter & Gamble Nigeria where she held several leadership positions, before moving to Cadbury Nigeria, then CAP PLC, and now Global Citizen.

Iphie Chuks-Adizue is the author of two books - The Uncommon Woman and Made for More, and is Founding President of the Uncommon Woman Movement.

She is a wife, mother of three children and recipient of several awards, the most recent being the Exceptional Leader of Excellence Award from the Global Women Economic Forum.

“Playing small isn’t humility, it’s sometimes disobedience in disguise”



WOMAN AT THE HELM

# Toyin F. Sanni

Executive Vice-Chair of Emerging Africa Capital



Toyin F. Sanni stands as the Executive Vice-Chair of Emerging Africa Capital, a distinguished Pan-African Investment Group dedicated to leveraging Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles. Through her leadership, the organisation has helped to transform a lot of lives. With investments in trusts and asset management, financial technology, infrastructure finance, capacity building and investment banking, the company is living by their vision, which is to be the leading catalyst for Africa's emergence as a key global origin and destination for environmental, social and governance focused investments and finance.

Toyin's influence extends across multiple prestigious boards. She is the Chair of Layer3 Limited, Non-Executive Director at Transnational Corporation Plc, and is a member of Nigeria's National Advisory Board on Impact Investing (NABII). Furthermore, Toyin is also the Chair of the NABII Committee on the Wholesale Impact Investment Fund (WIIF).

Furthermore, she is the founder and chairperson of Women In Finance Nigeria, and she also founded WIFNG UK—set up to help in providing an avenue to network among women, career development, advocacy and so on. Toyin is Chair of the Technical Committee on Financial Literacy and a member of the Investment Committee for Africa's Off-Grid Energy Fund (OGEF). She is also an Ambassador for Nigeria at the Africa CEO Forum.

Toyin's experience in the finance sector includes being an investment banker and business leader. But beyond that, she is a public speaker and someone who loves to share her knowledge for the benefit of others. She does this consistently, especially through her social media pages where she inspires readers with daily nuggets through her chosen word for the day, and elaborates on why the word is her choice.

She has completed the Owner President Management Programme at Harvard Business School, participated in the CEO Programme at the Lagos Business School and other executive programmes at Harvard, Wharton, and IESE Business Schools.

A recipient of various outstanding awards, some include the All Africa Businesswoman of the Year Award 2017 by CNBC/Forbes, Nigerian CEO of the Year 2018 by the Pearl Awards, and the Tech Times African Influencer CEO honours in both 2020 and 2021, and a LinkedIn Top Voice.





WE'VE GOT MEN

# Tony Elumelu

Impacting Africa the T.O.E way

Kemi Ajumobi

O

ur 'We've Got Men' personality for this week is Mr Africapitalism, Tony Onyemaechi Elumelu, popularly referred to as T.O.E. He is Africa's leading investor and philanthropist. Tony is the Founder and Chairman of Heirs Holdings. He is also the Chairman of United Bank for Africa (UBA), which operates in 20 countries across Africa, the United Kingdom, France, the UAE. Not forgetting chairing Nigeria's largest quoted conglomerate, Transcorp.

He has never been one who rests on his oars. It is why at every given opportunity that makes business sense around the globe, he will be present. He will not only be present there, you will see it because he will post about it. He will post about it in a way you will feel you went along with him. I give it to his team, they are always on point. T.O.E makes business look like fun. You can tell he enjoys it as he takes his followers on social media through the journey. Back to his team, they understand their assignment.

Beyond his commercial acumen, T.O.E is often open to learn, especially from young people. I guess that is why he is loved by them and who knows, perhaps that is why

he keeps reversing age, I mean, when you consistently have young folks around you, you begin to blend in with them.

T.O.E inspires the younger generation. He is their "guy" and somehow he understands them. I remember the young man Emmanuel Nduka, Co-Convener, LinkedIn Local-Nigeria, who had never hidden his admiration for him and finally met with him. It certainly was a great experience for him and marked a significant shift in his career. That is one thing T.O.E is known for, he likes to connect with youths and inspire them.

Little wonder his Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) is clear proof that he is very optimistic about the youths who he sees as catalysts for Africa's transformation. This laudable Foundation has become the hallmark for Africa's sustainable development and a leading champion of youth entrepreneurship on the continent. Their mission is to empower young African entrepreneurs, through their flagship entrepreneurship programme, a 10-year \$100 million commitment to identify, train, mentor and fund 10,000 young African entrepreneurs across 54 African countries, and the progress report has been outstanding.

So, yes, T.O.E is all I have listed above and more, but most inspiring is that he is also a family man. 5 girls,

two boys and a graceful wife.

At IWA, we admire his relationship with his daughters and though he loves to support causes that involve women, T.O.E will let you know any day, that it isn't just about supporting causes that have to do with women because you are a woman, it is that the women must show their intelligence in carrying out their duties efficiently when the opportunity opens up for them to be elevated. He shared this with me a while back when IWA went to present him an award as he wasn't around to receive his 'He For She' award during the conference.

There is more. If there is one thing T.O.E is known to be passionate about, it is Africapitalism. T.O.E believes that the private sector is the key enabler of economic and social wealth creation in Africa. "There is a better way to invest in Africa for a sustainable future that creates value for all." He states. And at Heirs Holdings, they believe that Africapitalism is a call-to-action for businesses to make decisions that will increase economic and social wealth, and promote development in the communities and nations in which they operate.

So, whether it is business, investment, philanthropy, youth empowerment or family, T.O.E ticks the box for us at IWA. We wish him success in all he does.



HOLISTIC LIVING

# Holistic Nutrition – Eating for energy, mental clarity, and disease prevention

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri

If your body is the vehicle that carries you through life, food is the fuel and the wrong fuel can make even the most luxurious car cough, sputter, and stall. But holistic nutrition isn't just about filling the tank; it's about using the right fuel so the engine purrs, the headlights shine bright, and the journey is smooth for years to come. Holistic nutrition sees food not just as calories, but as information. A set of instructions that tells every cell in your body how to function. Every bite you take sends a message: heal or harm, energise or exhaust, sharpen or fog.

## Food as Your First Line of Defense

Imagine your immune system as an elite security team, standing guard 24/7. When you feed them nutrient-rich foods, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats, clean proteins, you're giving them the latest armor, sharp weapons, and solid training. But when you feed them ultra-processed snacks, sugary drinks, and fried, nutrient-empty meals, you're handing them rusty tools and broken shields.

Research published in The Lancet in 2023 showed that poor diets are now responsible for more deaths globally than smoking. In Nigeria, rising cases of hypertension, diabetes, and certain cancers have a direct link to what we put on our plates daily.

## Energy Beyond Coffee

Many Nigerians believe energy comes in a can of energy drink or a triple shot of espresso. The truth? That's like borrowing money from a loan shark, it gives

you a quick rush but demands heavy repayment later in the form of fatigue, irritability, and sugar crashes. Holistic nutrition focuses on steady, natural energy by balancing macronutrients, the complex carbs for slow fuel release, proteins for repair and stamina, and healthy fats for sustained power. A breakfast of oats topped with bananas and nuts will power you far better than a sugar-coated pastry and coffee.

## Mental Clarity on Your Plate

Your brain is only 2% of your body weight but uses up to 20% of your daily energy. That means what you eat directly affects how you think, remember, and focus. Omega-3 fatty acids from fishlike mackerel and sardines are like premium oil for your brain's machinery. Leafy greens, berries, and turmeric act like cleaners, sweeping away the "mental dust" of inflammation that causes brain fog.

In my psychiatric practice, I have seen patients lift their mood and sharpen their focus simply by upgrading their diet. This is a proof that food is not just physical fuel; it's mental medicine.

## Eating as Prevention, Not Just Treatment

Too often, we treat food as an after-thought until illness knocks. But food can be your daily insurance policy. Antioxidants in colorful vegetables fight cellular rust. Fiber-rich foods like beans and whole grains sweep toxins out of your digestive tract. Fermented foods like ogi (fermented maize porridge) or yoghurt keep your gut, the body's command center for immunity—in balance. As the Yoruba saying goes, "Ounje l'òdùgùn, òdùgùn l'ounje"—food is medicine, medicine is food.

The Nigerian Table—A Holistic Twist  
We don't need to abandon our beloved

dishes; we just need to reimagine them. Swap fried plantains for oven-grilled ones. Choose brown rice or ofada over polished white rice. Load egusi soup with extra vegetables and less palm oil. Enjoy suya, but balance it with fresh cucumber, tomatoes, and onions.

Holistic nutrition thrives on variety, freshness, and moderation—not deprivation.

## Five Holistic Nutrition Habits to Start Today

**1. Eat the "Rainbow"** – Different colours mean different nutrients; aim for 4–5 colours in your meals daily.

**2. Hydrate Wisely** – Water is the highway for every nutrient; ditch the constant sugary drinks.

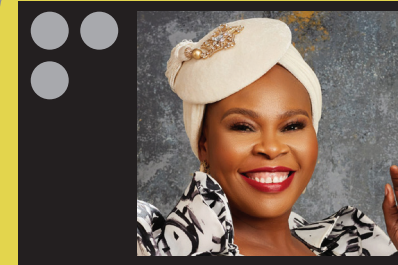
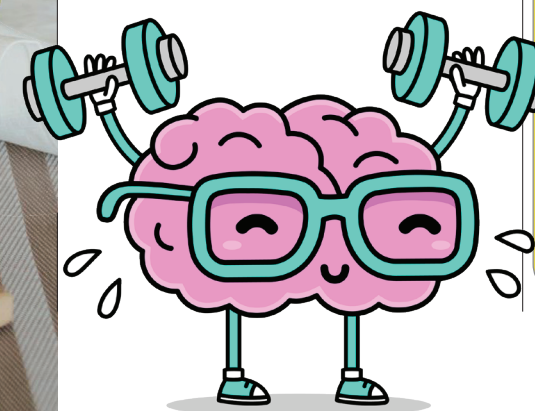
**3. Chew Slowly** – Digestion begins in the mouth; give your body time to absorb every bit of goodness.

**4. Mindful Eating** – Eat without TV or phone distractions; it improves digestion and satisfaction.

**5. Plan Ahead** – Healthy eating is easier when your kitchen is stocked with real, whole foods.

Holistic nutrition isn't a passing diet trend; it's a long-term love affair with your body. It recognises that the energy to chase your dreams, the clarity to make wise decisions, and the strength to fight disease are built bite by bite.

The food you choose today will either become tomorrow's medicine or tomorrow's poison. Choose wisely. Your body will thank you, not just for years, but for decades.



**Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri**

Psychiatrist-In-Chief at Pinnacle Medical Services

Dr. MAYMUNAH YUSUF KADIRI (aka DR. MAY) popularly referred to as "The Celebrity Shrink," is a multiple award winning Mental Health Physician, Advocate & Coach. She is the convener of "The Mental Health Conference" and the Medical Director and Psychiatrist-In-Chief at Pinnacle Medical Services, Nigeria's leading and foremost Psychology and Mental health clinic prominent in the application of innovative clinical approaches in the management/treatment of a wide range of psychological, emotional, and behavioral related disorders.

Dr. Kadiri is a dynamic Consultant Neuro-Psychiatrist and a Fellow of the National Post Graduate Medical College of Nigeria (FMCPsych) with almost 20 years' experience as a practicing Physician. She is a trained and certified Rational Emotive and Cognitive Behavioural Therapist from Albert Ellis Institute, New York, USA. She is also a certified Trauma Counsellor and Neurofeedback Practitioner.

Dr. Kadiri has wide experience in psycho-therapeutic techniques and has perfected her skills whilst in private practice and whilst working for a variety of organizations. She is a recognized radio and television guest Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist. She also contributes to articles published in magazines and newspapers.

She is the only Nigerian with the 14Ps.....Physician, Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Practitioner (NLP, BFB, NFB), Public Speaker, Published Author, Producer (movies), Proficient Coach, Parent, Philanthropist, People oriented, Public Health Advocate and Passionate about God and life.

The founder of Pinnacle Health Radio, African's #1 online health radio and a non for profit organization, "Pinnacle Medicals SPEAKOUT Initiative" which is geared towards creating Mental Health literacy in Nigeria and beyond.

The Executive producer of award winning movies, Pepper soup (focused on drug abuse) and Little Drops of Happy (focused on depression, postpartum depression and suicide) and creator of the most innovative mental health app in Africa, HOW BODI.



LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

## The Village Next Door

By Toyosi Etim-Effiong

You know that saying, "it takes a village?" Somewhere along the way, it feels like we moved far from that idea.

Not so long ago, it wasn't strange for family members to live on the same street or a few minutes away. Friends too. People bought land close together, built side-by-side, and raised their children like one big family. If an auntie needed something, she wouldn't call, she'd walk over. There was comfort in that. Safety in that. Help was literally next door.

Now, people are moving further away from loved ones chasing jobs, bigger houses, or just "space." Privacy has become the prize, and proximity feels old-fashioned. But in chasing independence, I think we've lost something important.

When a friend told me she was looking for property in my estate, I was... unsettled. Why here? There were so many other estates. We were already close and the visits and phone calls seemed fine to me. I didn't want to feel watched, and I value my privacy. While she was excited, I quietly wasn't sure it was a good idea.

Fast forward to now, and I can say without hesitation: it's one of the best things that happened

to both of us. Our daughters, besties before now, now play together almost every day and have sleepovers without us having to over-plan.

Her mum has stepped into my children's lives in such a beautiful way, being "grandma" from time to time, which is a huge blessing since I lost my own mum. We share resources naturally, from one household handling school runs when the other is busy, to splitting bulk-bought foodstuff and even raiding each other's closet. Life feels lighter because we're in close proximity.



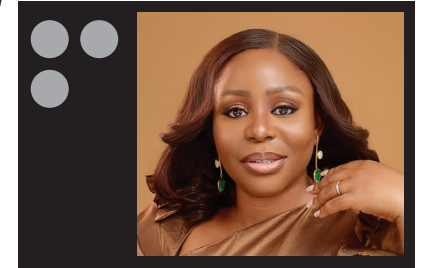
And now I get it: This is exactly how our parents and grandparents lived. They didn't just live in houses, they lived in community. If a child misbehaved, two aunties and one uncle would correct them before they even got home. If you were sick, food appeared at your door without you asking. People showed up; no scheduling, no formality.

Now, with everyone scattered, small problems can become big emergencies. You spend more on childcare, delivery services, and security, when sometimes all you need is a trusted friend or family member nearby. And it's not just about practical help, it's deeply comforting to know that if anything happens, people you trust can get to you quickly.

When choosing where to live, it's not just about the size of the house or fancy amenities. It's also about who you're close to. Imagine how much safer, lighter, and more joyful life could be if more of us were intentional about living near people we love and trust.

I believe the village model worked for a reason.

Proximity builds connection. Connection builds safety, and sometimes, the thing you think will cramp



**Toyosi Etim-Effiong**

Founder, That Good Media

Toyosi Etim-Effiong is a distinguished media executive who is bridging the gap between Nollywood and the global film and TV industry. With over 10 years of multifaceted experience in the media industry, she possesses the vital exposure and skills needed to drive media-related and experiential projects, as well as develop communication strategies for personal and corporate brands. She is a go-to personality and brand for anyone seeking to connect with key players in the media and entertainment industry on the African continent.

As the founder and CEO of That Good Media, a media solutions company with a talent management as well as an international partnerships division, Toyosi has successfully positioned herself as a leading expert in the African movie industry. Given her experience and expertise gained through various roles in the thriving Nollywood industry, she possesses the necessary skills and knowledge to facilitate international partnerships with investors on a global scale.

your style might just change your life for the better.

Your village doesn't have to be far away. Sometimes, the best place for it is right next door.

What do you think? Let's talk about it.

**"Connection builds safety, and sometimes, the thing you think will cramp your style might just change your life for the better"**



## FAITH, WORK &amp; WALK

# My Faith Work and Walk are intertwined

Debola Deji-Kurunmi

My Faith, Work, and Walk are not three separate lanes of life; but one well-braided cord.

In my own life's journey, you will find faith burning like fire in my bones, my work as the altar of stewardship; and my walk as witness to the wisdom God is teaching me, even when no one is watching.

As a woman on a mission, my approach to vision and execution is based on a simple but strong conviction: I seek to convert the spiritual into the strategic, the eternal into the executive, and the prophetic into the pragmatic. This is how I build, lead, and live, and it is how I turn revelation into results.

When I find people who believe in God living in mediocrity, it deeply unsettles me because I know that there has been nothing more calibrating and challenging in my life than my faith. It has been the source of my mission and permission to dream audaciously while moving with humility. And when I show up to work on any assignment, you will likely find me operating with high standards because I believe that work is worship in overalls, like passionate prayer holding a project plan. Now, this same faith infiltrates my daily walk, as it inspires my decisions, directions and devotions both in private as well as in public!

In 2020, I framed the 'Multi-Influential Life Roadmap,' drawn from the book of Genesis, through which I coach leaders on the 'Four Streams of Legacy.' 'The Empire of Ministry' is the stream of spirituality where we convert our faith into fellowship and transfer our devotion into discipleship. The 'Empire of Money' is the stream of industry where we solve problems, create value, build enterprises, and earn ethically.

The 'Empire of Meaning' is the stream of influence where we shape culture, and harness media, community, and creativity to elevate ideas that matter. 'The Empire of Mercy' is the stream of benevolence where generosity reaches the unreached, and we invest in people who cannot pay us back. Flowing together, these four streams help you build a Life of Legacy, one built on destiny and not domination.

Personally, I do not merely coach leaders to live and lead this way, but I practice it too. Since receiving this blueprint by revelation, it has radically shaped my perspective and sharpened my purpose.

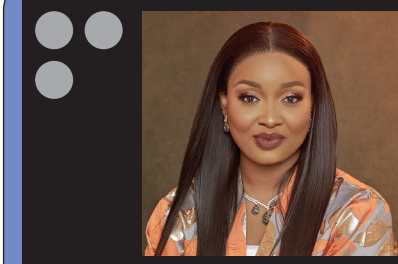
This is how I do it. In spirituality, I refuse to treat God as an accessory to my ambition. I allow His Word to edit my worldview and His wisdom to pace my growth. I do not ask, "How do I get ahead?" but, "How do I get in order?"

**"Measure success not only by revenue and reach, but by righteousness, restoration, and real transformation."**

In industry, I structure what I see, whether products, programmes, partnerships, and test value with integrity and data. My boardroom belongs to God; it is a birth room for breakthroughs. In influence, I honour the power of story and the stewardship of platforms. I desire to amplify truth with beauty, courage, and evidence. In benevolence, I architect generosity that goes beyond random acts, and toward long-lasting impact.

This centre of faith, work, and walk creates a focal point of force. As a visionary or legacy leader, I challenge you to position yourself at the cutting edge of these four streams. Curate your inner life with the same rigour you apply to your quarterly goals. Let your media be your ministry. Let your charity be your strategy. Guard your purity like you guard your IP. Build people as you build products, and measure success not only by revenue and reach, but by righteousness, restoration, and real transformation.

My charge is simple: let your faith frame your work, and your walk. When spirituality, industry, influence, and benevolence converge in a life that is integral, leadership moves from performance into purpose. Results follow. Cultures shift. Futures open. And a generation learns, by watching you, to forge their faith, work and walk too.



**Debola Deji-Kurunmi**

Founder, IMMERSE Coaching Company

Debola Deji-Kurunmi is a polymath, best-selling author, keynote speaker, public policy advisor, corporate trainer, and transformational coach for visionary leaders. Through her work of coaching, consulting, and capacity building, Debola deploys her extraordinary gift of unlocking potential in people, institutions, and nations.

She sits over a group of companies as well as non-denominational ministries, including IMMERSE Coaching Company, Ideation Hub Africa, Kingdom Leaders Global Alliance and FIREBRAND Movement.

Debola is a certified visionary leadership coach by the Oleg Kononov Global Coaching Certification, a Gallup Certified Strengths Coach, a Certified Masteries Practitioner by the International Association of Coaching, USA, and renown for her archetypical coaching frameworks as well as original assessments.

A highly sought corporate trainer for multinational corporations, SMES, development agencies, and governments, Debola has delivered executive coaching, team building retreats, and senior leadership training for great organisations.

Debola has been severally recognised for her outstanding leadership impact, with her transformational work featured on TV, international news, and media. She has received several awards including The 2014 New Leader for Tomorrow of the Crans Montana Forum, Geneva. 2018 Mandela Washington Fellow by US Government, one of 100 Most Inspiring Nigerian Women 2019, Nigeria's Leading Coach in 2021, 50 Most Inspiring Women in 2022, to mention a few.

DDK, as she is fondly called, is an author of 26 books to date and has spoken across three continents to emerging and established leaders.

She is masterful at high-tier coaching for crafting go-to-market strategy, rapid execution techniques, visionary launch and mastery, personal reinvention, ministry growth, and wealth expansion.





TRIBE WITH THE VIBES

## Bills vs Building Relationships: Where To Turn?

By Zainab Aderounmu

Have you heard the maxim, 'Your network is your net worth'? I'm sure you have because it's very popular and possibly because it's also true.

**T**he Yoruba would also say, 'Eniyan laso mi', which means people are my clothing. This emphasises the importance of forging and nurturing valuable relationships. You really never know what door a new person you meet can open for you.

One of the fastest ways to nurture a relationship is by offering value without

expecting anything in return. Think of it like depositing in a bank - someday, you may need to make a withdrawal.

But where do you draw the line between giving value and earning from the value you offer? Especially when the said value is your means of livelihood?

Young people often find themselves in situations where they're expected to offer

a level of labour completely for free, to build relevant skills, experiences and relationships. That is completely valid.

What is invalid is gaslighting young people into offering their already made skills, expertise and labour, completely for free or at a meagre amount, 'just because they are young', which in society's parlance means 'they shouldn't need money'.

"Don't put money first. You don't know what the relationship might bear," or 'we'll put you on our platform', we often hear. Let's be honest: exposure doesn't pay rent. And clout doesn't cover bills.

This is the age where adulting hits; bills pile, self-development costs money, self-care isn't free, and if you add black tax to the mix, the expectation of unpaid labour becomes not only unrealistic, but also harmful.

By asking young people to "keep paying their dues" without compensation, they risk missing out on potential income that could be invested in further education or becoming reliant on others for financial support, which delays independence and self-sufficiency.

They stay financially unstable, unable to meet basic needs and become conditioned to undervalue themselves. On a deeper level, it widens the youth-pay gap.

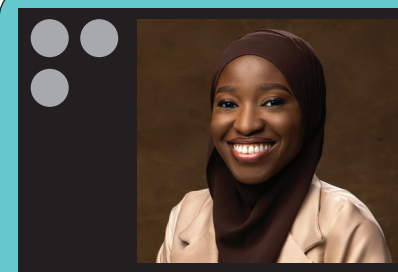
Take Adenike, my friend, for example. She regrets volunteering to teach at a local school a year after her NYSC. She described the experience as hellish. Aside from having to work after school hours on many days, she was also made to do more than she bargained for. Cleaning, on some occasions, and market runs, on others. Meanwhile, she never once got paid or appreciated for her work.

Money is a symbolic representation of power, and society puts up many walls to make it difficult to discuss it openly. Speaking up often earns you labels like greedy or materialistic. Silence makes it worse.

Relationships should be built on authenticity and value exchange, but society has a responsibility to teach young people how to value themselves appropriately.

Dear young person, avoid sliding in anybody's DM for 'urgent 2k'. It reduces your steeze, especially in this age filled with countless opportunities. Learn what you need to learn, volunteer and serve; they'll help you grow. Strategically build relationships, offer value and show that you're valuable to have on board. As actor, Tobi Bakre once said, 'Be service-oriented'.

**"Let's be honest: exposure doesn't pay rent. And clout doesn't cover bills"**



**Zainab Aderounmu**

Zainab Aderounmu A. W. is a First Class graduate of English Language and the Overall Best Graduating Student from the Lagos State University, Lagos Nigeria. She's a professional Master of Ceremonies, known as 'The Hijabi Compere', a public speaking coach and Communications Professional. She is currently a Youth advisor to the European Union where she doubles as the Spokesperson and Head of Communications & PR for the Youth Sounding Board.



But know when to uphold your dignity, and avoid sacrificing your talents on the altar of a "platform". Before venturing into any opportunity, ask yourself: Will I learn something new here? Will it connect me with the right people? Does this align with my long-term goals? Can I afford to do this unpaid? Do I love doing this? It might be a global platform with countless other opportunities attached. Weigh the situation and decide what works for you.

Ultimately, never forget, you are the platform.



FROM THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS

# Women Affairs Ministry presents WAVE to empower 10m Nigerian women in agriculture



In keeping up with the current administration on the promise to create 50 million jobs, expand productive economy, and deliver prosperity to every Nigerian household, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs presents the Women Agro Value Expansion (WAVE) Program, a catalytic initiative designed to empower 10 million Nigerian women across the full agricultural value chain.



## Strategic Impact Summary

- 10 Million Women Empowered: WAVE will train and equip women in production, processing, branding, and marketing of agro-products — transforming rural subsistence into competitive agribusiness.

- 50 Million Jobs Created: Each empowered woman is projected to generate 4–5 dependent jobs through cooperative structures, SME creation, transport, packaging, retail, and logistics.

- 40 Trillion Injected into the Economy: The value chain expansion, spanning crops, livestock, poultry, aquaculture, and exports, is projected to inject over 8 trillion annually into the real economy through increased productivity, SME activity, and consumer spending.

- 2 Trillion Boost in Internal Revenue: With structured market linkages, NAF-DAC-compliant processing, and formalised cooperative

taxation, WAVE is estimated to contribute over 2 trillion in IGR through VAT, export duties, MSME taxation, and state revenues within five years.

This initiative touches the grassroots. By reaching 10 million women and impacting their households and communities, WAVE is designed to organically convert economic empowerment into a direct mobilisation of women to champion the attainment of the 1 trillion dollar economy.

## What We Seek

The WAVE Program represents more than a policy intervention—it is a nation-building engine.

This is the moment to transform our women from producers of raw crops into global suppliers of branded Nigerian agro-products—backed by your vision, powered by our women, and guided by destiny.



Events

# Celebrating the 4th Coronation Anniversary of His Majesty, Ogiame Atuwatse III, CFR





GARB & GLAM

# The Little Black Dress

Few garments in fashion history carry the same power, mystery, and timeless appeal as the little black dress.

By Yolanda Okereke



From Audrey Hepburn's elegance in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* to its reinvention on countless runways, the Little Black Dress (LBD) has become more than clothing — it is a global symbol of sim-

plicity, sophistication, and strength.

But what makes the little black dress so powerful is not just its universal appeal, it is its ability to adapt, to tell different stories depending on who wears it, where it is worn, and how it is styled. In Nollywood, the little black dress has often been the shorthand for confidence, allure, or reinvention. When a woman walks into a scene in one, the audience knows something has shifted — power, desire, or destiny.

For Nigerian women, the little black dress has also been reimaged through our own lens of culture and creativity. It is never just plain. It may be adorned with aso-oke trims, Ankara accents, or daring gele headpieces. We take a global icon and make it ours, layering tradition over modernity, just as Nollywood does with every story we tell.

As a costume designer, I see the little black dress as a storyteller's weapon. It can transform a character

from vulnerable to commanding in seconds. It is minimalist, yet never empty. In its simplicity lies endless possibility.

The little black dress is not just fashion, it is attitude. It is memory. It is the canvas on which women paint their identity. And in Nollywood, as in life, it reminds us that style is not about excess — it is about presence.

The LBD is special and memorable because it is more than just a garment—it's a cultural icon, a symbol of elegance, and a timeless piece of fashion history. Here are the key reasons why it stands out:

## 01 Timeless Elegance

Introduced by Coco Chanel in the 1920s, the LBD was designed to be simple, versatile, and universally flattering.

Unlike trend-driven pieces, it has never gone out of style—every generation reinvents it while keeping its core appeal.

## 02 Versatility

It can transition effortlessly from day to night, casual to formal, minimal to glamorous.

With just a change of accessories—pearls, heels, a blazer, or bold jewelry—the same dress can serve multiple purposes.

## 03 Cultural Symbol

Made iconic by Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, the LBD became a cinematic symbol of sophistication.

It represents effortless glamour—less about excess, more about refined simplicity.

## 04 Democratisation of Style

When Chanel introduced it, black was traditionally reserved for mourning. She redefined it as chic, accessible, and fashionable.

The LBD was designed to be affordable, making style attainable for women beyond the wealthy elite.

## 05 Empowerment & Identity

When Wearing an LBD gives many women confidence because it embodies poise, mystery, and allure.

It balances modesty and sensuality, power and femininity—allowing the wearer to define herself on her own terms.

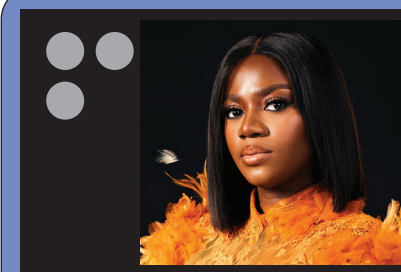
## 06 Fashion's Blank Canvas

The simplicity of the LBD allows for endless interpretation.

Designers use it as a canvas for innovation, while women use it as a backdrop for personal expression.

In essence, the LBD is

memorable because it's both universal and personal—a garment that belongs to history yet adapts to the individuality of whoever wears it.



## Yolanda Okereke

Founder & Head of The Rani Company

Yolanda Okereke is a visionary fashion entrepreneur and respected industry leader, known for her exceptional work as a Costume Designer and Creative Producer in Film and Television. With over a decade of experience, she has consistently shaped the visual identity of some of Nollywood's most iconic productions, earning a reputation for her artistic depth, organisational precision, and bold storytelling through costume.

She is the Founder and Head of The Rani Company, a leading costume design and styling firm, and The Wardrobe Shack, a costume rental house serving high-profile film and television projects across Nigeria. Rani Gisele was launched while studying Chemical Engineering at university.

Her extensive credits include critically acclaimed projects such as Netflix's *Blood Sisters* and *Olùtùré*, as well as *The Wedding Party*, *King of Boys*, *La Femme Anjola*, *The Set Up*, and *Day of Destiny*.

Her contributions have earned her nominations at the Africa Movie Academy Awards and the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards, and she was recently awarded Best Fashion Collaboration Film at FAME Week Africa, where she celebrated Nigerian costume design through a dedicated showcase.





# A Journey Through Traditional Beauty & Flavor

*Inside Clay Food Shop & The Henna Place*


“Together, Clay Food Shop and The Henna Place offer more than services. They offer belonging. A place where tradition is not just preserved, but honored, elevated, and shared”

## Clayfoodshop

Clay Food Shop is more than just a restaurant, it's a cultural experience. Known for its traditional elegance and modern interpretations of Northern Nigerian cuisine, Clay is a destination for food lovers who seek authenticity in every bite.

From their signature ram suya to rich native sauces, tigernut juice, and wholesome masa, every meal evokes the comfort of tradition.

 @clayfoodshoplagos


 : +234909 554 4990

## The Henna Place

Established in 2014, The Henna Place is Nigeria's leading traditional spa, bringing centuries old Moroccan, Northern Nigeria and Arab beauty rituals into the general wellness market. Specializing in Moroccan hammam treatments, sugar waxing, herbal hair care, and intricate henna designs, the spa provides a deeply relaxing and culturally rich self care experience.

With multiple branches across Nigeria, including three branches in Lagos, The Henna Place has become a go-to destination for brides, beauty lovers, and women seeking intentional, soul-restoring care from head to toe, it's a place to cleanse, unwind, and reconnect with yourself the traditional way.

 @Thehennaplace

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