



INSPIRING
WOMAN
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MICHELLE
MCKINNEY
HAMMOND

LIVING INTENTIONALLY, INSPIRING HUMANITY
WHOLESOMELY



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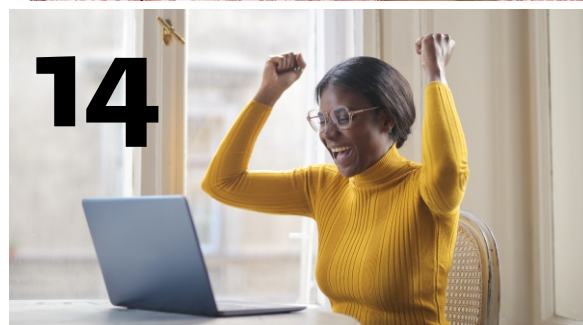
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African Feminism and the
Future of Women's Activism
in Nigeria



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Welcome!

Dear Readers,

It's always a feel-good experience for us as we weekly bring you interviews and articles you will love. But...wait...for real? Our final edition for August already? Someone please pinch me...when did we arrive in August that we are rounding up already? Indeed, time waits for no one.

We are excited to introduce our cover guest for this week to you. A remarkable woman who lives to inspire. Talk about someone who life tested but refused to break. She continued to rise above the obstacles and ensured the trials never stole her light. Those experiences made her a force to reckon with, encouraging everyone around her and nurturing them to excellence.

We present to you, a best-selling author of more than 40 books with over two million copies sold worldwide, an international speaker and Emmy Award-winning television cohost, actress, singer and songwriter, MICHELLE MCKINNEY HAMMOND. We admire how she is bridging her American roots with her connection to the African continent. Have a great time reading about her journey and truth.

Here are other articles in this edition:

HER POINT OF VIEW: Stop Climbing Blindly: Why Every Woman Needs a Career Blueprint. By Chinyere Okorocho.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE: Let Your Work Speak — But Do Not Make It Whisper. By Wola Joseph-Condotti.

FINANCIAL AdviseHER: Money Responds to Clarity. By Sola Adesakin.

GENDER INSIGHTS: African Feminism and the Future of Women's Activism in Nigeria. By Asmau Benzies-Leo.

HOLISTIC LIVING: From Handcuffs to Healing: Nigeria's Historic Step to Decriminalise Suicide. By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri.

TRIBE WITH THE VIBES: Guard your Heart With All Diligence. By Zainab Aderounmu.

WOMAN AT THE HELM: KAMPETA PITCHETTE SAYINZOGA is the CEO, Access to Finance Rwanda (AFR).

WE'VE GOT MEN: TONY BONNICI, Chief, Public-Partnerships Section, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Geneva.

See you in September!



COVER INTERVIEW

MICHELLE MCKINNEY HAMMOND

LIVING INTENTIONALLY, INSPIRING
HUMANITY WHOLESOMELY

Kemi Ajumobi

Michelle McKinney Hammond has spent decades inspiring women around the world

to live with intention, embrace their worth and navigate life, love, faith and change with wisdom and authenticity. A best-selling author of more than 40 books with over two million copies sold worldwide, Michelle has become one of the most recognizable and trusted voices in Christian lifestyle and relationship conversations. Her signature blend of faith, wit, candor and practical wisdom has allowed her to connect with generations of women across cultures and continents.

Long before reinvention became a cultural buzzword, Michelle was living it. Her journey has moved seamlessly across advertising, publishing, television, music, ministry, acting and film - each chapter revealing another dimension of a woman committed to using every gift entrusted to her. As an international speaker, Michelle has graced influential platforms around the world, bringing her distinctive perspective on relationships, womanhood, spiritual growth, purpose and personal transformation to audiences of thousands. Her ability to speak honestly about the complexities of real life while remaining deeply rooted in faith has become one of the hallmarks of her work.

Her influence extends far beyond the written and spoken word. An Emmy Award-winning television cohost,



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Black lead in the
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the Miss
Muskegon
Pageant**



actress, singer and songwriter with seven CDs to her credit, Michelle has also expanded into filmmaking as a writer and producer. After making West Africa her home in 2011, she continued building a body of work that bridges her American roots with her deep connection to Ghana and the African continent.

At the heart of Michelle's work is a consistent message: your life can continue to evolve.

Whether she is writing about love, speaking about purpose, ministering through music, creating for television and film, or encouraging women to confidently embrace their next chapter, Michelle embodies the message she has shared throughout her career - the power of becoming.

Today, she continues to write, speak, create, mentor and minister internationally, inspiring women to go deeper, live more fully and recognize that change does not have to signal an ending. Sometimes, it is an invitation. For Michelle McKinney Hammond, there is always another chapter to write.

► Years the early influences began and impact till date

I was born in London to a mother from Barbados and a father from Ghana. I went to school in Barbados before moving to the States at the age of seven. It was a traumatic transition. The British school system was more advanced than the American system at the time, which resulted in my being advanced several grades and becoming the youngest in my class.

I was underweight, had a heavy West Indian accent, and those differences made me a target for bullying. I found solace in books. As I moved through secondary school and high school, I discovered new loves and new means of expression that brought me joy: music, theatre, and dance.

The artistic side of me emerged in high



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I learnt that God will allow things to dry up to make you move, pivot, or release something so He can fulfill His purpose in your life

school and never left. On stage, I could become someone else—someone who didn't struggle with the issues confronting me in everyday life. Later, I became the first Black lead in the Civic Opera Association of Muskegon and first runner-up in the Miss Muskegon Pageant.

I have to admit, I became a bit of an overachiever, performing for love and acceptance. But those experiences also made me want to become a champion for the underdog, the rejected, and the



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Fear paralyses us. Grief can cause us to give up hope. Avoidance abdicates responsibility, and faith's best friend is patience

As the saying goes, “Never explain yourself to anyone. Those who love you don't need it, and those who don't won't believe you anyway.”

I learnt to rejoice in my flaws and even allow them to reveal who was really in my corner. Most importantly, I learnt to embrace correction and confrontation as opportunities to be better and do better.

▶ **Season of life that most tested your faith and your self-trust**

Right before I moved to Ghana, everything fell apart. I lost everything. It led me to examine myself and get in God's face on a whole other level. I never ask God, “Why?” I ask, “What?” But during that season, I had to admit that I questioned my skills, my gifts, my relevance, and even my walk with God. Where had I gone wrong? What had I missed?

Eventually, I circled back to the question I knew to ask: “What are You doing, God?”

What are You trying to show me? What do You want me to do? How do You want to glorify Yourself in the midst of this mess?

Lots of questions.

Then God said, “Move to Ghana. When you obey, I will reveal My plan.”

The rest is history.

misunderstood. I wanted to empower people to feel good about themselves and believe they could achieve whatever they set their hearts on.

Years later, when I met Christ, that passion found an even greater purpose. I became passionate about sharing how an intimate relationship with Him can transform your life and empower you to become who He created you to be.

▶ **Long held belief you had to adjust, relearn, or unlearn**

I had to adjust my attitude towards correction. I had to learn that correction wasn't rejection. For a long time, I felt the need to perform for love. Somewhere along the way, I had convinced myself that getting everything right guaranteed love and acceptance. Not true!



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When you acknowledge reality of your situation and relax, tension gives way to clarity, solutions begin to emerge, and you are able to rise above the situation

I learnt that God will allow things to dry up to make you move, pivot, or release something so He can fulfill His purpose in your life and position you to become a greater blessing to others.

When you understand that your life is bigger than you—that all roads and experiences ultimately point back to Him

and what He planned from the beginning of time—you panic less, question less, and trust Him more.

Forget about trusting yourself. Trust Him.

► **When a woman says, “I’m waiting for clarity,” what do you think is most often underneath the waiting: fear, grief, avoidance, or faith?**

Fear paralyzes us. Grief can cause us to give up hope. Avoidance abdicates responsibility. And faith’s best friend is patience.

Waiting for clarity affects everyone differently depending on how you see

God, how you see yourself, and what you’ve experienced.

I always say, when in doubt, do nothing. Wait for peace.

Sometimes the wait and the lack of direction are actually God’s pause sign, telling us to wait for His timing. The beautiful thing about waiting is that you can’t outwait God. He will make sure you arrive where you are supposed to be—on time.

► **Seeking wisdom when the answer isn’t “move on” or “stay,” but “learn how to love or do that thing differently”**

Life can be like quicksand. The more you fight where you are, the deeper you sink. But when you acknowledge the reality of your situation and relax, the tension gives way to clarity. Solutions begin to emerge, and you are able to rise above the situation.

Wisdom reminds you that God is in control, and you are not.

Do you trust Him? Then release yourself into His care and get happy about not being in control! That is actually a good thing. Someone more powerful and capable than you—Someone who has good intentions toward you—is in control. So instead of fighting the situation you’re in, learn the lessons. Those lessons will enrich you and equip you for your next.

► **Distinguishing between conviction and condemnation as a woman, especially when tired and heart-scarred**

You can still breathe when you’re convicted.

Conviction is that pinprick, that check in your spirit that tells you something isn’t right and gives you an opportunity to self-correct.

Condemnation, on the other hand, sucks the life and breath out of you. It is paralyzing. It leaves you without hope and fills your spirit with lies: You are worthless. There is no redemption for you. There is no way back to God. Condemnation is meant to take life from you. Conviction is meant to give life to



you through correction, calling you to pivot from where you were headed. They feel very different.

► **Your work spans advertising, publishing, television, music, ministry, acting, and film. How do you manage it all without one area getting more attention than another?**

Being sensitive to the season I'm in helps me know what deserves my attention. The Word is true: God will direct your

path. If something doesn't feel organic, I tend not to pursue it. If it isn't flowing, I pause and reconsider what I'm doing and whether it's the right time.

That's not to say everything God tells you to do is easy—on the contrary! But one of the confirmations that I'm on the right track is the level of peace I possess as I move forward. If I have peace, even when everything looks crazy, I proceed.

I'm determined to use every gift God gave me until I can't. I recently added Fashion Design (MMH Collections) to my list! I've found God to be the best time manager on the planet. When it's time for me to do a particular thing, He makes the space and the time for it to happen. And if I can't do something with excellence, I don't do it. That also helps me sift and separate what I'm supposed to be doing in any given season.

► **If the story of your life were rewritten as a film script, what scenes would take the longest to shoot—and why?**

I've been told I should make a movie about my life, but I can't figure out where to begin. Too many stories! Perhaps the longest scenes would be about my relationships and friendships. They have been lengthy and complex. I have very long-standing relationships in my life. We've been through a lot together and weathered so many storms that it would take time to unpack everything that has happened in both my platonic and romantic relationships.

And then there is my relationship with my father, whom I miraculously found after many years of separation. That story alone could probably be a movie.

► **Coming to Africa, what have you learnt about identity from crossing cultures, and what did it correct or expand in you?**

I think my father had plotted and planned to get me to move to Ghana for a long time! I spent a lot of time with him there during the holidays, but I had a thriving ministry in the States.

That all came to a halt when he died and essentially dropped his entire life into my lap. After trying to divide my life between two countries, I sought God in a heap of exhaustion and very clearly felt directed to move to Ghana.

It took me three weeks to pack up everything—including my dogs—and move.

Fifteen years later, I've never looked back. It wasn't a huge cultural leap for me

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Condemnation takes life from you but conviction gives life to you through correction and calling you to pivot from where you were headed



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because I was already acclimated to Ghanaian culture. West Indian and West African sensibilities are very similar. I always say the boat from Ghana had to land in Barbados—the people, the food, the mindsets are remarkably similar.

What continues to strike me is living in a world where we are the majority and don't have to apologise for being Black or feel hindered by it.

I remember attending a festival in Cape Coast and being overwhelmed by the beauty and majesty of the chiefs' procession. I felt immense pride and humility at the same time, realising that I was part of a royal people who had remained intact in tradition and culture. It was a stark contrast to my experience in the West.

► **Honouring culture without losing the values you hold dear**

I treasure so much of the culture I've come to know and love. In many ways, I find it quite biblical: the honour we give to elders, family accountability, and the way we take care of one another.

My identity itself crosses cultures. I am British, Ghanaian, West Indian, and American by citizenship. I also have Nigerian heritage—my grandmother was



Nigerian, and Nigerian. I am Michelle Ayodele McKinney Hammond.

I am a Fanti from Cape Coast in Ghana's Central Region and a Safohen—a warrior queen. My title is Safohen Nana Araba Hammond.

I embrace all of it because it makes me who I am. I am grounded in my identity. I definitely know who I am! But some aspects of culture—African or otherwise—run counter to the culture of God's Kingdom. That is where I draw the line.

God and His Word supersede culture. I won't compromise the standards of God to win human approval.

► **What is the greatest lesson life has taught you?**

Just when you think you've finally figured out life, you discover that you haven't! Walking with God is spontaneous, exciting, exhilarating, and scary all at the same time. Because when you open your hands and say, "Have Your way with my life," you are in for the ride of a lifetime. And it makes for an amazing testimony.



There is never a dull moment with God.

► **What's a boundary that changed your life?**

Learning to say no.

I also learnt not to allow anyone to drive my car but God. He gets the last say in my life.

That boundary has kept me from making a lot of mistakes and given me greater peace and stability.

Every good thing is not God. Just because something is good doesn't mean it's for me. Knowing that settles me.

I don't have to be all things to all people. I am only called to those He has assigned me to.

That is liberating.

► **You've built a multi-decade body of work. What does success mean to you?**

Success to me is making God smile and blessing people. My passion is to live a life that aligns with what God has given me to say and to be an example of His character to everyone I encounter.

If I can give someone a glimpse of God that transforms their thinking and their life, I've succeeded.

For me, success isn't financial. It is about making eternal deposits into the lives of people.

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► **As a producer, tell us about your works and where those projects stand today.**

It's been a three-phase journey.

I began behind the camera—writing, art directing, producing, and being a voice-over talent in the advertising world for the largest African American ad agency in America. Then I moved in front of the camera as an actor in several movies and television series in Ghana. Eventually, I began writing scripts, directing shorts, and finally writing and producing my first film, *First Love*, which will soon be released as a series of vertical shorts.

I'm also excited about bringing my novels to life through a series entitled *Once Upon A Life*.

These projects are all currently in development, and I'm excited about what's ahead.

► **How important is it for women to know and embrace their worth?**

When you know and embrace your worth, it frees you to recognise and celebrate the worth in others.

You become able to nurture and empower other people to become what God created them to be. I believe this is the lifelong assignment of everyone who knows God. This is sisterhood at its best.

The power of every woman is her ability to empower others.

An empowered woman understands that life is not a competition. No one is a threat. Everyone has a part to play in the tapestry life is weaving.

We are individual threads, but when woven together, we create a beautiful picture.

Knowing and embracing our worth is critical to our health as women and to the contributions we make to society and the world.

► **As an international speaker who has done this for years, what have you learnt, and what advice would you give speakers and mentors?**

You have to earn the right to speak into people's lives.

Empathy has to be a major factor. Most people are looking for answers, so listen.



Read the room. Hear the Spirit.
Don't be married to what you planned to say. The message may need to change based on the needs of the people in front of you.

Whether I'm speaking in a secular or sacred environment, I don't give my opinion. I give people the Word of God—whether through Scripture or biblical principle—because I believe it is the only sure solution to the things we face in life.

I also prefer the word discipleship to mentorship, because I think mentorship is often misused and misunderstood. Effective mentorship or discipleship can only happen when you really walk with someone.

If those who lived with and followed Jesus for three years didn't understand everything He was saying, what can really be accomplished over lunch every now and then?

Mentorship only yields results when there is transparency, consistent accountability, and a willingness to receive correction. It requires a lot of time to build a relationship that consists of all of that.

► **What does growth look like when it's private, slow, and uncelebrated?**

The truth is, that's often the only way real growth happens—privately, slowly, and without applause. When you can be your best when no one is looking, you have truly grown. The mountaintop is fabulous, but the valley is where the fruit grows. God will leave you there until you get over yourself. It hurts. It can feel unending. It can make you question yourself and everything you believe until every layer of self-determination is peeled away. But the process is actually designed to preserve you so that you can sustain and maintain everything He causes you to attain. God will often separate you before others celebrate you. He does some of His best work in the shadows and dark spaces of our lives so that when we finally shine, it is His light that others see. That takes the



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pressure off us to be brilliant. It is much easier to reflect His glory. We burn out because self-generated light isn't sustainable. Once you understand the purpose, you can surrender to the process.

► **Winning the Emmy and what changed afterward**

It was a wonderful acknowledgment of my work, and that is always affirming. But I come from the advertising world, where we always said, “You're only as great as

your last ad.” So, rather than making me feel that I had arrived, winning the Emmy challenged me to strive for the next thing. The standard was lifted.

► **To the female executive who is overwhelmed by deadlines, balancing work and life, and is on the verge of giving up, what do you want her to know?**

Release yourself from the pressure to be everything to everyone all the time. It's impossible—and that is good news! The



only person who can accomplish that is God. So, thank God that He is God and you are not. At the end of the day, the tyranny of the urgent is a lie. What you don't accomplish today will still be waiting for you tomorrow. Deal with life in small bites, and don't beat yourself up. Sometimes, your inability to do something is by design because it creates room for someone else to rise. It allows someone else to grow. Make space for other people to do their part. Find delight in releasing control instead of fearing it. The truth is, you were never really in control anyway. The illusion of control drives us to place unrealistic expectations on ourselves, leading to frustration and low self-esteem. So let go. Do what you can do and leave the rest to God and others. Wealth is not merely the accumulation of achievements or acquisitions. True wealth is a life that is well-lived and sustainable. Examine what is robbing you of that. You would be amazed at how much we do simply because we believe it is expected of us. The only expectations you ultimately need to live up to are God's. And believe me, we often require more of ourselves than He does.

► Unforgettable Day

I will never forget the day I stood trembling in front of a preacher who told me two things: God loved me more than I would ever know, and He had a call on my life. Those two truths blew my mind and changed my life forever. Because of the circumstances in my life at the time, I felt totally unworthy. But suddenly, those words gave me hope and an incredible sense of purpose. I've spent my life ever since pursuing the fulfillment of what God saw in me.

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WOMAN EXECUTIVE



Let Your Work Speak — But Do Not Make It Whisper

By Wola Joseph-Condotti

Let me describe a woman you probably know. You might even be her. She is excellent. Genuinely. She delivers early, delivers clean, and delivers again. Her work rarely comes back with corrections. When something is on fire, she is the one they call, because everyone knows she will handle it and she will not make a fuss about it.

She is exactly the kind of person any leader wants on the team. I have built teams around women like her, and I would do it again tomorrow.

But there is one small thing holding her back. And it is not her work.

The Habit We Were Praised For

Many of us were raised on a simple, good instinct. Do the work well, and let the work speak for itself. Do not boast. Do not make noise. Keep your head down, deliver, and let the results carry you.

It is a beautiful instinct. It built my early career, and I still believe in most of it. But somewhere along the way, a lot of excellent women took that instinct one

step too far. We did not just let the work speak. We made the work whisper. We got so uncomfortable with the idea of talking about what we do that we stopped talking about it altogether.

And here is the quiet problem with that. Leaders cannot reward what they cannot see. Not because they are careless, but because they are human, and they are managing many people, many priorities, and a great deal of noise. If your good work is happening silently in a corner, there is a real chance it stays in that corner. That is not a flaw in you. It is just how

organisations work. And it is fixable.

Hard Work Is Not the Problem. Hidden Work Is.

Let me be very clear about something, because I do not want to be misread. Hard work counts. It has always counted, and it always will. I have never once regretted rewarding it, and I never will. The people who deliver, who take the standards seriously, who do the unglamorous work that keeps the lights on, those people are the backbone of every organisation I have ever led. Nothing I am about to say changes that.

What I am saying is narrower, and gentler. It is this. Doing excellent work and helping people understand the value of that work are two different skills. And a lot of us mastered the first while quietly neglecting the second.

You can be the best in the building and still be the best-kept secret in the building. Those two things can be true at the same time. And when they are, it is not because you did anything wrong. It is because nobody ever taught you that letting your work be understood is part of the work.

Giving Your Work a Voice

So what does this look like in practice? Not politics. Not spin. Nothing that would make you feel like a different person. It looks like being able to say, plainly and without shrinking, what you did and why it mattered. Most excellent women are strangely bad at this. We finish something genuinely difficult and then describe it like it was nothing. Oh, it was a team effort. It was not a big deal. Anyone could have done it. And the room believes us, because why would they not? We told them it was nothing.

Say it clearly instead. Not loudly. Just clearly. It also looks like letting the people who make decisions actually see your work firsthand, rather than assuming it will travel to them on its own. Volunteer for the thing that matters. Speak in the

meeting. Let your name be attached to the good outcome instead of quietly slipping out of the room before anyone can thank you.

None of this is self-promotion. It is stewardship of your own contribution. And it honours the work, rather than burying it.

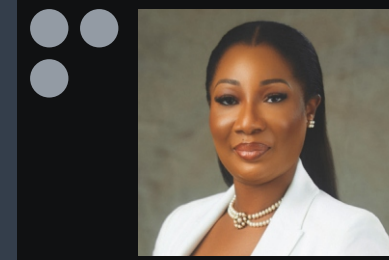
A Word From Scripture

Joseph is often remembered for his gift. He could interpret dreams, and he could. But look closely at the moment that moved him from the prison to the palace. He interpreted Pharaoh's dream, yes. But he did not stop there and wait quietly to be noticed. In the same breath, he laid out a plan. Store grain in the years of plenty. Appoint a wise man. Prepare for the famine that is coming. He connected his gift directly to the biggest problem in the room, out loud, in front of the person who could do something about it. Joseph was faithful in the prison for years, and that faithfulness was never wasted. But he became indispensable in a single conversation, the moment he let his excellence be seen solving the thing that mattered most. The gift got him the meeting. The willingness to speak got him the nation.

Final Thoughts

So to the excellent woman reading this, hear me clearly. Keep working hard. Keep your standards high. Keep delivering with integrity, because that is who you are and it is never, ever wasted. I promise you it is being noticed more than you think, and I promise you it matters.

But do not make your good work whisper. Let it speak. Say plainly what you have done. Let the right people see it. Give your excellence the voice it has honestly earned. Because the goal was never to be the quietest person doing the best work. The goal is to do excellent work, and to let it be understood. Both. Not one at the expense of the other.



Wola Joseph Condotti

Chief Executive Officer,
Eko Power Limited

Wola is the CEO of Eko Power Limited.

Prior to her current role, she was 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.

Wola Joseph Condotti was also 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

Money Responds to Clarity

By Sola Adesakin



Let me tell you something I have watched play out dozens of times in my consulting practice. A woman sits across from me, successful by most measures, earning well, working hard, doing all the things that are supposed to lead to financial progress. And when I ask her a simple question, what do you actually want your money to do for you over the next three to five years, the room goes quiet. Not because she has not thought about money. She thinks about it constantly, but thinking about money and being clear about money are two completely different things.

Most people are making financial decisions in a fog. They save when it feels right and spend when it feels necessary. They invest when someone recommends something convincing enough. They say yes to opportunities that sound good and no to things that feel expensive, without ever running either decision through a filter that asks: does this move me toward something I have specifically defined? That is what I mean by random money moves. Not reckless ones necessarily, just unconnected ones. Decisions that do not talk to each other because there is no central instruction telling them where they are all supposed to be heading.

Money responds to clarity the way water responds to a channel. Without direction

it spreads everywhere and pools nowhere. Give it a defined path and it moves with surprising force toward a specific destination. The same N100,000 that disappears into general spending without a trace becomes a deliberate, visible building block when it has somewhere specific to go.

So what does financial clarity actually look like in practice? It is not a vision board. It is not a vague sense that you want to be comfortable. It is specific enough to act on.

It sounds like this. I want to own a two-bedroom apartment in a specific area within four years, and the deposit required is approximately N8 million,

which means I need to be setting aside roughly N170,000 a month starting now. It sounds like this. I want to leave full-time employment within six years, which means I need investment income and consulting revenue that replaces at least 80% of my current salary before I hand in that letter. It sounds like this. I want my children to have the option of a quality university education, which means I need an education fund that reaches a specific number by a specific year. These are not dreams. They are coordinates. And the moment you set them, something shifts.

You start seeing differently. The networking event you would have skipped suddenly looks relevant because someone in that room is connected to the industry you are

building toward. The online course you dismissed as expensive now looks like a reasonable investment because it directly increases your earning capacity in a way that feeds your three-year target. The business idea that has been sitting in your notebook for eighteen months suddenly has urgency because you realise it is the missing income stream that makes your plan work.

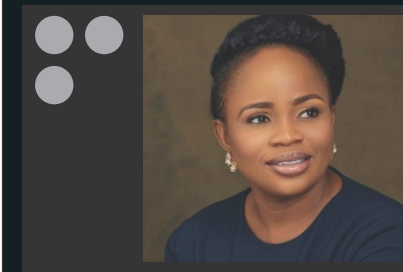
Clarity does that. It reorganises what you notice. Psychologists call it the reticular activating system, your brain's filtering mechanism that prioritises what you have told it matters. When you get clear about what you want financially, you are not just setting a goal. You are reprogramming what your brain pays attention to. Opportunities that were always there become visible because now you have a reason to see them.

But here is the part that makes most people uncomfortable. Clarity also means saying no. No to the spending that feels normal but directly contradicts what you are building. No to the social obligations that are quietly draining capital you have earmarked for something specific. No to the investment that sounds exciting but does not belong in your plan. Random money moves feel flexible. Aligned money moves feel restrictive at first. But restriction in service of a destination you chose is not deprivation. It is discipline with a purpose.

The practical starting point is a single page. One page with three things on it. What you want financially within the next three years, stated in specific numbers. What your current financial position actually is, honestly. And the monthly gap between the two that your decisions now need to close. That page becomes the filter for every financial choice you make. Does this move close the gap or widen it? That question, asked consistently, is worth more than any budgeting app on the market.

Stop making random money moves. Get clear, set the coordinates, and align every decision to the destination.

When you know where you are going, the path has a way of showing itself.



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 InstructorSM and a member of the Personal Finance Speakers Association.

HER POINT OF VIEW



Stop Climbing Blindly: Why Every Woman Needs a Career Blueprint

Chinyere Okorochoa

A few years ago, I spoke with a woman who had done everything “right.” She was hardworking, respected, and steadily promoted. Every few years, another opportunity came along and she took it. Her CV looked impressive.

Then I asked her a simple question: “What are you actually building towards?” There was a long silence.

She had spent years climbing, but had never really decided where she wanted the ladder to take her. Many women are doing exactly the same thing. We work hard. We meet

deadlines. We accept promotions. We change jobs when better offers come. We accumulate titles and responsibilities. Yet somewhere between delivering results and managing life, we forget to ask one fundamental question: Where is my career actually going? That is why every woman needs a career blueprint.

Your Career Needs a Destination

A career blueprint is simply an intentional picture of the professional life you want to build and a plan for getting there.

It is not a rigid 10-year timetable. Life does not work that neatly. It is a compass.

If you want to become a CEO someday, for example, your blueprint should make you ask: What experience does a CEO need? Have I managed people? Budgets? Strategy? Operations? Have I developed commercial judgement?

I have seen brilliant professionals reach senior levels only to discover that the next role requires experience they never

deliberately acquired.

They were so busy performing today's job that they forgot to prepare for tomorrow's.

Hard Work Is Not a Career Strategy

This is particularly important for women because many of us were raised to believe that if we simply work hard enough, someone will notice and reward us. Sometimes they will. Sometimes they won't.

I learnt over the course of my own career that competence is essential, but competence alone does not build a career. You must also understand where you are going and intentionally acquire the skills, relationships, visibility and experiences required to get there. Otherwise, you may spend years being excellent at something that is not taking you towards the future you actually want. But What If Life Changes the Plan? It will.

You may marry. Have children. Relocate. Lose a job. Encounter a terrible boss. Receive an opportunity you never imagined. Or simply wake up one morning and realise that what you wanted at 30 is no longer what you want at 40. I know this personally.

When I began practising law more than three decades ago, I could not have mapped out everything my career would eventually become. Over the years, my professional life expanded beyond legal practice into leadership, mentoring, coaching, speaking and writing. The blueprint evolved because I evolved. That is why I always say: write your career plan in pencil, not permanent ink. Changing the plan is not failure. Drifting without one is the greater danger. So, Where Do You Start? This weekend, give yourself one uninterrupted hour and answer five questions:

Where am I now?

Be brutally objective about your skills, experience, reputation and network.

Where do I want to be?

Think beyond your next promotion. What would you genuinely like your professional life to look like five to ten years from now?

What is missing?

Perhaps you need commercial experience, leadership exposure, another qualification, stronger networks, greater visibility or a sponsor who will advocate for you.

What are my next milestones?

Break the journey down. What needs to happen in the next three years? One year? Ninety days?

Who needs to know me?

Careers do not grow in isolation. Identify the people, communities and professional networks that can expose you to opportunities, challenge your thinking and advocate for you. Then act.

Because a beautiful career plan sitting in a notebook is still just a notebook. And revisit it regularly. Careers change. Industries change. Life changes. You will change. There will be detours and disappointments. Some doors will refuse to open. At other times, opportunities you never planned for will completely alter your direction. That is fine.

A blueprint is not supposed to imprison you. It is supposed to stop you from wandering aimlessly. Your career may span 30 or 40 years. That is far too much of your life to leave entirely to chance.

So climb. Work hard. Take opportunities. Change direction when necessary. But every so often, stop and look up. Make sure the ladder you are climbing is still taking you somewhere you actually want to go. Because from her point of view, success is not simply about how high you climb. It is knowing why you are climbing in the first place.



Chinyere Okorochoa

Partner in the Law Firm of
JACKSON, ETTI & EDU

With over three decades of experience as a trailblazer in the legal profession, Chinyere Okorochoa 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.

GENDER INSIGHTS

African Feminism and the Future of Women's Activism in Nigeria



Asmau Benzies Leo

African feminism is not simply an imported ideological framework applied to African realities. It is rooted in the lived experiences, histories, struggles and resilience of African women who have long challenged systems of domination in their homes, communities, economies, political institutions and societies. In Nigeria, the future of women's activism will depend on how effectively feminist movements respond to the multidimensional nature of women's oppression, including violence against women, toxic masculinity, sexism, patriarchy, economic exclusion and

unequal power relations. Nigeria has made important progress in developing laws, policies and institutional mechanisms for gender equality. Yet the gap between policy and lived reality remains significant. Women continue to experience violence, discrimination and exclusion from political and decision-making spaces. UN Women reports that about one in three Nigerian women aged 15–49 has experienced physical or sexual violence, while women's representation in parliament remains extremely low. (UN Women Data Hub) These realities demonstrate that the struggle for gender justice cannot be reduced to the enactment of laws alone. It requires transformation of the social, cultural and political structures that reproduce

inequality.

At the centre of this struggle is patriarchy, the system of social relations through which authority, resources, decision-making and legitimacy are disproportionately concentrated in male hands. Patriarchy manifests differently across Nigeria's diverse communities, but its consequences are remarkably consistent: women are often expected to be submissive, economically dependent, sexually available, responsible for unpaid care work and less entitled to political authority.

Sexism reinforces these structures by normalising assumptions about what women can or cannot do. A woman who is assertive may be labelled aggressive; a woman who seeks political office may be judged by her marital status, appearance or sexuality; while a man displaying the same qualities may be celebrated as strong leadership. Such double standards are not merely cultural inconveniences, they are mechanisms through which power is reproduced.

Toxic masculinity must therefore become a central concern of contemporary African feminism. Masculinity itself is not the problem. The problem emerges when boys and men are socialised to equate manhood with dominance, control, aggression, sexual entitlement, emotional suppression and the ability to exercise power over women. In conflict-affected communities, these expectations can become even more dangerous. Research on northern Nigeria has highlighted how gender norms and notions of protective masculinity can interact with conflict and violence. (UN Women)

This means that women's activism cannot focus exclusively on empowering women while leaving harmful constructions of masculinity untouched. The future must include men and boys, not as the leaders of feminism, but as partners in dismantling systems that also constrain them. Boys must learn that strength can mean empathy, responsibility and peaceful conflict resolution, while men must be encouraged to understand equality not as a loss of power but as a transformation of power.

Violence against Women represents one of

the most visible expressions of unequal gender power. Sexual violence, intimate-partner violence, harassment, exploitation, child marriage and other forms of abuse do not occur in isolation. They are connected to economic dependency, harmful social norms, weak accountability mechanisms, stigma, unequal access to justice and the socialisation of entitlement. Consequently, the future of activism must move beyond responding to violence after it occurs. Prevention must become equally important. This requires transforming social norms, strengthening survivor-centred justice systems, improving institutional accountability and investing in grassroots women's organisations. UN Women similarly identifies gender discrimination, harmful social norms and gender stereotypes as structural drivers of violence against women and emphasises prevention alongside survivor response. (UN Women)

Conflict adds another dimension. Nigeria's insecurity, from terrorism and insurgency to banditry, communal violence, displacement and farmer-herder conflicts, has gendered consequences. Women and girls may experience sexual violence, displacement, economic deprivation and loss of livelihoods, while also carrying disproportionate responsibilities for children, elderly relatives and displaced households. Yet women remain significantly underrepresented in formal peace and security decision-making. Nigeria has developed National and State Action Plans under the Women, Peace and Security agenda, but implementation and meaningful participation remain challenges. (UN Women Africa)

This raises an important question: Who has the power to define peace? If peace is defined only by the absence of armed conflict, women's experiences remain invisible. African feminist activism must broaden the meaning of security to include freedom from domestic violence, economic insecurity, political intimidation, sexual exploitation,

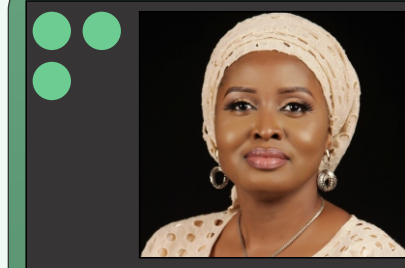
environmental insecurity and structural discrimination. Peace must mean safety in the home, dignity in the workplace, representation in parliament and freedom to participate in public life without fear.

The future of Nigerian feminism must therefore also be about power, not simply gaining access to existing institutions, but questioning how those institutions distribute power. Women need seats at the table, but representation without influence can become symbolic. What is required is meaningful participation: the ability to shape budgets, policies, legislation, security priorities and development decisions.

This is particularly important in politics. Violence and intimidation directed at women in political spaces can discourage women from contesting elections and reinforce patriarchal control over political institutions. Recent research similarly identifies discrimination, intimidation and gender-based violence as barriers to women's political participation in Nigeria. (Nigerian Journals Online)

African feminism must consequently become more intersectional and inclusive. Nigerian women are not a homogeneous group. The experiences of a woman in a conflict-affected community in the North-East may differ substantially from those of a professional woman in Abuja, a market woman in Lagos, a woman with a disability, a rural farmer, an internally displaced woman, a young activist or an older community leader. Future activism must recognise these differences while building solidarity around shared struggles for dignity, equality and justice.

Technology will also reshape women's activism. Nigerian women are increasingly using digital platforms to organise, educate, expose injustice and influence public debate. But digital activism brings new threats, including online harassment, sexualised abuse, cyberstalking and coordinated attacks against outspoken women. The feminist movement must therefore fight for digital safety as part of women's human rights.


Dr. Asmau Benzies Leo

Executive Director,
Centre for Nonviolence and
Gender Advocacy in Nigeria
(CENGAIN)

Dr. Asmau Benzies Leo is a development practitioner with extensive national and international expertise in gender equality, peace-building, governance, and humanitarian action.

She holds a PhD in Public Governance and Leadership, a Master's degree in Conflict Management and Peace Studies, and executive certifications from leading institutions including Howard University, Harvard University and Glasgow Caledonian University.

As Executive Director of the Centre for Non-violence and Gender Advocacy in Nigeria (CENGAIN), she has led ground-breaking advocacy initiatives on women's political participation, gender-based violence prevention, and security sector reform across multiple World Bank, UN and EU-supported projects.

Internationally, Dr. Leo has represented civil society at the United Nations, contributed to regional dialogues on Women, Peace and Security, and partnered with global networks advancing gender justice and inclusive governance.

She is a UN Recognised Global Ambassador on Women, Peace and Security. Her expertise bridges grassroots action with policy advocacy, making her a respected voice in advancing gender equality and sustainable peace in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.



WOMAN AT THE HELM

Kampeta Pitchette Sayinzoga

CEO, Access to Finance Rwanda (AFR)

Kampeta Pitchette Sayinzoga is the CEO, Access to Finance Rwanda (AFR).

Access to Finance Rwanda is part of the broader Financial Sector Deepening (FSD) in Africa that seeks to create a transformative impact on the ending of poverty by supporting efforts to improve financial inclusion and financial sector development by helping financial institutions and markets drive a more inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

With over two decades of leadership across Rwanda's public and financial sectors, Kampeta has held senior roles including at the World Bank, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (as Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury), and the Office of the Prime Minister (as Director of Cabinet). Previously, she led the Development Bank of Rwanda (BRD), where she oversaw a widely recognised

institutional transformation—strengthening the bank's financial performance while significantly expanding its development impact.

She currently serves on several regional and international boards, including the African Trade Transformation Fund and the World Bank President's Economic Advisory Panel.

Beyond her financial expertise, Kampeta is also passionate about climate change and its effect on Africa, Rwanda specifically. She admits that Rwanda may be among the least polluting countries, yet it is unmistakably among the most affected by climate change. As she puts it: "Countries like Rwanda are ready and have the appetite for reforms to be able to tackle Climate Change because it is at the heart of our inflation and macroeconomic problem."

In The New Map: Energy, Climate, and the Clash of Nations, the report notes that the past three and a half years have widened the gap between wealthy and poor countries in the pursuit of energy security. On that divide, Kampeta Pitchette Sayinzoga explains: "for some countries, it is a question of substitution—substituting fossil fuel with more sustainable sources of energy. However, for many countries like mine, it is a question of access; how to ensure that your people have access to energy."

A graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Nottingham, Kampeta is passionate about building institutions that opens locked doors and opportunities, make lives better and strengthens markets.



WE'VE GOT MEN

Tony Bonnici

Chief, Public-Partnerships Section, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Geneva

Tony Bonnici has been based in Geneva since 2006, working with the United Nations on issues that sit at the intersection of development, policy coordination, and international cooperation.

In his current role, he is Chief of the Cooperation and Partnerships section at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), where he steers work on public-private partnerships (PPPs), digital connectivity, and regulatory cooperation.

His leadership has helped UNECE translate complex policy agendas into practical, results-driven initiatives—particularly through flagship work designed to support implementation at country level. Among these efforts is the PIERS

sustainability methodology, which has been developed and successfully applied to strengthen sustainability outcomes in a way that is both measurable and operational.

Tony's expertise is grounded in a long track record of high-level diplomacy and international engagement. Prior to joining the UN, he served in the Diplomatic Service of Malta from 1991 to 2006, holding a series of senior postings that demanded negotiation, strategic representation, and technical policy leadership. His assignments included serving as Consul at the Embassy in Rome, Italy; serving as Delegate to the United Nations and international organisations at the Permanent Mission of Malta in Geneva, Switzerland; and working as Trade and Economic Counsellor at the High Commission of Malta in London, United Kingdom. Across these roles, he worked

closely with governments and multilateral partners to shape positions, build consensus, and advance Malta's engagement on regional and global priorities.

Academically, Tony is trained to operate at the highest level of legal and policy analysis. He holds a law degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science. He also completed a master's degree in Diplomatic Studies and International Relations. In addition, Tony earned a Ph.D. in International Law from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. Together, his academic credentials and professional experience equip him to bridge policy, law, and partnerships—turning international ideas into partnerships that deliver.

HOLISTIC LIVING

From Handcuffs to Healing: Nigeria's Historic Step to Decriminalise Suicide

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri

The Federal Executive Council approved an amendment to the National Mental Health Act to decriminalise attempted suicide, finally ending the colonial-era provisions that for decades treated psychological distress as a criminal offence. Section 327 of the Criminal Code Act and Section 231 of the Penal Code, archaic laws inherited from British colonial rule have long punished people already suffering the deepest pain imaginable, subjecting survivors to up to one year in prison, fines, or both.

Today, we shift from prosecution to compassion. From handcuffs to healing. This is personal to me. Not just as a Psychiatrist, but as someone who has spent nearly two decades on the frontlines of this fight.

But let us be honest: this victory came at a terrible cost. The World Health Organisation estimates that Nigeria loses more than 7,000 lives to suicide annually, with a staggering 300,000 attempts each year. Other sources suggest the figure may be closer to 16,000 deaths annually and many more go unreported due to stigma and fear of prosecution. Over 450,000 Nigerians require psychosocial support every year. Behind each number is a story of silent suffering—a child, a parent, a colleague criminalised simply for being ill.

From our helplines at HowBodi in 2025, over 2,000 suicidal ideations were recorded across all states in Nigeria, and more than 500 potential suicide attempts were averted. Yet we continue to face a severe shortage of mental health professionals, with fewer than 200 psychiatrists serving

over 200 million people. Nigeria is not alone in this journey. Across the globe, nations are waking up to the truth: suicide is a public health issue, not a crime.

In the last two decades, countries including India, Guyana, Ghana, Pakistan, and Malaysia have successfully decriminalised attempted suicide. Pakistan repealed Section 325 of its Penal Code in 2022, with its Senate declaring that "suicide was not a criminal offence but a mental illness." Ghana followed suit in 2023 with its Criminal Offences Amendment Act. Kenya's High Court decriminalised attempted suicide in January 2025, declaring Section 226 of the Penal Code unconstitutional. Rwanda led the way on the African continent as early as 2018.

Yet, as of 2024, approximately 23

countries still criminalise suicidal acts. Nigeria was among them, a status we are now determined to shed. Globally, suicide remains the third leading cause of death among young people aged 15–29. The World Health Organisation reports that the African region now has the highest suicide rate globally, at 11 deaths per 100,000 people, compared to the global average of 9. The male suicide rate in Africa is the highest of any region, at 18 per 100,000.

Critics may ask: "Won't decriminalisation encourage more suicide attempts?" The evidence points firmly in the opposite direction. A systematic review demonstrated that criminalisation of attempted suicide is associated with increased rates of suicide, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Countries that criminalise attempted suicide do not have consistently lower suicide rates compared to the global average. What criminalisation does achieve is simple and devastating: it keeps survivors from seeking help.

As Minister of Health Professor Ali Pate rightly observed, the existing legal framework "discourages help-seeking behaviour" and creates a fundamental inconsistency with the National Mental Health Act 2021, which already provides for supportive care, protection, and treatment for people at risk of self-harm. He drew a powerful analogy: treating someone who attempts suicide as a criminal "is like getting somebody who has tuberculosis and saying, 'Why did you have tuberculosis?'"

But we must be clear: decriminalisation is not the finish line, it is the starting block. Minister of Health Professor Ali Pate has set an ambitious target: reducing suicide deaths and attempts by 15 percent by 2030. This will require far more than legislative change.

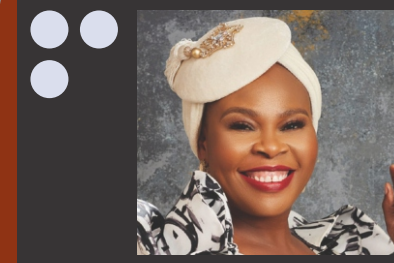
It demands massive investment in mental health infrastructure, including training more psychiatrists, psychologists, and community health workers. It requires public awareness campaigns that challenge

stigma and teach Nigerians to recognise the warning signs of suicide. It necessitates accessible and affordable care, through platforms like HowBodi, which bring therapy and psychosocial support directly to people's phones. And it calls for community-led interventions, engaging faith leaders, teachers, and employers to become gatekeepers of mental well-being. I have been building these systems for years—through The Mental Health Conference, Pinnacle Health Radio, Pinnacle Medical Services' 30-bedded inpatient hospital, Employee Assistance Programmes managing over 32 companies with more than three million employees, and HowBodi, telemedicine platform making mental health care accessible to underserved communities. I have used films, conversation cards, board games, and community engagement to normalise the very conversations we have avoided for generations. And I have never been prouder of my country than I am today. But we cannot do it alone. Government, private sector, and civil society must work hand in hand.

To every Nigerian who has felt the cold grip of despair: your pain is not a crime. You are not weak. You are not cursed. You are human. And now, your country is finally recognising that the only appropriate response to suffering is care, not punishment. To the National Assembly: I urge you to pass this amendment swiftly. Do not let bureaucratic inertia delay what is fundamentally a matter of life and death. The current legislators have a tenure that ends in December 2026. We cannot afford to start this journey from zero.

And to every Nigerian reading this: start talking. Normalise the uncomfortable conversations. Keep raising your voices, sharing resources and calling on the National Assembly to decriminalise attempted suicide in Nigeria. We need all hands on deck to achieve this. We can do it. It is a MOVEMENT.

Ask your colleague how they truly are. Check on your friend who has been quiet lately. One conversation could save a life. This is our moment. The gong has sounded.



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.

TRIBEWITH THE VIBES

By Zainab Aderounmu

Guard your Heart With All Diligence

When we exhibit negative emotions as humans, we're often quick to question our humanity or capacity for good. Imagine being sad and envious that your friend, with whom you were waiting for a promotion, got it ahead of you. The problem isn't the emotions we spontaneously feel, the problem is our response to such emotions.

Do you act on your envy, or do you guard your heart? How do you guard yourself from such inclinations?

I remember feeling envious of a friend a few months ago; she was more of a slightly older colleague. I wanted what she had and the skills set she wielded. Immediately I felt that urge, I took a short bathroom break, to look in the mirror and self talk. One effective way to guard your heart is to have an honest conversation with yourself.

I said "Zainab honey, you know we can't compare our chapter 3 to

another person's chapter 15. It doesn't work that way girl! They can inspire you, but you can't want what they have. It's okay, my love, we're building." A good self conversation isn't a disparaging one, it's a compassionate one. How would you speak to a loved one experiencing the same emotion? Exactly, treat yourself the same way.

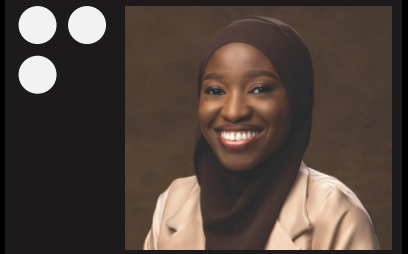
Self-speak comes from a journey of self awareness and love, which is another way to guard your heart. When you nurture envy and the wicked desires that come with it, you're communicating that you're unaware of the blessings God has bestowed on you. The simple truth is, you have been created with numerous talents and abilities, but when you can't recognise what you have, you want what others have. Knowing yourself and diligently playing to your strengths will save you from the wicked snares of anger at another's achievements.

In that moment when your heart longs for something someone has, remind yourself of who you are and what you carry and redirect the energy into

inspiration. It may sound like this "how I wish I could do XYZ like Ade... Oh, but I can do ABC; I'm sure if I wanted I could learn XYZ. I'll ask Ade for help if she doesn't mind."

Wanting what another person has isn't a crime, but, is that genuinely the picture you want to paint or are you just copying another person's painting? In a race, one big mistake you can make is to watch other racers' progress. You'll get confused and thrown off guard, and you'll ultimately lose. Stay in a class of your own, and build an authentic life.

My sibling and I currently have a group name and each time I see someone copy it, I laugh because there's a story behind the name. If you asked the copies, they probably won't have an authentic story to share. Authenticity is the higher road from comparison/envy; even if you're not the one feeling such emotions but you're experiencing it from someone else, take the highway, be authentic. Craft beautiful and real stories that no one else can copy. Envy, comparison, jealousy aren't death sentences, they're indicators, of what you desire, and where your self knowledge may be lacking.



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.

Woman Executive



Wola Joseph Condotti
Chief Executive Officer, Eko Electricity
Distribution Company

When the Sector is Bigger Than You: Leading in Systemically Broken Industries

There is a kind of leadership burden of running a company inside a sector that is, honestly broken. You inherit ambitious targets. You put together a competent team. You write a credible strategy. And then you spend most of your week fighting problems you did not create, cannot fully fix, and will still somehow be blamed for when they land on the evening news.

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Financial AdviseHER



Sola Adesakin
Founder and Lead Coach,
Smart Stewards

Live for the Right Things: A Smarter Financial Approach for 2026

Every New Year comes with pressure. New goals, expectations. New standards of "success" defined mostly by what people are showing online. But in 2026 is going to be financially different for you, not because you spent louder or tried harder to impress. It will be because you lived for the right things.

Financial progress is less about dramatic results and more about quiet alignment.

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HOLISTIC LIVING



Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri
MD/CEO Pinnacle Medical Services Ltd.

Your Greatest Investment Is the Life You Build Every Day

When Maggie looked in the mirror, she believed the extra weight she had gained was her greatest problem. It was only the visible sign of a life that had quietly drifted out of balance. Stress had replaced rest, convenience had replaced nourishment, and survival had replaced intentional living. Her transformation began not with a miracle diet but with one decision: to care for herself differently. That single decision gradually changed her body, restored her confidence, lifted her mood, strengthened her relationships and gave her a renewed sense of purpose.

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Her Point Of View



Chinyere Okorocho
Partner & Overall Head of Sectors
at Jackson, Etti & Edu

The "Support Role Cycle". Why So Many Brilliant Women Are Overlooked at Work

Recently, I had a conversation with a female executive that stayed with me long after our meeting ended. On paper, she was exceptional. Highly competent. Dependable. Intelligent. Hardworking. The kind of professional every organisation says it wants. Responsibilities that were often beyond her job description.

Visit our website www.theiwagroup.com to read conclusion

Gender Insights



Asmau Benzie Leo (Ph.D)
ED of the Centre for Nonviolence and Gender
Advocacy in Nigeria (CENGAIN)

Nigeria in 2026: Why True Security Must Have a Woman's Face

As Nigerians step into 2026, one truth remains undeniable: insecurity in Nigeria is not gender neutral. From banditry affected communities in the West to displacement camps in the Northeast, the most vulnerable regions across the Middle Belt, women and girls are not merely collateral victims of conflict—they are deliberately targeted, systematically affected, and often left without access to justice.

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WITH BES



Zainab Aderounmu
Youth Advisor & Ambassador
Delegation of the European Union
to Nigeria & ECOWAS

Nigeria in 2026: Why True Security Must Have a Woman's Face

The New Year has begun and making a sense of what you want may feel overwhelming. You may be tempted to 'see how it goes' instead of setting concrete goals, but I don't recommend because what you don't measure, you can't multiply. On that note, here's a step-by-step process of setting your goals for the new year.

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Published in **The PUNCH** every Tuesday.



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](https://www.instagram.com/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](https://www.instagram.com/Thehennaplace)

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