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DR. CHINYERE
ALMONA (PHD)

DRIVING STRATEGIC ECONOMIC POLICY AND PRIVATE-SECTOR ADVOCACY

Inspiring Woman Africa Series

14

THEME Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths To Excellence

CONVENER



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Founder/Group CEO,
Inspiring Woman Africa (IWA)
Convener, IWA Conference

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Former President of the Federal
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

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Welcome!

Dear Readers,

IWA day is upon us. Today, Tuesday is another opportunity to share a special edition with you. On our cover is DR. CHINYERE ALMONA (PHD) and she is driving strategic economic policy and private-sector advocacy. She is currently the Director General/Chief Executive Officer, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) — Lagos, Nigeria. The LCCI is West Africa's leading private-sector advocacy body, established in 1888, with over 4,000 corporate members spanning 26 sectoral groups. As Director General, she provides strategic leadership to promote a competitive business environment, facilitate trade and investment, and shape national and regional economic policy. We had an enlightening conversation with her and for sure, this will be worth your time.

Other articles we have for you:

In the midst of all that is going on in Nigeria, Zainab Aderounmu on **TRIBE WITH THE VIBES** is asking "Safety...where are you?"

For **FINANCIAL AdviseHER**, Sola Adesakin is asking you to upgrade your money language, upgrade your money life.

On our **HER POINT OF VIEW** section, Chinyere Okorocha says one of the most overlooked career skills today is the ability to switch off. Not because your work is unimportant, but because mental rest is what sustains long-term performance and preserves your ability to lead with clarity.

On **WOMAN EXECUTIVE** Wola Joseph-Condotti says leadership always sounds noble until you are the one in the chair and nothing is clear.

Find out how to navigate life's transitions: Divorce, widowhood, and retirement planning as told to us by Abiola Adediran in **GENDER INSIGHTS**.

Imagine standing in a quiet room. No phone, no noise, no deadlines. Just your heartbeat, your breath, and the rhythm of your own body. In **HOLISTIC LIVING**, Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri teaches us how movement, breath, and stillness heal the mind.

Our **WOMAN AT THE HELM** is Khadijat Abdulkadir, Founder/CEO, INGRYD & Digital African Woman and our **WE'VE GOT MEN** personality is Olufemi Awoyemi, Founder and Chairman of Proshare.

It's 16 days to IWA Series 14, have you registered? This is one event you don't want to be briefed on, be there!

Ciao!



COVER INTERVIEW

DR. CHINYERE ALMONA (PHD)

DRIVING STRATEGIC ECONOMIC POLICY
AND PRIVATE-SECTOR ADVOCACY

Kemi Ajumobi



Dr. Chinyere Peace Almona (PhD) was raised in a strong Christian home by her late father, Reverend

Canon Israel Anyadike Nwankwo, and her mother, Associate Professor Joyce Nwanne Nwankwo—a blend of ministry, discipline, academic excellence, and purpose. She is the third of six children, and her upbringing shaped her deep values of faith, integrity, service, and leadership. Dr. Almona is joyfully married to Obi Christopher Almona, from Aboh in Ndokwa East Local Government Area of Delta State, and together they are blessed with three adult children who continue the legacy of excellence, service, and purpose.

She is currently the Director General/Chief Executive Officer, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) — Lagos, Nigeria. The LCCI is West Africa's leading private-sector advocacy body, established in 1888, with over 4,000 corporate members spanning 26 sectoral groups. As Director General, she provides strategic leadership to promote a competitive business environment, facilitate trade and investment, and shape national and regional economic policy.

At Vantage Governance Services (VGS), she founded and led the governance and sustainability advisory



“One of the most defining lessons I inherited from my parents is the unwavering value of integrity expressed through service”

firm dedicated to strengthening governance frameworks for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), financial institutions, and development-focused organisations across Africa. VGS was established to bridge the gap between global governance standards and Africa's local business realities. Chinyere was Regional Program Manager (Senior Corporate Governance Officer), International Finance Corporation (IFC, World Bank Group) — Lagos, Nigeria, where she led IFC's Africa-wide corporate governance advisory operations, establishing laws, and improving board performance, governance systems, and institutional resilience for private and state-owned entities across 13 African countries. She also led governance reforms for over 40 African institutions across 13 African countries.

At PricewaterhouseCoopers, she was Director, Governance, Risk & Compliance, where she provided strategic leadership in governance, risk, and compliance advisory services, overseeing a multidisciplinary team delivering ESG, governance, and regulatory transformation solutions to clients across West Africa. Chinyere is a member of several distinguished boards and a recipient of several awards in honour of her work and expertise.

She has an MBA in Admin, from Enugu State University of Technology Business School, Enugu, Nigeria and she is undertaking an MSc. in International Relations, University of East London (UEL). Chinyere has a Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA), Business School Netherlands, and she is a certified leadership coach. She is deeply passionate about people development, women empowerment, and leadership transformation. Her work, both formal and informal, reflects a consistent commitment to helping others rise, thrive, and lead. Above all, Dr. Chinyere Almona embodies a life dedicated to faith, excellence, impact, and service. Whether in leadership circles, ministry environments, boardrooms,



“Stepping into the role of Director General of the LCCI felt like a purposeful convergence of my professional journey and personal mission”

classrooms, or communities, she remains committed to inspiring others to step into their highest calling and to build a world where integrity, compassion, competence, and purpose lead the way.

▶ **Lesson or value from your parents that has significantly shaped your approach to leadership and service**

One of the most defining lessons I inherited from my parents is the unwavering value of integrity expressed through service. My father, Rev. Canon

Israel Nwankwo, served faithfully as a clergyman in the Anglican Church, and through his life I learnt that leadership is not a status, it is stewardship. He often reminded us that character is the leader's true currency, and once compromised, it is difficult to restore. His life taught me that leadership must first be accountable to God, and then to those you are privileged to lead. My mother, Professor Joyce Nwankwo, spent many years as an academic and shaped my understanding of discipline, resilience, and compassion. She modelled excellence with humility and

served with a rare balance of strength and empathy. From her, I learnt that leadership is not only about results, it is also about how people feel because you passed through their lives. Together, my parents engraved in me the belief that true influence is not proven by title, position, or applause, but by the quality of impact and the legacy you leave behind. These values continue to shape my leadership philosophy and remind me daily that the highest form of leadership is service that is purposeful, principled, and people-centered.

► **What motivated you to take on the role of Director General/CEO of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry?**

Stepping into the role of Director General of the LCCI felt like a purposeful convergence of my professional journey and personal mission. For many years, my work in corporate governance, development finance, and private-sector competitiveness exposed me to the structural gaps and untapped potential within African enterprise. I have always believed that strong economies are built

on strong institutions — and strong institutions are built on sound governance, innovation, and an enabling business environment. This conviction inspired my book, *Corporate Governance for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses in African Economies*, which advocates for greater appreciation and adoption of governance principles among SMEs. That work deepened my passion for strengthening the backbone of Africa's private sector, and the LCCI role presented a national platform to advance that mission in a practical, strategic, and far-reaching way. Leading LCCI was not just a career step, it was alignment. It offered the opportunity to serve, influence policy, support businesses of all sizes, and help create a more competitive, resilient, and globally connected Nigerian economy. For me, it is a calling rooted in purpose, experience, and a deep commitment to helping businesses thrive.

► **Describe challenges you faced when you first assumed leadership and how you overcame them**

When I assumed leadership at LCCI, one of the immediate realities was the complexity of navigating diverse stakeholder expectations. The Chamber represents a broad constituency: government agencies seeking alignment with policy frameworks, multinational corporations expecting continuity of standards, SMEs looking for advocacy and practical support, development institutions exploring partnership pathways, and sectoral business associations requiring targeted engagement. Each group had different priorities, and balancing these expectations while maintaining a unified strategic direction required deliberate patience and thoughtful leadership.

Internally, another key challenge was strengthening operational efficiency and ensuring that our processes, systems, and governance structures were aligned with the level of influence and responsibility the Chamber carries. There is always a delicate transition



“LCCI is a premier business catalyst for Nigeria and the African continent, supporting meaningful participation in AfCFTA and reinforcing the role of the private sector as a driver of economic transformation”



“Across Africa and around the world, we have seen that societies thrive when women are fully included and equipped to contribute at their highest level”

period in leadership, the task is not only to build but to preserve what is working, while evolving areas that need modernisation, efficiency, and innovation. Doing this without disrupting institutional memory and stability demanded both sensitivity and decisiveness.

I approached these challenges with a mindset rooted in listening and learning. I spent considerable time engaging stakeholders, asking questions, studying history, and understanding context before initiating change. This allowed me to identify priority areas for restructuring, clarify roles and expectations, and reinforce a culture of shared leadership rather than directive administration. Building trust became essential.

Transparency, consistent communication, and demonstrating early wins helped strengthen credibility. I also prioritised empowering the internal team, ensuring they had the clarity, resources, and autonomy needed to perform optimally. Over time, the combination of clear vision, collaborative leadership, systems strengthening, and strategic execution created alignment and momentum across the organisation.

Those early challenges ultimately became catalysts for growth, sharpening strategic focus, deepening stakeholder collaboration, and positioning the Chamber to operate with greater agility, relevance, and long-term impact.

Key initiatives or projects you are currently focusing on

At this stage of our transformation journey at LCCI, we are intentionally strengthening initiatives that expand economic opportunity, deepen competitiveness, and reinforce the Chamber's relevance in an evolving global landscape. Some of our key focus areas include:

- **Advancing Trade Facilitation and Export Competitiveness:**

We are actively supporting private-sector readiness for regional and global trade, particularly under AfCFTA. This includes exporter certification support, policy dialogues on trade logistics, and connecting Nigerian businesses to continental and international value chains.

- **Strengthening Sector-Based Advocacy and Policy Influence:**

Through more structured sectoral groups and evidence-based research outputs, we are enhancing our engagement with policymakers to shape reforms that support enterprise growth, innovation, and investment confidence.

- **Driving Digital Transformation and Data-Driven Engagement:**

We are modernising internal processes, upgrading digital communication channels, and building a smarter data ecosystem that enables real-time insights, member intelligence, and improved service delivery.

- **Building Capacity for MSMEs and Emerging Businesses:**

As MSMEs form the backbone of the Nigerian economy, we are rolling out targeted programs for financing, business development, corporate governance, export readiness, and digital literacy to help them scale sustainably.

- **Deepening International Partnerships and Investment Linkages:**

We are expanding strategic relationships with economic blocs, investment agencies, international chambers, and bilateral trade platforms to increase inbound and outbound investment, accelerate technology transfer, and strengthen Nigeria's participation in global commerce.

These and many other initiatives reflect our vision of positioning LCCI as a premier business catalyst for Nigeria and the African continent, supporting meaningful participation in AfCFTA and

reinforcing the role of the private sector as a driver of economic transformation.

Why women empowerment matters to you and effective strategies for advancing gender equity

Women empowerment is deeply personal to me—not only because I am a woman, but because I have lived, observed, and supported journeys where unlocked potential has transformed lives. When women rise, the ripple effect extends far beyond the individual. It strengthens families, elevates communities, drives innovation, and accelerates national development. Across Africa and around the world, we have seen that societies thrive when women are fully included and equipped to contribute at their highest level.

However, empowerment does not happen by accident—it requires intentional structures and pathways. Effective strategies must go beyond inspiration and focus on access, opportunities, and systems that sustain progress. These include mentorship and sponsorship, which help women navigate leadership pathways with confidence; representation at decision-making tables, because visibility matters; inclusive workplace policies that address bias and structural inequities; and equitable access to finance and resources, especially for women entrepreneurs who remain disproportionately underfunded. Equally important are work environments where women do not have to choose between competence and acceptance, ambition and family, or career and dignity. Real empowerment is about creating spaces where women are seen, heard, supported, and respected—and where their leadership is not an exception but a norm.

Ultimately, empowering women is not a favour, it is a smart economic and societal strategy. When women thrive, nations prosper.

“The future of leadership in Africa is undeniably shifting, and women are at the centre of that transformation”

► **The future role of women in leadership in Africa**

The future of leadership in Africa is undeniably shifting, and women are at the centre of that transformation. Over the next decade, we will see women increasingly shaping the direction of innovation, governance, diplomacy, entrepreneurship, and nation-building. The narrative is evolving—women are no longer waiting to be invited into leadership spaces; they are redefining them. The era of merely asking for space is coming to an end. Women are now building the tables, redesigning the frameworks, influencing systems, and intentionally lifting others as they rise. African women are demonstrating remarkable resilience, creativity, and competence across every sector. This momentum is being reinforced by generational shifts, expanded access to education, increased economic participation, and a growing recognition that gender diversity is not just a moral imperative—it is a competitive advantage. Through my books *The Future-Focused Female Leader* and *Ways Women Lead Well*, I have explored this evolving leadership landscape and highlighted models of leadership that are authentic, value-driven, and impactful. The future will belong to women who are bold, visionary, collaborative, and unapologetic about the value they bring. Africa is entering a season where women will not only participate in leadership—they will shape its identity.

► **Current state of commerce and industry in Nigeria**

Nigeria's commercial and industrial landscape today reflects a compelling blend of resilience and untapped potential. The private sector continues to demonstrate remarkable adaptability despite operating in a challenging environment. Businesses face persistent pressures such as high operating costs, foreign exchange volatility, infrastructure constraints, supply chain disruptions, and shifting regulatory frameworks. These factors have, understandably, tempered growth and introduced uncertainty for

many enterprises.

Yet, beneath these pressures lies a powerful current of ingenuity and determination. Nigeria's entrepreneurial spirit remains one of the most dynamic in the world. From small enterprises to established industries, innovation continues to thrive — whether in manufacturing, creative industries, agriculture, renewable energy, digital technology, or the increasingly vibrant services economy.

Emerging sectors, including fintech, value-added agriculture, circular economy solutions, and export-oriented

manufacturing, signal the country's capacity for transformation. With the right policy reforms, infrastructure investments, and trade facilitation mechanisms, Nigeria is well positioned to unlock stronger industrial competitiveness and deeper integration into global value chains.

In essence, Nigeria's business environment is not defined by its challenges, but by its resilience, creativity, and potential. The opportunity ahead is significant, and with strategic collaboration between policymakers, industry players, and development partners, the next chapter of Nigeria's commerce and industry can be one of accelerated growth, sustainability, and global relevance.

► **How Nigerian businesses can become globally competitive**

For Nigerian businesses to compete confidently on the global stage, there must be a deliberate shift from operating purely in survival mode to building with strategy, scalability, and sustainability in mind. Competitiveness today goes beyond price, it is anchored in value creation, innovation, and excellence.

To thrive internationally, Nigerian businesses must strengthen productivity, embrace technology, and consistently adhere to global quality and certification standards. Corporate governance remains a critical enabler, as transparency, accountability, and ethical business practices build investor confidence and open doors to international partnerships and markets.

Digital transformation is no longer optional, it is a key differentiator in efficiency, customer engagement, supply chain optimisation, and access to global opportunities. Additionally, businesses must deepen capacity for research and development, product design, branding, and intellectual property protection to move beyond commodity-based competition.



“Nigeria's commercial and industrial landscape today reflects a compelling blend of resilience and untapped potential”

“For Nigerian businesses to compete confidently on the global stage, there must be a deliberate shift from operating purely in survival mode to building with strategy, scalability, and sustainability in mind”

Ultimately, global competitiveness requires a mindset shift, from short-term survival to long-term value, from informal approaches to structured systems, and from imitation to innovation. With strategic intent, investment in talent, stronger governance, and purposeful collaboration, Nigerian businesses can not only compete globally, they can lead.

► **Key policy changes needed**

To unlock Nigeria's full economic potential and create a truly enabling environment for business competitiveness, several strategic policy reforms are essential:

A Stable and Predictable Regulatory Environment:

Policy consistency and regulatory clarity are critical for long-term planning, investment confidence, and reduced operational risk. Businesses thrive when the rules are transparent, consultative, and reliable.

Incentives for Local Production and Value Addition:

Strengthening backward integration, encouraging domestic manufacturing, and supporting local supply chains will enhance productivity, reduce import dependency, and stimulate job creation across key sectors.

Simplified and Transparent Tax Administration:

Streamlining tax systems, reducing multiple taxation, and improving compliance frameworks will relieve pressure on businesses—particularly MSMEs—while broadening the formal tax base and enhancing government revenue efficiency.

“LCCI plays a pivotal and strategic role in Nigeria's economic landscape as the collective voice of the organised private sector”

Improved Trade Logistics and Export Facilitation:

Enhancing port processes, customs efficiency, and transport infrastructure will lower cost-to-market, strengthen export capacity, and enable Nigerian products to compete more effectively within AfCFTA and beyond.

Energy and Infrastructure Reforms:

Reliable power supply, modern transport networks, and stronger digital infrastructure are foundational for productivity, industrialization, and economic diversification. Improved infrastructure is not only an economic necessity—it is a strategic advantage. Collectively, these policy priorities will help build a more competitive economy, attract investment, accelerate industrial growth, and position Nigeria as a leading trade and business hub on the continent.

► **The role of LCCI in shaping policy decisions**

LCCI plays a pivotal and strategic role in Nigeria's economic landscape as the collective voice of the organised private sector. Through evidence-based advocacy, LCCI provides informed perspectives that help shape policies affecting business and investment. We engage in structured dialogues with government institutions, regulators, and legislators, presenting research-driven insights, policy recommendations, and sectoral feedback that reflect the realities and priorities of businesses. Our role extends beyond advocacy, we facilitate constructive partnership between policymakers and the private sector, ensuring that reforms are inclusive, practical, and aligned with national development objectives. By convening thought leaders, sector groups, and international partners, LCCI creates platforms where ideas translate into actionable frameworks, and where the business community contributes meaningfully to shaping a more predictable, competitive, and enabling economic environment. Ultimately, our mission is to ensure that

“Today, competitiveness is increasingly determined not by size, but by agility, innovation, and digital readiness”

the voice of business is not only heard but respected, and that policy outcomes support sustainable growth, innovation, and prosperity across the Nigerian economy.

► **Impact of infrastructure development**

Infrastructure remains one of the most critical drivers of economic competitiveness and national development. It forms the foundation upon which industries operate, supply chains are built, and trade flows. When infrastructure — such as energy supply, road networks, ports, water systems, telecommunications, and logistics corridors — is weak or unreliable, the cost of doing business rises significantly. This leads to reduced productivity, inefficiencies across value chains, diminished investor confidence, and slowed economic growth.

Conversely, countries that prioritise infrastructure development create an enabling environment where businesses can scale, industries can innovate, and commerce can flourish. Efficient transport systems lower logistics costs, stable energy supply drives industrial output, and modern ports facilitate seamless export and import processes. Robust digital infrastructure further accelerates competitiveness by enabling e-commerce, automation, financial inclusion, and participation in the global digital economy.

In essence, improving infrastructure is not just about physical assets — it is about unlocking opportunity. Every kilometre of road paved, every watt of reliable power supplied, and every port system upgraded strengthens the economy's capacity to grow, compete, and attract long-term investment.

Infrastructure development is therefore not optional, it is fundamental to Nigeria's economic future.



technologies—artificial intelligence, data analytics, e-commerce, automation, fintech solutions, and digital customer engagement—are positioning themselves for sustained relevance in the global marketplace. Those that resist digital transformation risk being left behind. In essence, technology is not merely an enabler—it is a catalyst for inclusion, efficiency, and exponential growth. As Nigeria continues integrating digital solutions across sectors, the businesses that invest in technology-driven transformation will not only survive—they will define the future economy.

▶ **Boosting foreign direct investment**

Foreign Direct Investment flourishes in environments where stability, clarity, and confidence converge. Investors are drawn to markets with predictable policies, transparent regulatory processes, and strong institutions that uphold the rule of law. When risks are manageable and the operating environment is clear, investors are more willing to commit capital, transfer technology, and build long-term partnerships.

For Nigeria to position itself as a top investment destination in Africa, we must strengthen the fundamentals that drive investor confidence: modern infrastructure, consistent macroeconomic policies, simplified licensing processes, competitive incentives, and effective dispute resolution mechanisms. Strategic reforms that improve ease of doing business, enhance logistics efficiency, and deepen public-private dialogue will also be critical in unlocking capital inflows. Nigeria possesses extraordinary potential, our population, talent, natural resources, and emerging innovation ecosystem are compelling assets. By aligning these strengths with investor-friendly policies and a reliable governance framework, we can transform intention into investment and investment into sustainable economic growth.

In essence, attracting FDI is not only about capital, it is about creating an environment where global investors see Nigeria not as a high-risk option, but as a strategic and rewarding opportunity.

▶ **Technology and its impact on commerce**

Technology has become one of the most powerful forces reshaping commerce and redefining how businesses operate. It is transforming traditional business models,

revolutionising service delivery, streamlining supply chains, and expanding market access in ways that were unimaginable a decade ago. From digital payments to smart logistics, from automation to e-commerce platforms connecting buyers and sellers across continents, technology is levelling the playing field and democratising opportunity.

Today, competitiveness is increasingly determined not by size, but by agility, innovation, and digital readiness. Businesses that embrace emerging

“Foreign Direct Investment flourishes in environments where stability, clarity, and confidence converge”

► Improving export capabilities

For Nigerian businesses to fully participate in regional and global markets, export capability must be intentionally strengthened. Export readiness goes beyond ambition — it requires systems, standards, and strategic support. Businesses need access to market intelligence, product certification, standards compliance, efficient logistics, and appropriate financing mechanisms to compete internationally with confidence and credibility.

Capacity-building must also be paired with institutional support structures that simplify export processes and reduce barriers to entry. Platforms such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offer unprecedented opportunities to expand into new markets, leverage regional value chains, and showcase Nigerian products beyond borders. Through partnerships with government agencies, trade promotion bodies, financial institutions, and international organizations, we are working to equip businesses with the knowledge, networks, and tools they need to export successfully.

Ultimately, strengthening export capability is not only about increasing trade volumes — it is about building globally competitive enterprises, diversifying the economy, and positioning Nigeria as a key player in international commerce.

► Impact of local content policies

Local content policies have played a significant role in increasing domestic participation and strengthening national capacity in key sectors, particularly oil and gas. These policies have created opportunities for indigenous businesses, stimulated job creation, and encouraged



local value addition. They have also contributed to skills transfer and the development of supply chain ecosystems that previously did not exist at scale. However, the long-term success of local content frameworks requires a careful balance between national priorities and the realities of global competitiveness. While protection and preferential access are important in the early stages, they

must be paired with investments in quality standards, innovation, technology adoption, and capacity-building. Equally essential is fostering an environment where collaboration between local firms and international partners supports meaningful knowledge transfer, rather than dependency or superficial compliance. Ultimately, effective local content policy is

“Platforms such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offer unprecedented opportunities to expand into new markets, leverage regional value chains, and showcase Nigerian products beyond borders”

not just about reserving market share, it is about building globally competitive enterprises that can stand confidently on local and international platforms. When implemented thoughtfully, supported by strong governance, and aligned with broader economic development strategies, local content policies can accelerate industrialisation and position Nigerian businesses for sustainable global relevance

► **Future trends shaping business in Nigeria**

The business landscape in Nigeria is evolving rapidly, shaped by transformative forces that will redefine how organisations operate, compete, and grow. Several emerging trends are poised to influence the future of commerce and industry:

Rise of the Digital Economy and Automation:

Digital adoption, AI, and automation will reshape business processes, optimise efficiency, and expand new models of value creation.

Growth of the Green and Circular Economy:

Sustainability imperatives, climate considerations, and resource optimisation will shift industries toward cleaner energy, responsible production, and waste-to-value systems.

AfCFTA-Driven Regional Trade:

The African Continental Free Trade Area offers unprecedented market access, regional value chains, and cross-border collaboration opportunities, transforming Nigeria from a single market perspective to a continental one.

Innovation-Driven Entrepreneurship:

Nigeria's vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem will continue to birth solutions that address local challenges with global relevance—particularly in tech, finance, agriculture, and creative industries.

Increasing Focus on Governance, Compliance, and ESG Standards:

Investors and stakeholders are prioritising ethical practice, transparency, and environmental and social responsibility, making strong governance a competitive advantage.

Youth-Powered Enterprise and Talent Transformation:

With one of the youngest populations in the world, innovation, digital fluency, and new workplace models will be driven by youth-led leadership and emerging skills.

As these trends accelerate, businesses must respond not only with optimism, but with agility, strategic foresight, continuous innovation, and a commitment to building the capacity needed to remain resilient and relevant in a rapidly changing world.



“The business landscape in Nigeria is evolving rapidly, shaped by transformative forces that will redefine how organisations operate, compete, and grow”

HER POINT OF VIEW

How to Disconnect From Work After Hours

Chinyere Okorocha



One of the most overlooked career skills today is the ability to switch off. Not because your work is unimportant, but because mental rest is what sustains long-term performance and preserves your ability to lead with clarity.

Think of it this way: athletes don't train around the clock. Their recovery is part of their strategy for winning. The same principle applies to your career. The ability to rest intentionally is not indulgence, it is discipline.

For women, this is even more critical. Too many of us have been conditioned to constantly prove our worth by working longer, staying connected after hours, and carrying invisible loads at home. The result? Burnout, resentment, and missed opportunities to show up as our best selves.

Disconnecting is not a sign of weakness, it is a leadership move. It teaches others how to respect your time and demonstrates that you can set boundaries while still delivering results.

Here is a framework to help you disconnect without guilt and still accelerate your growth.

Step 1: Define Your Boundaries

Boundaries are not barriers; they are instructions that teach others how to work with you. If you are always accessible, you are silently signaling that your time has no limits.

Decide on your official "work-off" time and communicate it with confidence. You might say, "I'll be offline after 7 p.m., but I'll respond first thing tomorrow." Use calendar tools, status updates, or your email signature to reinforce this.

Teaching Point: When you don't set boundaries, you unintentionally train people to expect unlimited access. Leaders are respected not only for their output but

for how they model balance.

Step 2: Create a Shutdown Ritual

Your brain needs closure at the end of each workday. Without it, your mind keeps spinning long into the night, blurring the lines between professional and personal life.

Try this simple 10-minute ritual:

1. Review what you accomplished today.
2. Write down your top three priorities for tomorrow.
3. Physically close your laptop or step away from your workspace.

Teaching Point: This ritual tells your brain, "Work is complete. Rest can begin." It builds the discipline of mental recovery that leaders rely on to stay sharp.

Step 3: Build Recovery Habits

Disconnection is not just about stepping away from your desk. It is about intentionally filling the space with activities that restore you.

- **Movement:** go for a walk, stretch, or exercise.
- **Connection:** spend quality time with friends, family, or mentors.
- **Reflection:** journal, pray, meditate, or read something nourishing.

Teaching Point: When you plan recovery with intention, you avoid the trap of defaulting back into work. Recovery becomes part of your growth strategy, not an afterthought.

Your Challenge This Week

Choose one boundary, one shutdown ritual, and one recovery habit. Commit to them for five consecutive days. Then notice what happens to your focus, your energy, and your ability to show up with presence. Because career growth is not just about pushing harder. It is about knowing when to step back so you can step up stronger. The women who rise are not the ones who run themselves ragged. They are the ones who understand that rest, like resilience, is a leadership skill.



Chinyere Okorocha

Partner in the Law Firm of JACKSON, ETTI & EDU

With over three decades of experience as a trailblazer in the legal profession, Chinyere Okorocha has established herself as a leading voice in law, leadership, and career growth for women. As a partner in one of the most prestigious law firms in the country, she has not only navigated the complexities of a competitive industry but has consistently broken barriers to become a sought-after leader, mentor, and advocate for women in the workplace.

Chinyere's career journey is a testament to her resilience, vision, and versatility. She has held numerous leadership positions, served as a director on multiple boards, and is widely admired for her strategic thinking and ability to inspire teams toward excellence. Beyond her professional accomplishments, she has also graced stages as a speaker, sharing insights on leadership, career growth, and the unique challenges women face in their professional lives.

A devoted wife and proud mother of three, Chinyere understands firsthand the challenges of balancing the demands of a thriving career with a fulfilling personal life. Through her own experiences, she has mastered the art of work-life integration, demonstrating that women can achieve extraordinary professional success without sacrificing the joys of family and personal well-being.

Her career development platform, Heels & Ladders, is dedicated to mentoring and guiding women who aspire to redefine success, achieve career mastery, and lead with purpose. Whether you're navigating leadership challenges, striving for balance, or looking to amplify your influence, Chinyere's expertise will help you transform ambition into achievement.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE

Leading Through Uncertainty: How to Make Sound Decisions When Nothing Feels Stable

By Wola Joseph-Condotti

Leadership always sounds noble until you are the one in the chair and

nothing is clear. When the data is incomplete. When the risk is high. When your team is looking to you for direction and you do not have a map. That is when leadership is truly tested. Not in clarity, but in chaos.

In times of crisis, volatility, or ambiguity, the temptation is to either freeze or flail. But true leadership finds its footing, not in perfect information, but in anchored conviction.

When the Playbook No Longer Applies

We are living in unpredictable times. Economic downturns. Energy transitions. Regulatory uncertainty. Market shifts. Policy flip-flops. And beneath it all, the pressure to perform, to protect, to decide. And yet, leadership is not the absence of uncertainty. It is the ability to move through it with courage, composure, and clarity of purpose. One of the hardest truths I have learned in executive leadership is this: there will be moments when you have to make consequential decisions without full visibility. And that is where your values become your compass.

► Anchored Leadership

In unpredictable terrain, two things anchor us: principles and people.

1. Lead from Values, Not Just Data: Data is important but it is not always available, accurate, or complete. In chaos, it is your values that become your GPS.

Do you lead with integrity even when it is costly? Do you prioritize people over optics? Do you choose long-term credibility over short-term convenience? These are the questions that define

legacy.

2. Listen Deeply, But Do not Lead by Consensus: In moments of uncertainty, seek wise counsel but remember, leadership is not about pleasing everyone. It is about making the best decision with the information at hand and the values you hold dear.

► Biblical Insight: Joseph in Egypt

Joseph's story offers a profound model. He rose to leadership in a foreign land during a time of severe global famine. There was no precedent. No playbook. Yet his decisions saved nations.

How? Because when uncertainty reigned, Joseph leaned into divine wisdom and practical planning. He did not wait for perfection. He acted on insight, preparation, and trust in the bigger picture. That is what leadership looks like when everything feels unstable.

► Emotional Intelligence in the Eye of the Storm

Uncertain seasons test not just your strategy but your state. Your team is watching.

Not just what you decide, but how you carry yourself.
Not just what you say, but how you say it.
Not just what you control, but how you handle what you cannot.
Calm is contagious. So is panic.
In my own leadership journey, I have found that stillness is a discipline. There have been days I had to make high-stakes decisions with moving targets, half-truths, and political pressure. But even then, I learned to pause, pray, prioritize and then proceed.
Because while the environment may be unstable, my inner compass must not be.

► Practical Tools for Leading Through Chaos

1. Clarify What is Fixed vs. Flexible: Not everything is negotiable. Identify what must remain (your mission, your ethics, your people) and what can shift (methods, timelines, resource allocation).

2. Scenario Plan, Do Not Over-Predict: Prepare for multiple outcomes instead of betting everything on one forecast. Agility is better than false certainty.

3. Over-communicate with Empathy: In chaos, silence creates suspicion. Keep your people informed. Let them feel seen, even when you can not fix everything.

4. Trust Yourself, But Submit to God. We lead, but He sees. Our decisions may not always be perfect, but when made in wisdom and humility, they can still bear fruit.

Final Thoughts

Leadership in stable times builds reputation. Leadership in unstable times builds legacy. So if you are leading through uncertainty right now, take heart. It is not a sign that you are unqualified. It is a sign that you have been entrusted. Stand firm. Breathe deeply. Lead wisely. Because the world does not need leaders who know everything. It needs leaders who know how to lead when nothing is certain.



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.

FINANCIAL AdviseHER

Upgrade Your Money Language, Upgrade Your Money Life

By Sola Adesakin



abundance while your words constantly reinforce lack. The future you're working toward is already listening to what you say about money.

Language is not just communication. It is creation. It shapes your beliefs, and your beliefs shape your behavior. When you repeatedly say, "I am broke," you reinforce a state of helplessness. When you constantly describe life as "hard," you subconsciously push ease and opportunities away. Meanwhile, people who see money as a tool and not a mystery tend to take more proactive steps like budgeting, investing, negotiating, and learning new skills; actions that directly grow wealth.

This is not about blindly declaring riches while doing nothing to back it up. It is about aligning your thinking, your speaking, and your planning so they can produce better results.

So, how do we upgrade our money language in a practical, everyday way?

1. Move from fear to curiosity

When you don't understand something financially; investment products, taxes, insurance, stocks — instead of saying, "I don't know this," start saying, "I'm learning this." The first statement shuts the door. The second one opens it. Curiosity attracts knowledge, and knowledge attracts decisions that multiply.

2. Replace limitation with possibility

Rather than declaring, "I can't afford it," try, "How can I afford it sustainably?" The first response ends a conversation; the second one activates creativity. Wealthy people don't always have the money; they have the mindset to find solutions.

3. Speak the language of strategy, not self-pity

Statements like:
"I'm tired of these bills"
"I'm just managing"
"This country is too hard"
may feel true in the moment, but they reinforce struggle as your identity. Instead, shift to:
"I'm mastering how to manage money

better"

"I am building a stronger financial foundation"

"I am finding ways to thrive wherever I am"
This is how confidence is built, one intentional sentence at a time.

4. Normalise wealth conversations

Money is not a taboo topic; silence is what keeps many stuck. Talk about investing. Ask questions. Discuss the things that lead to growth: assets, savings, retirement plans, emergency funds. When you normalise progress-focused conversations, you normalise wealth-building behaviour.

5. Think and learn wealth daily

Your environment feeds your thinking. What do you read? Who do you listen to? What financial skills are you improving? You cannot speak wealth fluently if you never study the language. Invest in financial education: courses, practical money tools, mentorships, and reputable content sources.

The truth is that money responds to clarity, discipline, and consistency long before it responds to desire. If your financial goals sound vague even to you, they will remain vague in reality.

Say what you want clearly:

"I am building wealth."

"I am improving my financial decisions."

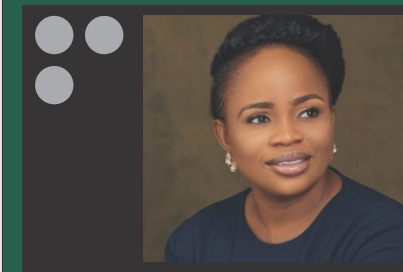
"I am growing my investment knowledge."

"I am creating a better financial future for my family."

Each time you speak like this, you strengthen the mindset that helps you act smarter with money. And those little shifts, the decisions to save today, invest consistently, avoid lifestyle pressure, learn something new all compound into long-term success.

Your words lead. Your finances follow

If you want a better money experience, upgrade the language you use to describe it. Wealth isn't just something you pursue. It's something you cultivate in how you think and speak daily. Start today: talk wealth, think wealth, learn wealth, and over time, you will live wealth.



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.

GENDER INSIGHTS

Navigating Life's Transitions: Divorce, Widowhood, and Retirement Planning

Abiola Adediran

Life has a way of changing its rhythm when we least expect it. One day, you're following a familiar routine—balancing work, family, and personal dreams—and the next, everything feels different. For women, transitions like divorce, widowhood, or retirement can feel overwhelming, not just emotionally, but financially and practically. Yet, with intention, planning, and self-awareness, these periods of change can also become opportunities for empowerment, growth, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Take Funke, for example. She had spent over a decade in her marriage, building a home, raising children, and supporting her husband's career. When the marriage ended, she suddenly found herself navigating life alone, financially responsible for herself and her kids in ways she hadn't fully anticipated. At first, it was daunting—she had bills, mortgages, and limited savings earmarked for family expenses. But Funke knew she had to take action. She began by assessing her current financial situation: understanding her assets, liabilities, and income streams.

She created a new budget, separating what was essential from what was discretionary, and prioritised building an emergency fund to cushion unexpected expenses.

Funke also made a conscious choice to educate herself about investments and retirement planning. She explored personal finance resources, attended workshops, and consulted with a trusted financial advisor. Within a year,

Funke was not only managing her finances independently but also investing in herself—her skills, her business ideas, and her long-term security. Divorce had been painful, yes, but it became the catalyst for Funke to step fully into her financial independence.

Then there's Chidera, a widow who lost her

husband unexpectedly after 25 years of marriage. The grief was profound, and on top of that, she faced the immediate responsibility of managing finances that she had never fully overseen. She realised she needed to take control of her family's financial future. Chidera started by gathering all legal documents—wills, insurance

policies, property deeds, and pension statements—to get a clear picture of what was available. She sought professional advice to manage inheritance taxes, understand pension benefits, and ensure the family estate was secure.

Beyond the immediate financial tasks, Chidera also focused on planning for the long term. She began to set realistic goals: building a diversified investment portfolio, establishing a savings plan for her children's education, and exploring life insurance policies to protect against future uncertainties. Importantly, she also prioritised her well-being. She joined support groups, connected with mentors who had navigated similar experiences, and learnt to make decisions that honoured both her emotional and financial needs. Widowhood had shifted her world, but it also revealed her strength and resilience. By taking deliberate steps, she transformed a painful transition into a journey of empowerment.

Retirement, too, can be a major transition, though often anticipated rather than sudden. Yet, even planned transitions come with uncertainty. Take Yetunde, a corporate executive who had spent decades climbing the ladder. When retirement approached, she was excited about freedom but anxious about sustaining her lifestyle, managing investments, and planning for the next chapter of life. To navigate this transition, Yetunde began by assessing her retirement readiness: reviewing pensions, investment accounts, and expected income streams. She worked with a financial planner to calculate her future expenses and identify gaps, creating a strategy to bridge them.

Yetunde also embraced the personal side of retirement. She explored passions she had long set aside, from volunteering to traveling, and ensured her retirement planning reflected her desired lifestyle, not just financial targets. By combining financial preparation with intentional life planning, retirement became not an ending, but a beginning—a chance to live

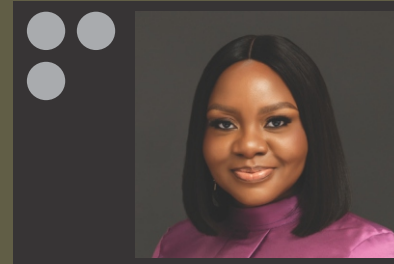
on her own terms, with security, joy, and purpose.

What unites Funke, Chidera, and Yetunde is the understanding that transitions require both financial clarity and emotional resilience. Taking control of your finances is empowering, but so is taking care of your well-being. For women navigating divorce, widowhood, or retirement, the key is to approach each stage with intention. Assess your current situation, understand your assets and liabilities, seek professional guidance when needed, and align your financial decisions with your life goals.

Rebuilding finances after divorce might involve creating new budgets, consolidating debts, understanding spousal and child support agreements, and starting fresh investment strategies. Managing inheritance or pensions after widowhood requires gathering legal and financial documents, understanding tax implications, creating long-term savings plans, and protecting family wealth. Planning for retirement is about forecasting your expenses, creating income strategies that support your desired lifestyle, and investing in experiences and personal growth that bring fulfillment beyond money.

Transitions are never easy, but they are transformative. They force reflection, growth, and intentional action. They are opportunities to reclaim your power, redefine your goals, and design a life where wealth serves well-being, not just survival. Whether it's Funke learning to stand financially on her own, Chidera taking control after loss, or Yetunde planning a fulfilling retirement, the journey is the same: integrating financial security with emotional and personal fulfillment.

When women approach life's transitions with courage, planning, and self-compassion, they don't just navigate change—they thrive through it. And in doing so, they create a blueprint for others to follow, leaving a legacy of resilience, empowerment, and holistic wealth.


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.



WOMAN AT THE HELM

Khadijat Abdulkadir

Founder/CEO, INGRYD & Digital African Woman

As a passionate social entrepreneur and the Founder of INGRYD Academy and Digital African Woman, Khadijat Abdulkadir is dedicated to leveraging technology to create access and opportunities in developing markets. Her commitment extends particularly to empowering women and youth in Africa and Europe, as well as advocating for diversity and inclusion in business and government.

INGRYD began with a simple but powerful vision: to make opportunities accessible to all. What started as one woman's mission to bridge the skills gap for underserved youth has grown into a global movement — connecting people to life-changing training and businesses to job-ready tech talent. Today, they are a global partner in workforce

transformation — offering advanced training, enterprise consulting, and access to job-ready, certified tech professionals. They don't just build talent pipelines. They build futures.

Digital African Woman (DAW) is a foundation dedicated to the development and support of women-led African and Diaspora tech startups. DAW provides the opportunity for women to learn, engage and be empowered to participate actively in their respective societies while maximising the power and use of technology.

With decades of experience in the technology sector, Khadijat also founded Xerde. Her most recent start-up raised over \$2,000,000 in funding, showcasing her ability to attract investment and drive innovation. She was a Special Assistant to two Inspector Generals of the Nigerian Police, where she deployed the

Nigerian Police Digital Bank and Police Cooperative Platform.

Prior to launching her own businesses, she served as the Chief Technology Officer at Africa Prudential PLC. She has also held the position of Head of IT Testing and Digital Transformation at Apside Belgium.

Khadijat possess both technical and functional experience in integrating, testing, and supporting SAP R/3 and ECC 6.0, with practical knowledge of configuration across various lifecycle implementation phases.

She is a certified Advanced ISTQB and Agile Coach, and has a strong command of SDLC methodologies, including Waterfall and ASAP. Additionally, she has foundational programming skills in ABAP, C++, C#, and Python.



WE'VE GOT MEN

Olufemi Awoyemi

Founder and Chairman of Proshare

Olufemi Awoyemi is the Founder and Chairman of Proshare, Nigeria's foremost financial information hub and owners of WebTV, Debtors Africa and Proshare. An astute leader, forward thinking and disruptive strategist, he is a Fellow of several reputable professional bodies including The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), the Institute of Directors, (IoD) the Chartered Institute of Bankers and the Institute of Management Consultants. He is also an Associate member of the Nigerian Institute of Management. Olufemi Awoyemi holds Honorary fellowships of the Association of Investment Advisers and Portfolio Managers, Institute of Credit Administration, Business Process Management Institute, and the Institute of Information Management.

Having had a distinguished career spanning over three decades, Olufemi Awoyemi is regarded as an expert in finance and business strategy

and a leading authority in economic and public policy. Over the period, he has had course to work with various leading local and international brands such as PricewaterhouseCoopers, UAC of Nigeria, Eterna Oil & Gas Plc, Phillips Consulting, Fountain Trust Bank and British American Tobacco, recording remarkable outcomes and earning the respect of many.

He has served on several other committees including the Securities & Exchange Commission's Capital Market Committee (CMC) on FinTech Roadmap for Nigeria, the Institute of Directors' Financial Services & Capital Markets Committee as Chairman, and as Vice-Chairman of the Ethics & Governance committee to mention a few.

He had previously been a 3-term member of the Strategy, Research & Advocacy committee of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), member of the 2015 Technical Sub-Committee of the Nigeria

Economic Summit Group (NESG), member of various committees of the Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce and in 2012, Technical Advisor to the National Assembly House Committee on Capital Markets.

Olufemi is currently a Governing Council Member and Vice-President of the Association of Investment Advisers & Portfolio Managers, Governing Council member of the Fintech Association of Nigeria and representative member for Nigeria on the African Fintech Network (AFN) and many more.

He has published hundreds of reviews, opinions, articles, research work, and publications in the last three decades covering workplace issues, market intelligence, service/practice/innovation issues in the capital market, corporate governance in Nigeria, public policy, and impact assessments, as well as white collar crimes in corporate Nigeria and the markets.

HOLISTIC LIVING

When the Body Speaks: How Movement, Breath, and Stillness Heal the Mind

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri



Imagine standing in a quiet room. No phone, no noise, no deadlines. Just your heartbeat, your breath, and the rhythm of your own body. For a moment, you remember that peace isn't something we find, it's something we return to.

The truth is our bodies have been whispering to us for years. But in the rush of modern life, we've forgotten how to listen. We chase pills, projects, and perfection, yet the cure we seek often lies in the simplest of practices such as movement, breath, and stillness.

Our bodies are storytellers. Every tight shoulder, shallow breath, or sleepless night is a message: something within needs attention. The mind and body are not separate kingdoms, they share one nervous system, one heartbeat, one history. When one suffers, the other calls for help.

Stress, anxiety, and depression don't just live in our thoughts, they live in our cells. And healing them requires more than talk; it requires reconnection. Science now echoes what ancient wisdom has known all along: when we move our bodies, control our breath, and practice

stillness, we activate the body's own pharmacy.

Movement: The Medicine We Forgot

Exercise is more than sweat, it's alchemy. Every stretch, stride, or step release endorphin, the body's natural antidepressants. Movement tells the brain, "We're alive. We're capable. We're safe."

You don't have to run a marathon to feel better. Sometimes, healing begins with a 10-minute walk in the morning sun or dancing in your living room. Movement clears emotional cobwebs that words can't reach. It teaches your

brain that progress doesn't always mean productivity, it can mean peace.

Breath: The Bridge Between Chaos and Calm

When life feels heavy, our breath becomes shallow. But with one deep inhale, something shifts. Breath is our built-in reset button, a bridge between chaos and calm. It slows the heart, quiets the mind, and reminds us that survival and serenity can share the same space.

Mindful breathing is powerful because it's accessible anywhere. In traffic, at your desk, or before a difficult conversation. Try this: inhale deeply for four counts, hold for

two, exhale for six. Do this five times. You'll feel your thoughts untangle, one breath at a time.

Stillness: The Strength in Silence

In a world that glorifies hustle, stillness feels rebellious. But stillness is not inactivity, it's inner alignment. It's choosing to listen rather than react. It's giving your nervous system permission to exhale.

Meditation, prayer, or even sitting quietly under a tree invites the body to return to its natural rhythm. Stillness doesn't erase life's noise; it simply lowers its volume so you can hear yourself again.

Beyond Weight and Workouts: The Joy of Movement

We often treat movement as punishment for eating or a chase for perfection. But what if it's simply celebration?

Dance not to burn calories, but to burn stress. Walk not to reach a step goal, but to reconnect with your body's gratitude. Yoga, hiking, swimming, these aren't fitness trends, they're conversations between the mind and body that say, "I'm here. I matter."

When the Body Heals, the Mind Follows

The most profound therapy sometimes doesn't come from a couch, it comes from consciousness. The moment you move, breathe, and rest with intention, your body begins to self-correct. The heart rate stabilizes. The mood lifts. The fog clears.

This is not magic, its biology wrapped in mindfulness. It's the science of self-compassion.

You don't need fancy equipment or perfect routines. You just need presence. Start where you are. Stretch when you wake. Breathe when you're overwhelmed. Sit in stillness when the world feels too loud.

Because healing isn't always found in a prescription, it's often found in your pulse.

When you honor your body, you heal your mind. And when you heal your mind, you return home to yourself.



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.

TRIBE WITH THE VIBES

Safety...where are you?

By Zainab Aderounmu

In the past week, the tension in Nigeria has been overwhelming. Story after story of kidnappings: 25 girls in Kebbi, over 300 children and teachers in Niger State, and countless others taken in scattered incidents across the country. What unsettles me most is how easily we've learned to carry on, pretending we are somehow safe.

"As long as my family is fine, as long as I'm not directly affected," that seems to be the mindset. Not just among citizens, but heartbreakingly, among our leaders too. Earlier this year, I traveled to Kwara for an event and made the journey back by road without a second thought. If I had to make that same trip today, I honestly wouldn't dare.

Those incidents that once felt like distant headlines are now creeping

closer, unsettlingly so. Schools, meant to nourish the minds and dreams of young people, are being shut down, not for holidays or repairs, but to shield students from the threat of violence. It's a heartbreaking reminder of how insecurity is reshaping even the most fundamental parts of our lives.

The question is simple but sobering: How much longer before it reaches your doorstep?

The barrage of violence may force us into despair but we cannot afford to stay numb or silent. This is the moment for citizens, communities, leaders, and institutions to demand coordinated, sustained security action from our leaders, not occasional reactions when tragedy strikes.

A massive number of out of school children (over 20 million according to UNICEF) got us here in the first place. So closing down schools, as some

governors have done, is only a band aid which would aggravate our wounds and reinforce insecurity.

Nigeria's security infrastructure cannot continue to run on outdated strategies and reactionary responses. Research shows that societies with stronger education and youth engagement opportunities are less likely to experience violence and radicalisation. Our government must shift from reactive firefighting to preventive strategy. That includes safeguarding school environments, deploying technology for surveillance, strengthening local vigilante networks through proper regulation, and addressing the root economic drivers of kidnapping. When schools are fortified and communities are empowered, insecurity loses its fuel. Anything less is simply postponing the crisis.

The truth is, insecurity doesn't disappear when we pretend it doesn't exist. The opposite, in fact, happens. It compounds, it multiplies and creeps closer. Kwara is a 5-hour drive from Lagos, and it shares boundaries with Ibadan, how much longer will the bandits stay put before venturing out? Let's think about it.



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.



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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.

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