







Promise Ikpe

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November, 2018
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ISBN: 978-978-3074075

Printed in Nigeria by
Reap Press
2018

D education

This book is dedicated to mother Africa and the African child

A cknowledgment

I want to thank all those who were part of the discussion about the problem with Africa; your contributions and insight helped greatly to shape this **book**.

I ntroduction

“What is the problem?” The doctor asked, “Describe the way you are feeling.” He picked up his diary and began to write on it as she narrated the symptoms she was experiencing. After listening to her attentively, he took up his stethoscope and listening to her heartbeat and breathing, and then he directed her to the laboratory to meet the laboratory scientist for lab tests. As soon as the lab results were ready, she took it the printouts to the doctor who examined the results keenly before diagnosing the extent and form of her health failure. The amount of money she spent on the tests was much more than she spent on the drugs that were prescribed by the doctor afterwards.

Highlighting the problem with Africa is by no means a ploy to demean Africans, but it is intended to identify the problem and then suggest effective steps to be taken in order to eradicate the problem. This is so that Africa would become the envy of all the nations and the prevalent view of Africans universally would be rebranded for good.

In every nation that has experienced recognizably positive progress, one person had taken a step in the right direction and was joined by others. A revolution will not come when we sit back and deride the one man who is pointing out the right way; it comes when we stand up and join in speaking out and acting right. Every revolution starts with one man who is then joined by others, and then, the nation experiences the revolution and the needed change is achieved.

The change we need in Africa starts with you; it starts with me. Do not just read about this and remain seated.

The average African has lost faith in the African nation, yet he expects non-Africans to respect Africa and Africans. The land of Africa has become a place where only the fittest survive. However, we can do something today. We can, at the very least do something to make Africa better for our children and their children.

The more unconcerned and/or in active we are, the worse Africa would become and this would increase racism as Africa would lose its value all over again.

Countries outside the African continent do not want us, as much as we try to hide the color of our skin, they still do not want us. We are thought of as monkeys. Racism will never cease; kids have been taught to abhor the black race.

I once had a business partnership with an English woman. She pretended to be liberal and even tended to speak against racism. However, as soon as we had a misunderstanding, she became racist. She guiltlessly called me a “Black Scallywag”. It is common knowledge that even Barrack Obama suffered racism as the president of the United States.

If we truly want to end racism, we must get better together, because we have the potential to be better. Africans must take the lead in science, the arts, medicine, politics, business, sports and virtually all other spheres of the world.

Until we take the lead in world affairs, racism against black people will not end. Some people flee Africa thinking that they have fled from their problems. However, they go to live in places where they are insulted everyday for the rest of their lives because of their skin color, and they must endure it. Even then, anyone who accepts an African wants to be praised for accepting a black, because he thinks that something is wrong with black people.

Thankfully, we can all take a stand today, so that tomorrow, every black man will be proud to be African.

You can be part of the movement to rebrand Africa.

It is a popular saying that Rome was not built in a day, but the work started on one day. Let us start building today. If we are united we can build an African nation that will be the envy of the world.

This book identifies various problems with the average African and suggests means by which this problem can be solved.

Preface

IS AFRICA CURSED?

In allusion to the curse of Noah on Canaan, many people have suggested that Africa is under a spiritual curse. The curse which is alluded to in the bible is that “he will be the servant of servants”.

This curse is used to explain away the apparent backwardness of Africa and Africans.

“And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread. And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.” Gen. 9:18-27

Ham, the second of Noah's children saw his father's nakedness and rather than cover it up, he went out and called his brethren to see his father's nakedness.

This character that was exhibited by Ham is dominant in the average African. An African would rather broadcast (murmur, complain and worry) about his problems than think of ways to

proffer solutions. The average African does not want to think, including believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

When most Africans become friends with richer persons or with people from developed continents like Europe, their first move is to complain to those people about how they have suffered and how the economy is been bad for them. Rather than thinking of ways to handle their problems, they complain endlessly.

Ham's action brought a curse upon Canaan, his son, and a school of thought holds that Canaan dwelt in Africa.

Is Africa still under this curse? Put yourself to a test; beside what you see in Africa and in yourself do you think we are still under that curse?

Do you beg every seemingly wealthy person for financial assistance?

Do you negatively describe Africa to non-Africans, emphasizing the poverty in Africa so as to win their sympathy and enable you find a way out of Africa?

That was the problem with Ham; the same problem that brought the curse upon his son Canaan. If this is your problem, it is a curse upon your children (ie. the Next generation of Africans). We must break the trend in this generation; we must learn to confront our problems and overcome them. We need to stop complaining and telling ourselves that we cannot face our problems and overcome them unless a foreign helps us.

Jesus brought redemption from curses, and deliverance from the powers of darkness (Col. 1:13). In the same way that it might be said that Africa was cursed by Noah, it can also be said that Africa is blessed by Jesus Christ. It all depends on what one chooses to align with; either to the blessings brought by Christ or the curse laid by

Noah. To align yourself with the blessings of Christ, you must renew your mind and step out of the blinding culture we inherited, learn to confront your problems yourself with information and the power of a renewed mind.

Many years ago, I made a conscious decision not to reason and act like an average African because this reasoning has been the curse of the average African.

We must learn to walk in the newness of life that Christ brought. We must consciously reject the curse and constantly renew our minds, sharing this message with other Africans.

People laugh at Christians in Africa, and they even blame their devotion to God as the reason for the problems in Africa. However, the truth is that even Christians in Africa have refused to let go of the traditional ways of handling affairs that has set Africa backwards. We need to update our cultures as Africans and take the lead in the affairs of the world. Wherever there is an abundance of curses, there is an abundance of blessings.

We must renew our minds. I will be helping you through this book on the path to a renewed mind.

Can Africa lead the world?

Jesus, the greatest prophet on earth answered this question when He prophesied thus;

“So the last shall be first, and the first last...” Matt. 20:16

Some nations and continents may be leading in terms of economy and general well-being, but God has said that everyone will have their chance. The one who is first today will eventually be overtaken by the one who was last. Therefore, every nation currently trailing in economic, social and political affairs has the spiritual provisions needed to take the lead in the world, even African nations.

Every nation will have the opportunity to take the lead role in the affairs of the world.

Before the formerly leading nations were overtaken, the overtaking nation first revolutionized her thought pattern. They upgraded their mentality and so were able to overtake the leading nations at that time.

If we must overtake the leading nations of these days as Africans, we must first renew our minds and change the average mentality that has set Africa backward.

We should not sit down contentedly and swallow information or practice cultures that did not lead our fathers out of poverty and obscurity; instead, we should seek higher information and shun practices that have not been helpful to us. Those cultural practices that are responsible for setting us back should be put to an end. Practices like accepting bribe before voting, selecting candidates for positions based on financial gain, attempting to pull down successful people due to envy et cetera should no longer be found among us.

Our education system needs to be upgraded, and we can start to do this by seeking information using the internet and exploring knowledge beyond the school curriculums which are based on books written prior to the advent of much technological knowledge.

The current products of our education system in Africa cannot conquer the world, and the present cultures we are holding on to are only setting us back.

Waiting on the government to bring the change we need is a waste of much needed time. Let us begin in our homes, with our siblings; let us teach our children. We must maximize the benefits of the world wide web to upgrade the mental attitudes of our children.

Let us resist cultures and practices that hinder growth. Let us love one another and resist the devilish urge to envy or be jealous. Let us put one another first and as Christ said, soon, we will take the lead in the affairs of the world.

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D iscontentment in B ondage

Two cows were tied down with the same quality of rope under the same tree. One of the cows escaped; it was able to escape because it was restless and kept pulling on the ropes until the ropes loosened. Meanwhile, the other cow just sat under the tree and chewed on its cuds.

One of our problems in Africa is that we are comfortable in bondage. As long as we have something to chew like the cow mentioned above, we do not mind the chains of oppression hanging around our necks.

The average politician in Africa knows that if he gives an African something to eat, the African would not care about how he rules or what he does with national resources.

Many politicians throw money at people to calm them and stop them from fighting for good governance and a better economy.

We cannot become a great nation when we are comfortable in bondage; when we complain about our conditions but take no actions or when we sell our future for a morsel of bread.

For Africa to be great, we must be restless about the poor infrastructure, the pathetic governance and the abuse of our rights to better living.

Africa cannot be great if you and I are comfortable in our yokes. We must think about our nation first; how to build it. We must say “NO” to food given to us in exchange for our freedom; that is when we can truly begin to make Africa a great name in the world.

A Generous Attitude

Many years ago, in Odota Illorin west, I joined some locals to swim in a stagnant river. I almost died afterwards because of a virus I picked up from that river. I was not the only one who contracted a disease from that river; most of my friends who swam there with me did too.

What made the river so dangerous to health? The answer to that is that water flows in and does not flow out.

Africa continues to receive without giving; eventually, Africa will stink and become a very dangerous place to live in.

Another one of our problems in Africa is that we want to take and continue to take. The leaders want to take and the led wants to take; no one wants to give.

A nation is not impoverished by giving; the generous soul is made fat.

Africa is fast becoming the most dangerous place to live in on the face of the planet, because Africans only want to take and not give. The Dead Sea is referred to using the term 'Dead', because it receives water and does not release any. Africa will become a dead nation if Africans continue in the habit of stinginess and greed.

It is a generally common habit in Africa to say things like, “bring me something”, “buy me that”, “what did you bring for me?” “When will you take me out?” “Give me my share” etc.

The African mind has been cultured to ask for things and not to aspire to give anything. That is why the African mind has not been

creative. Necessity is the mother of invention; if Africans think of the necessity of giving, the African mind would be opened to invent. Our creativity will be unleashed if we begin to think more about giving than receiving. Africa will become greater when we begin to consider what we can give as a nation, as a city, as a family or as individuals.

The leading nations of our days are the nations with people that give. Therefore, if we want to take the lead in the economic affairs of the world, Africa should give. No nation or individual has grown poor by giving; nothing good comes out of withholding.

There would be better living in Africa, when Africa begins to give to the rest of the world. The giver will definitely become lord over the receiver. Until we begin to give, we will not lead in the affairs of the world.

You, as an individual can start by being the giver in your sphere of influence. Give money, share your ideas, divide up your space, and do things for others for free. Our value as individuals, nations and as a continent will greatly increase as we increase our giving.

A dequate Training

Some hens were brought to our house and locked at the backyard, along with some hens that were already there. The old hens fed and freely walked around while the new ones did not dare; they kept running away from us.

The other hens were accustomed to our presence so they were not afraid to take food lying close to us or walk past, right under our legs. However, the set of new hens did not know us and they kept jumping around in panic whenever anyone got close. Because of

this, they did not enjoy freedom like the rest of the hens. Most times it took quite a long while before new hens adjusted and become bold enough to share spaces with us, and some never learned to be at ease with us.

One day, I decided to investigate the reason some hens were accustomed to us. I observed newly hatched chickens following their mother to my legs to pick food and to walk through without fear; at that moment I realized that they were taught to be bold in our presence, so they grew up bold and free to get close to us. Because we have to live together, sharing the same space, if they must survive, they must learn to get as close as possible to us or fear would deny them food and freedom.

One of our problems in Africa is that we are not trained to think and face our problems ourselves. Our parents made sure we lacked nothing and did not teach us to provide for ourselves by providing services through creative thinking. When they can no longer provide for us, we are left with no skills, only certificates that the government and the companies in Africa do not trust. Then, we are left jumping from one office to another looking for employment in vain.

Most African parents think they have achieved all they need to by putting their children through college, but that is a huge lie. To help the African child, you must teach him how to think, how to put his knowledge to use and invent. The proof that a child understands a thing or deserves a certificate for knowing it is his/her ability to use that knowledge to create, or render services, not the exams he/she can pass.

The only thing the African parent celebrates in the African child is his/her ability to speak and properly spell in the colonial language as if perfect comprehension of the language is the ticket to a better society.

There are several African graduates who can speak English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, yet they are so far useless in solving our society's problems.

Most of our graduates of economics, science, engineering etc. in the world today can only speak English fluently and nothing more. We need more than the ability to speak the colonial language to take the lead in the economic affairs of the world. We need to know how to put our knowledge to practice; how to use what we have studied to solve socio-economical problems.

To be able to do this, we must begin at home; parents need to ask their children what they can do with what they have learnt in school. We should no longer be merely considering their abilities to make correct sentences and spell accurately.

We need to demand that schools teach useful and relevant skills that are practical and relevant to the type of problems we are experiencing in Africa. This way, when the African child graduates, he will not search for jobs, he will create them, because he has been taught to think creatively and to create value by solving problems within his society, thus developing a better Africa.

A Supportive Attitude

Three men fell into a pit and there was no apparent way out, so they started thinking about what to do. Suddenly, one came up with the idea that if they stand on each other's shoulders, at least one of them would get the chance to escape the pit. However, they all died in the pit because they could not settle on who would be at the top and who would be under. No one wanted to stoop to carry the other one to safety. "Unless I'm the one getting out of this pit, I won't help anyone get out," that was probably the dominant thought in their head. They all chose to die rather than help one

person escape.

One of the popular emotions in Africa is 'envy'. Envy is another form of witchcraft and there is nothing that hinders progress in Africa more than envy. Nobody wants to bend over for others to climb on to success; even when you try to make it by yourself, people do everything they can to pull you down.

Envy appears to be the normal reaction of an average African when another person is about to break out of poverty with a vision or project. "If I can't get it, no one else should", this is the kind of emotion the average African expresses. Most Africans do not want other people to excel; they would rather have a foreigner excel than have their friends and family succeed.

The major reason most Africans hardly ever patronize local producers and service providers is because it is our brothers, other Africans that will benefit when we do. Our currency will definitely increase in value when we patronize each other more than we patronize foreigners. Development will come to Africa when your brother breaks through, and your sister excels.

The energy required to succeed in Africa is a multiple of that required to succeed outside Africa, because one must first overcome the opposition presented by one's African brothers who are envious and will refuse to help you rise.

A man who builds an empire honestly in Africa would have built 10 times such an empire outside Africa because he will first have to overcome household envy and general opposition. The development of Africa will begin with the success of your brother and your friends. We must be actively involved in building up one another; helping one another reach the skies.

If your brother succeeds and does not add to your life, he will still not be a subtraction, because then he would be self-sufficient. However, when he does not succeed, he may be forced to become a thief and eventually steal from you.

When other people succeed, even without us, our lives become better because they have succeeded and will not be liabilities to us. These people will not steal from us; when they buy from us, they will pay because they have the means and when services are offered to them, they pay.

Let us be the shoulders that will help our brothers climb to the top. Let us support the ideas and visions of one another. Let us promote what our brothers and friends do. Let us promote their art, patronize their services and buy their products. Most importantly, let us not expect huge discounts or free services from friends and family, instead, let them enjoy better profit because of we patronize them.

Selflessness

One of the *Rebranders* noted that when an average African gets to the top, he wants to destroy the ladder by which he climbed so that he alone would be at the top. This was apparent when Obasanjo, a former president of Nigeria wanted a third tenure and tried to adjust the constitution to achieve that. Mugabe of Zimbabwe ignored the constitution and wanted to rule till he was 100 and then hand over to his wife. Biya of Cameroon is still in power, although his strength is failing in his old age. It is in almost every African Nation. When Africans attain power, they would do everything to hold on to it and never relinquish it till death.

While you might be accusing only political leaders, let me bring it home. You can notice the same trend in government staff who

continue to adjust their ages so that they will not retire for the next generation. We can see this same trend in business people who hide their business secrets so that they can monopolize enterprises. We see it in extended families where uncles refuse to assist his nieces and nephews because he fears that when he does, they will do better than his children; instead, he frustrates them with the hope that his children will be better.

In Africa, people want to monopolize enterprise, power and opportunity and this is our biggest problem. It is the reason we resist the emergence of visionary leaders; the reason we destroy potential inventors from being showcased; it is the reason the same old political leaders are recycled every election year; it is the reason our economy is poorly managed; and the reason we are getting farther behind in politics, commerce and trade.

Many years ago, I learnt a valuable lesson from the use of my phone's memory card. I had paid for every application on the phone, and so when someone asked if I could share some of those applications and media files with him for free, I was not quite pleased. I thought of declining, but then I resisted the thought and forwarded all the applications, songs and videos; he was really grateful.

A few days later, something happened with the memory card and it was corrupted; the only solution was for me to format it or I would lose the memory card. Formatting one's memory card is always difficult, but for me it wasn't, because the person I had shared my files with was within reach. I formatted the memory card and went in search of the person I had transferred all my applications and media files to. He transferred the files to me and saved me a lot of trouble. While I was sharing my files with him for free, I did not know I was saving myself in the future.

If the future of Africa is to be saved, we must share opportunities to everyone. The opportunity to lead in politics; to share in our enterprise, and to enjoy the same opportunities we have. We must not always give opportunities to people because they are our children or because they are our relatives. Let us begin to give opportunities to people because they have earned them. When those who are deserving of opportunities are brought on board, Africa will begin to take the lead in world affairs.

A football team that will do well is one with the coach that recruits talented players; not the one with a coach that employs his sons and friends. A good team scouts for worthy players and brings them to the team. We must scout for worthy Africans, sponsor them to lead in politics, in business and in every sector of the nation and soon, Africa will take the lead in the affairs of the nations.

Honesty

Someone once told me, “Outside Africa, a thief is investigated thoroughly and every theft he was ever involved in is also investigated, then his degree of involvement is established before he will be accused and tried as a thief in a court of law. In Africa, someone who is arrested for smoking Indian hemp would be tortured by the police until he/she accepts responsibility for all the unsolved theft cases of the police”.

Many people are shot dead by the police in Africa because some senior police officers want to prove that they are working, yet crime continues unabated. When an innocent man is tortured and forced to admit to a crime he did not commit, the real perpetrators of the crime is allowed to walk free and is thus encouraged to commit the crime again and again.

We lie about everything in Africa much to our detriment. In sports, we gather over-age players and adjust their ages to suit the category. Due to this, players who are actually of the required age category are pushed aside in favor of those who are not. If we continue with this, we might win today and fail in the future, because we will have no future in sports as long as we continue to use over-age players for competitions meant for players below their age. We win under 17-20 world championships repeatedly, but we never win the senior world championships because we have continuously lied about our ages.

Dishonesty has become such a normal way of life in Africa that it is no longer considered wrong. A former president of Nigeria lied about his age and when the truth was discovered, no one became upset about it, because every sector was already built on lies. The president was not the only one who had lied about his age; many civil servants, sports men/women, public servants and students had done the same.

A fuel metre is no longer the true measure of a liter of fuel; so many other false measuring scales are being used in trade in Africa. Businesses discovered to be using false scales are not frowned at; in fact, many Africans do not know the true measurements for most of the goods they buy.

If we must rebrand Africa, we must set another foundation for a new Africa; a foundation laid on honesty and integrity. A foundation for an Africa where our official ages are our true ages; where the accused is truly the perpetrator; where the measure of any goods is its true measure; where the boundary of our lands is the true boundary; where opportunities go to those who have truly earned them through diligence and handwork.

A society built on falsehood has no future; but a society built on truth, honesty and integrity will outlast generations. As an African, have you used false scales? Have you lied about your age to qualify for something beyond your age category? It is time to stop earning based on falsehood and lies. It may be true that “everyone does it”, but if you truly want a rebranded Africa, you must open up to the truth and no longer aspire to opportunities you cannot earn. Africa will become better when we begin to walk in honesty and integrity.

Reasonable Demands

One day God appeared to two people and asked them what they wanted because they had been waiting on Him in fasting and prayers for days. Let us call them John and Joel. Both of them already knew what they were going to tell God. A few years later, John with his certificates was job hunting. He was going from one prayer meeting to another with the same prayer topic “I want a job that suits my certificates”. Hearing how Joel was doing, he went to see him after many years. He told Joel how he had been job hunting for years and begged him to employ him after acknowledging how good God had been to Joel. Joel was reluctant because the service he was providing in the society required professionalism which John lacked although he was a government certified academic.

John asked Joel, “The day we were praying for our futures, what did you ask God for?” Joel looked at him for a while and then said, “I asked God for wisdom to provide the services and values I am now providing for the society, which is also earning me money today”. Joel curiously asked John, “What was it you asked for that day?” John sighed and said, “I asked that I might pass my exams and graduate without problems”. Joel playfully said, “now that you have graduated without problems, why are you not satisfied?” Joel replied, “Will I eat my certificate? What is its use if it cannot earn me money?”

Most of us in Africa are like John, praying that we might pass our exams and graduate without problems. We are blinded to the fact that our elder brothers and sisters who have graduated are not yet useful to themselves and the society with their certificates. The certificate the government has given them has no use in the society we live in.

We need to pray like Joel, and before we do that, we must first identify a particular problem in our African society and ask God to give us the wisdom to solve that problem. When we can solve a problem in the society, money will come to us, and the society will also become a better place to live in. There are so many things to be done in Africa in terms of economic development; therefore, Africa is a place where there is an abundance of jobs. There is no place on earth where there are more jobs and opportunities than in Africa.

We need men and women who will think deeply enough to be able to create the aforementioned jobs. We need people who can be employed because they have proven themselves by solving one or more of the problems in the African society.

In the future, when you pray, mind what you ask God. When we pray asking for the right things, we will enjoy the right things. Ask for skills and for wisdom to solve one or more of the African societal problems. If you do this, you will not be amongst the job-hunters; instead, the world will seek you out for your services.

Training the Mind

A father tasked his little son to solve a mathematical problem. When I saw the problem, I noticed that it was impossible because the equation was not correct, so I quietly tapped the father and pointed out to him that the equation he had given to his son could not be solved.

The man told me that he knew that the equation was incorrect, but he wanted his son to learn to think and not just accept that an equation or a problem in life does not have solution. He said he wanted his son to think deeply. “So, what is the solution to this equation?” I asked. He replied without blinking, “The equation is wrong. But he has to think deeply and consider it carefully to find out that the equation is wrong. The aim is not for him to solve the equation but it is for him to learn how to think deeply and never give up on any problem he faces in life.” I smiled and said to him, “this is the kind of training we need in Africa.”

We need to train the African child to think. Let us tell the African child to think of ways common problems can be solved with less time and resources. Let us instruct the African child to never give up and to continue creating ways that societal problems can be solved. Let us let the African child know that nothing is impossible if he/she can invest time in thinking of ways to solve the common problems of our society. Let us make the African child aware that if he can spend more time thinking and asking questions instead of worrying, he will find a solution to whatever problem he is faced with.

When we begin to train the African child to think and come up with solutions, Africa will rise from obscurity to greatness. Let us train the African child to know that nothing is impossible and there is no problem that can overwhelm him as long as he can think hard and deeply enough. The solution to the problem of Africa is Africans.

I ntensive Thinking

A man was digging for diamonds, and at the site where he was digging, many others had dug and found several diamonds so it was very likely that he would also find diamonds. He began to lose hope and grow weak when it seemed as though he had dug deeper

than those before him, yet he had not hit diamonds. Soon, fear that he had either chosen the wrong spot or was just unlucky began to overwhelm him, so he gave up. The man picked up his digging tools and left the site. A while later, another man went to the site and began to dig further on the same spot the first guy had abandoned. After a little digging, the second man uncovered a lot of diamonds in that spot.

This is one of the issues with the African man; he easily becomes tired of thinking up solutions. Often times, the African man gives up after shallow thought that achieves no results and he blames his failure on bad luck or his environment.

The mind is sharpened when it is developed, and nothing develops the mind better than exercise. We must consciously have 'thinking sessions', where we ask ourselves important questions about creating value.

The best leader is the one who has had more thinking sessions about leadership than his contemporaries. The best economist is the one who has had more thinking sessions about the economy than anyone else. The most successful people in every profession are the ones who have spent more time thinking things over than others.

If the African child can think deeply enough, he/she will definitely come up with creative ideas that will solve the social and economic problems facing Africa. The solution to every problem in Africa is within the African, we just need to dig deeply enough to find them. People who think deeply are always asking questions, researching and producing ideas; they also have clearer imaginations, and these are tools required to build a better society. What we need in Africa is not more natural resources; it is not foreign aid. What we need in Africa is great ideas birthed during our meditations. The best foreign aid we can have as Africans is aid that encourages us to

think for ourselves, by ourselves.

If every African will take some time out of every 24 hrs to consider how he/she can create value, the value of Africa will appreciate greatly. Sound and sharp minds are what we need to build a great Africa.

Africans who do not see great opportunity in Africa have not meditated deeply enough. Britain, USA, China and Japan are scrambling to invest in Africa, so as to get a share of the treasure in Africa. If there is nothing in Africa, the rest of the world would not be scrambling to exploit us. The experts in these nations have thought deeply and seen the potential in Africa; and they have figured out a way to put these potentials to use. However, Africans have not seen these opportunities in their mind's eye because we have refused to use our mind's eye. We need to think very deeply to see the treasure that is deep within Africa.

Deferring Appetite

There was a little boy whose name was Emma. He always had ice-cream or some other snack close to him and when he didn't he made a huge scene and before one could say jack, snacks would be handed to him. This boy's parents had packets of snacks stashed around the house so whenever he wanted snacks, he immediately got snacks. Today, Emma is a grown man; he no longer lives with his parents but he feels discontented with life because the society does not hand over whatever he wants as quickly and easily as his parents did for him. Emma started to engage in fraudulent deals that got him quick money and with the money he freely indulged his carnal desires and soon enough the money would be gone. Emma was always looking for ways to cheat and defraud people so that he could make more money to sustain his life full of expensive bad habits; it became the circle of his life: defraud people to make a

lot of money and spend it all on his carnal desires.

The average African child is trained to get anything he wants whenever he wants it; the poor do it just as well as the rich. When poor parents continuously apologize to their children for not being able to satisfy their random desires, the children grow up believing that they are entitled to whatever they want, whenever they want it. Thus, when the African child becomes independent, he does not understand the meaning of patience in the pursuit of a better life; he lacks financial intelligence. He/she would always be ruled by his appetite and this would impede his ability to think ahead so as to plan and invest properly.

The first rule for success is the ability to rule over one's carnal desires. The future belongs to whoever can overcome his hunger for food and thirst for drinks. Until we have conquered the dictates of our body, we will not overcome the socio-economic challenges of our society.

The African child needs to be taught to defer gratification because if he does that he will be able to invest in various sectors of the society and be better rewarded while creating a better society at the same time.

A man who cannot conquer his overwhelming appetites today can neither think of the future nor take action regarding the future. We must master our emotions and conquer our appetites as Africa, only then will we be ready to take on the future.

Enhanced Teaching Aids

He was very distracted while the teacher tried to teach him in class. Let us call him Charles. Charles' thoughts were filled with graphics from his laptop games and he was thinking about returning to his

games after the class. The teacher's words made no sense to him as he grew more uncomfortable with each passing minute. When the teacher noticed that he was not paying attention to her, she rebuked him and called him several unsavory names. Charles angrily walked out of the class, went to sit under a tree and continued the game he was playing before the teacher walked into class.

While many people may falsely think that Charles is not interested in education, the truth is this; the activities in which Charles finds fun have more graphics and theatrics than the activities used to supposedly impart knowledge.

In Africa, the entertainers do a better job of holding attention than the educators. Every day, better graphics are used to program our games, clubs are well decorated, well ventilated and graphically enhanced, but our classrooms and learning centers are just the opposite.

When a child's head is filled with graphics from the games he plays and exciting images from his fun activities, equal or higher graphics are required to excite the child in learning.

Teachers must be exciting and use visual aids in teaching if they want to sustain the interest of the modern African child in learning. We need to use our imagination and create captivating ways to ensure that the African child retains the image of what he has been taught. When the African child is excited by what he sees in class, learning will be spontaneous and it will be easier for him/her to imagine things of academic importance.

Let us invest, not just in the quality of information we feed the African child, but also in visual aids and interesting methods with which to pass down lessons.

Africa will become great when we do not only educate the African child with the necessary knowledge, but also use methods that will imprint knowledge on their minds.

Riddance of Inferiority Complex

The late Michael Jackson was black at birth and white at death. What made him spend so much to look white? What made him despise being black?

It is because we have been told that there is something wrong with the color black. We were lied to and told that we had no souls. We were taught evolution and called monkeys, and we believed it all.

The African man has been made to feel that he looks less like a human and more like a monkey. Now, Africans believe that there is something wrong with how they look, and so he does his best to look and act unlike his natural self so that the rest of the world might accept him.

Yet another problem in Africa is that we are not proud of how we look, and this has made us insecure about ourselves. Rather than let them seek our acceptance, we seek the acceptance of the white man. While we should not insult them for lacking melanin in their skin because of their bad climate, we should also not allow them to make us feel inferior. If there is an inferior race, it is not the black race.

We are not proud of our accents which are purely influenced by our indigenous languages; this has caused us to speak poorly because we try so hard to sound like we are not Africans. We are not proud of our hair and so we dye our hair to look like the Europeans' or better still, we buy an imitation of theirs and fix it over ours.

We are not proud of the things we create, our products and services; we only value products and services created by foreigners. We are not proud of the color of our skin; bleaching cream is a popular product in Africa. We are not proud of the appearance of our nails; we either paint them or replace them. Until we are proud of our divine heritage, they will not borrow from us; not until we realize that if there are humans that are like the monkey, they are not Africans. Until we are proud of our thick, dark hair and our skin and our accents, the rest of the world will not admire our looks.

The Brazilian hair is not the best hair for Africans, the African hair is. The American and/or British accent is not the best for us, the African accent is. If there is a superior race, it is the black race. There is nothing wrong with how the black man looks and talks. The inferiority complex that the black man suffers from because he feels he does not look good enough is part of the problem with Africa. We must rise and be proud of the way we look and the way we speak. Africa has the very best climate, which is why we look the way we do. The rest of them are just products of a bad climate; too little sunlight and lots of snow. Be proudly African.

A pplying W isdom to R eligious B eliefs

A lady lost her job because she fought with the wife of her boss. The boss had instructed her not to let anyone go into his office because he was working on some files. However, the wife of the boss came to visit, she tried to stop her, things got out of hand, and she fought with her boss' wife. Her boss came down from his office and fired her for disrespecting his wife. The lady became a sales agent at another company and was fired for fighting a customer who had verbally abused her. This lady's mother thought that she kept losing her job because of some 'village people' who do not want her to succeed. Rather than encourage her to seek help for her

anger issues, the mother accused spiritual forces of trying to destroy her daughter's career. The mother took her from prayer house to prayer house and from one prophet to another, rather than instructing her to meet a therapist who would counsel her on anger management.

The prophet houses they went to were filled with students who wanted to pass examinations by miracles; they wanted God to show them the answers to questions without having to read. Men who wanted contracts were there, even ones who had poorly handled their previous contracts; when clients stopped giving them contracts, they resorted to praying that God force clients to give them contracts. Also in attendance were mentally lazy people who wanted God to feed them straight from heaven but simply refused to put their minds to work to make use of opportunities.

“Study to show yourself approved...” that is what the bible says. However, the average African would rather have a miracle in order to get approval. God has sent us to perform miracles, yet the average African keeps hunting for miracles. This is why Africans are easily deceived by *juju* men who pose as pastors and prophets, making a mockery of the gospel.

The spirit of God comes with the ability to reason. Everyone who has the Spirit of God in them excels. Some excel in skills like Bazelel; some others excel in strength like Samson; some in leadership like David; some in wisdom like Solomon and some in all manners of learning like Shedrack, Meshack and Abednego.

Any religion that makes you mentally lazy and causes you to blame the devil for your lack of character does not preach the gospel. Africans have to open their minds and stop blaming the devil for the problems they create. A majority of the people who ask me to pray for them to get jobs, are people I cannot employ myself.

It is time to stop expecting miracles and start performing miracles. Jesus sent us to perform miracles, now that we have his name; now that we claim to know Him. Perform miracles in science, in arts, in medicine, in economics, in leadership and in rebranding Africa.

Employability

“Why should we employ you?” the interview panel asked. He looked at them for a while, and then he replied, “I hacked into your system and invited myself to this interview.” While others paraded their clean certificates, he used his skills and got the IT job. If you know that you can create value for a big corporation, use the value you want to sell to them to first earn for yourself. The only way to be confident of your skills and be certain of the value you bring to the bigger corporation you intend to work for is to use your skills to create value for yourself first.

While several people are complaining that there are no jobs, entrepreneurs are worried that there are no worthy people to employ. If you studied education, begin by conducting home lessons for children in your street; if you studied mass communication, make videos of yourself showing off your skills. Whatever it is you have studied, put the knowledge to use. If you create value, you will attract success.

The creator of Whatsapp inc. was once rejected by Facebook Corporation. However, because he believed in the value he could add, he went on and created Whatsapp. The Facebook company went back for him because they saw what he could do.

The government is not the reason you don't have a job or the reason you're broke, you are. One of our problems in Africa is that we have more confidence in papers (certificates) than in what we can actually accomplish with our skills and knowledge. Certificates

have not helped us in Africa because almost everyone has one. Our societal problems are still there and the government that gives these certificates after collecting tuition fees does not employ the holders of the certificates because they can see that we do not possess the skills required to create value.

If you really want to succeed in Africa, shelve your certificate and learn to put your knowledge to good use. No one has succeeded in Africa only because of what he/she learnt in school. The school which the African child is exposed to does not prepare the child to add value to the society. To make headway, you must dig deeper and submit yourself to further practical learning.

Do not be deceived by the certificate; it is neither your ticket to a better life nor the ticket to a better society. Develop yourself to get further skills and to create value for yourself. When you do, success will come to you and to the African society. The success of Africa is tied to yours and so is her failure.

Elimination of the Causes Of Corruption

During an investigative discussion in the Rebrand Africa Group, one question was asked, “why are Africans corrupt?” After brainstorming, we discovered that corruption has nothing to do with wealth or poverty, education or illiteracy; the poor are as corrupt as the rich, the educated just as much as the illiterate. Then, why is Africa corrupt? Africa is so corrupt that the prime minister of England once said, “if the amount of money stolen from Nigeria was stolen from Britain, Britain would cease to exist.”

The answer to the question above is simple; Africans inherited a culture based on fear and mental laziness. The fear that what one has is not enough no matter how abundant and the mental laziness that retards thoughts of ways to sustain one's possessions.

The life of the average African was shaped by a culture of fear and mental laziness. When an African learns that there may not be rain for his farm tomorrow, rather than think of alternatives to watering his crops, he looks for an easy way, even if it is a corrupt way.

Many years ago, I was leaving a city where I had gone for missionary work. The local boy who had helped me with domestic chores wanted my boots, but the pair was too big for his feet; the boots were also worn and really old. I promised the boy that I'd send him a new pair, but he would not wait till later, he said he'd rather have the torn, worn and oversized boots that he could see rather than wait for me to send new ones at a later date.

The fear that what we don't have now, we may not get in the future has made the average African crave for anything he can see. He cannot wait for the future because his mind is not trained to have faith and he is not disciplined to think of ways to create the right conditions for his desired future.

This desire to have everything now, because of the inability to creatively think up ways to live in abundance tomorrow is the primary cause of corruption in Africa. When an average African is given the opportunity to be in charge of a bulk of materials, because he has not been trained to think of ways to sustain resources, he wants to grab it all for himself, even when it is not morally right.

If we must grow as Africans, we must see the future, believe in it and plan for it. We must look beyond today and consider the long term repercussions of every one of our decisions. We should ask ourselves, “will what I crave today hinder me from receiving something better tomorrow? Will eating it all now make me go hungry tomorrow?”

Poor men think of what they can eat now, average men think of what they can eat for a week, rich men think of what they can eat for a year and very wealthy men think of what they will eat for decades. If you intend to eat well for decades to come, you might have to sacrifice and refrain from eating too much today.

The African must plan in advance for decades. Planning for decades will guide the choices we make today. We will carefully consider the kind of men we enthrone over ourselves and the way we manage our resources. The poverty of the mind is the primary cause of corruption in Africa. If we can believe in our tomorrow and plan for it, we will live more carefully today. We must stop eating our seeds because we are afraid they will not germinate. Let us think of ways to make our seeds grow. Integrity, honesty and patience are the evidences of faith and a firm plan for the future Africa, do not fear; Believe and Think.

I ntegrity

I knew of a street beggar who became quite popular. He had begged virtually everyone for either food or for money. The beggar was healthy and strong. No one understood why he did not want to take up a decent job. Many people started to use him to do their dirty work.

Drug dealers sent him to go and pick up or drop off their goods with their respective clients. Some women made him empty their trashcans; both the old and the young were using him to run errands; he did all the tasks for peanuts.

His dignity was abused, his name was no longer respected and those who should have respected him made him their errand-boy. People who were new in the neighborhood accorded him respect until they discovered that he was the street beggar. When they

discovered his position in the society, the respect instantly vanished and they joined the rest of the people to treat him like scum. One day, this street beggar made a friend who encouraged him to stop begging. He gave the beggar some money to start a business. The beggar started a business and stopped begging, but when his business collapsed unfortunately, the man went right back to begging.

The beggar in the story above represents Africa. We seem to think we can only survive by begging because we think we cannot do anything great and so we have refused to build up our industries. We depend on foreign aid that has not helped us in any way. Our continuous pleas for aid have only caused us to lose dignity and respect; it has given other nations the impetus to deride us and make a joke of us; it has made Africa the dustbin of the world.

Our leaders must stop depending on foreign aid; it has made us lazy and has hindered us from thinking critically about how we can survive and thrive by ourselves. We are disrespected by countries that we have the potentials to surpass in greatness. Africa had the oldest cities and civilization, even before some nations that now assist us existed.

Our industries are failing; it is time to confront the issues facing us as a nation, and a good way to start is by refusing foreign aid. While we await the government, let us stop being beggars ourselves. Because we keep depending on friends and relatives, many Africans are angry with one person or another for not giving them help they think they are entitled to. When an average African meets someone who he thinks is richer, the first thing he does is to beg the person, even for things he does not need. If we must grow as Africans, we must learn to confront our issues and stop begging for and depending on aid. It is time we begin to send aid abroad; there are countries in much more need than we are and that is how we

can grow. When we begin to think about what we can give to other countries, to our friends and to our families, we will take responsibility and begin to grow. Until we start to think about giving, we will not grow into the respected nation we deserve to be; we will not become the race that is honored and admired by the rest of the world.

A ccepting R esponsibility (the B lame G ame)

The average African blames the government for economic failure and for his failure, the incumbent government blames the past government for leaving debts and making things difficult, the past government blames the preceding government, and so the circle of blame continues.

Who is the government? Is the government made up of aliens? They are the people we selected and elected to lead us; they are the manifestations of our daily choices as Africans. The kind of government we elect reflects our nature as Africans. The kind of people we choose is a reflection of the kind of people we are. The government of Africa is the expression of the average African in leadership.

One who cheats from a small seat of authority will definitely cheat as a top government official. Most Africans go late to their places of work, they fill in a wrong check in time, recording that they were early to work; staff in several firms miss work regularly and have a colleague sign in for them; senior staff use their positions to extort money from junior staff; yet, all of us accuse the government of corruption and indiscipline, while we are just as corrupt and irresponsible as they are.

In Africa, the difference between most workers and the government officials is the level of operation. We are the

government of Africa, whatever we expect from the higher government; let us dish it out to those below us. Let us be the change we crave.

If we expect a better government, we must begin to treat other people better; family and friends, neighbors, staff, colleagues and all those around us and in our care. We must learn to put others first, keep to our promises, join queues like others, honor our contracts and strive to present an understanding attitude to everyone around us.

A man who is unfaithful to his wife, does not discipline his children, violates contract agreements, treats his staff badly, and does not keep to his words is just as bad as any bad government in Africa. If we must succeed as Africans, we must stop attacking the government for her faults and blaming them for our failures; we must begin to take responsibility for our own faults and failures. The more time we spend blaming other entities for our failures, the worse we become. Until we stop playing the blame game, we will not move forward as Africans.

An unhealthy tree does not recover from its leaves; its recovery starts from its roots. When the root of a tree becomes healthy, the entire tree, including the fruits will soon recover health as well, but it can only begin at the roots. Sick roots will never produce healthy fruits. If we keep expecting change to start from the government, we will never make any headway.

Nobody is more to blame for the problems in Africa than Africans. Today, make a decision to be the change that you want to see in Africa. A better Africa begins with you.

Respect For Elders

A girl who was on her way to an interview stopped to help an elderly woman lift her luggage as she noticed that they were walking towards the same bus park. When she got to the venue the interview, she went in but was rejected after she appeared before the panel. As she walked out of the building disappointed, she met the same elderly woman she had helped earlier walking into the building where she had just been interviewed. The woman recognized her and asked her why she looked so despondent, and she told her about the job interview. The elderly woman asked if the interview had been inside the building she was about to enter, the girl replied affirmatively and the woman asked her to follow her back inside. The girl followed her into the firm as she walked straight into the conference room where the panel was still interviewing candidates. The head of the panel happened to be the woman's son, and she simply told him to employ the girl as a favor to her. Just like that, the girl got the job.

The average African child is taught to greet elders and relieve them of their burdens, if possible. The African child is also taught to run errands for elders, give them the better seats, let them get ahead in queues and respectfully greet them.

Our problem in Africa began when we started to say 'Hi' to our elders, rather than greeting them the traditional way and winning their good will. It began when we started to quarrel with them over spaces in queues and seats in public spaces. When we started to expect our elders to relieve us of our burdens and to greet us first, we went off the track. We became a disrespectful nation and started missing out on the blessings and advice of our elders, which we need in order to thrive. No elder will bend and lift us on their shoulders or give us the opportunity we need if we are disrespectful to them.

A better Africa is the Africa where we put our elders first and respect those who God has placed above us as seniors and as elders. Being disrespectful to our elders will reduce our chances of taking the front stage as Africans. The next generation can only be allowed to take over from the current generation if they have been respectful to them.

Mental Agility

In a busy street, one day, someone shouted “Thief! Thief!! Thief!!!” while pointing to a young man who had been standing close to her. Before you could say Jack Robinson, everyone on the street had descended on him. They started to beat him in the manner of jungle justice which is characteristic of Africans. Some of the people asked the woman, “what did he steal from you?” she replied, “My phone, he stole my phone.” The crowd did not ask the young man any questions, they did not stop to investigate, they drenched him with petrol and set him ablaze. As the fire burned, the son of the woman who had raised the alarm ran up to her, and asked what was happening; she told him the thief had stolen her phone. The son was baffled, “do you have a new phone?” he asked, “because you left your phone at home and I ran here to give it to you.” It was not until then that she thought to check if the phone she saw the young man holding was hers or just a similar brand. As she realized what she had done, she felt so ashamed of herself and left the scene without saying a word as the young man was already dead. She would forever live with the weight of the guilt.

This is another issue affecting Africans; we have always been too lazy to investigate matters for ourselves. The average African avoids tasks that require mental exercise; he would rather rely on information handed to him without investigating the information. The reason wrong traditions are still prevalent in Africa is this; an African will take actions because his father has said it is the

tradition. Africans do not investigate traditions to ascertain whether they are based on truth and/or useful to society. Many African women who are past the age of marriage are still unmarried because of the marriage tradition that lets families over tasks the groom during the marriage ceremonies. Marriage has become a burden only few African men can bear. Due to this, quite a number of African men have chosen to cohabit with a woman and have children together; these men can drive away the women whenever they grow tired of them because they are not married by traditional laws and customs. This is as a result of the exorbitantly high traditional requirements for marriage in Africa.

Many Africans still hold on to the tradition of female circumcision, insisting that women cannot reproduce without it. Science has proven this belief to be false, yet several African communities have adamantly refused to let go of this tradition which is completely useless and particularly dangerous to mental and physical health. A lot of Africans forward messages, pictures and videos, making such information viral without taking time out to research concerning the information. The average African is too lazy to exercise his mental faculty.

If we are to grow in Africa, we must learn to investigate and process every piece of information handed down to us. We must examine our traditional practices and consider the level of their usefulness to us. We must learn to investigate before we believe and practice.

Studying For Knowledge

A man who lived abroad regularly sent money to his brother-in-law to build him a house. The house was supposed to reflect the man's status as a wealthy man. The brother-in-law was to design the house, choose the quality of the building materials and supervise the execution of the building plan.

The brother-in-law kept a lot of the construction money for himself and built a poor house with pitiable materials. When the man returned from his home abroad on a visit, the brother-in-law brought out the keys to the building to hand them over to him, however, the man said, "I've wanted to build you a house for a long time, you can keep it. The house is yours." The man wept when he should have been rejoicing, because the evil acts he thought he had committed against someone else had come right back to him.

In Africa, we go to school to get certificates, and because we think we should study just for the certificate, we find a way around the exams and get the certificate. Eventually, when the government we are studying to work for does not provide jobs for us, we are left with the reality of what we have done to ourselves. The certificates we expect to give us jobs cannot provide jobs for us. Certificates that cannot enable us create jobs for ourselves have no value. A certificate should not just help you get a job, it should enable you to create jobs.

If the certificate cannot fetch us a job, the knowledge that earned us the certificate should enable us create jobs. However, because we do not study properly, with the illusion that we only need to study to pass exams, we end up having no knowledge as we have not studied to know. Therefore, we cannot use the knowledge to our benefit as we do not even possess the knowledge.

Africans will continue to suffer avoidable problems until we learn to study to know and understand, not only to pass exams. Until we study to be able to create jobs and not just to get jobs, we will stay behind in world affairs. To win the battle against poverty and obscurity, we must prioritize knowledge and skills above certificates; we must study to be able to apply knowledge for our own benefit.

You cannot be said to have understood any subject on the school curriculum, until you can apply that subject in real life situations. Therefore, until you can implement the knowledge from your study of Chemistry, Physics, Government or Economics in day-to-day living, you have not understood it for yourself. It does not matter your grades, whether straight As or bent Bs; constructive application is proof of knowledge. We should not let the desire for high grades or a certificate overthrow the hunger for knowledge. Do not study to pass; study to know and apply.

Applauding Successes

In a story, an African man was given the opportunity to ask for anything he wants. The condition was that, whatever he gets, his brother would receive double. He thought about asking for a house; but he did not like thought of his brother having two houses. So he thought about asking for a million dollars to go to his bank account; but again, he was unhappy with the thought of his brother having two million dollars in his account. The man sat down and thought hard, “What can I have and still be better than my brother when he has double?”

So, he thought of having one of his eyes removed so that his brother might have his two eyes gouged. This sounds like a very unlikely story; however, this is the typical mentality that has set Africans backward for ages and caused witchcraft to thrive in Africa. An African wants to be better than his brother at all costs. The African man is only careful to share his beer, not his books; to spread his diseases, and not the cure; to transfer his problems, and not the solution.

When an African man fails, he wishes his brother same fate so that he won't be the only one who had tasted the bitterness of failure. An African man is happy when evil besets his brother.

When most African men succeed, they want to enslave their brothers; they try to make the class gap between them and their brothers widen daily. An African man wants to outperform his brother in every area and most African men do not want to let their brothers have any chances of success because they want to be the only ones succeeding.

When an African man gets to sit on a seat of authority, he wants to keep it to himself and refuses to give anyone else a chance to sit. In African schools, students who can afford textbooks do not let other students borrow their textbooks because they want to stay top of the class or they don't want to give another student the opportunity to perform better than them. When one independently discovers the way to success, an African man who refused to give directions would still do all he can to stand in the way of that success. An African man is ready to spend money to intimidate his brother and make him look like nothing.

Africa will become better; When we begin to share books to pass knowledge, not just our drinks. When we begin to let others also lead without our influence. When we begin to give the same quality of food and clothing to both our children and our maids. When we let our servants eat on the same table with us. When the boss lets his lower staff get paid before him. Africa can become progressive when we begin to look out for each other rather than stand in the way of one another. When we can sincerely say, "let my brother get it too, and if I can't get it, let me help him get it"

Training Africans In Relevant Fields

We were asked to find 'X', meanwhile, our fathers who found 'X' were unable to pay our bills using the 'X' they found several years ago, and our elder brothers who looked for 'X' from their primary to tertiary education are suicidal because of the irrelevance of 'X' in the Africa they live in.

Africa should train Africans in the areas in which she has the capacity to provide employment for Africans. We should educate our children in the fields where African companies can employ them or where they can thrive on their own in the African economy. What is the use of studying mechanical engineering, civil engineering and so many other courses when African companies cannot employ graduates who studied those courses?

The roads in Africa are either constructed by Julius Berger or some other foreign civil companies. African presidents visit foreign doctors in foreign hospitals. Our aircraft and automobiles are made abroad. Virtually everything we use in Africa is imported from the tooth-pick to the cellphones. Why do we train our children in professions where we don't use their services?

Some people have struggled to build companies that offer the same services we pay foreigners for, yet we refuse to patronize them. We instead hire foreign companies and pay more for the same services our local entrepreneurs can offer us for less.

Many years ago, I met a woman who would not take off the string of beads around her neck. Even though the necklace was obviously made by an amateur and did not look very good, she wore them proudly because it was made by her daughter. Those beads were her most treasured jewelry.

If Africans can treasure the products and services that Africans have been trained to produce and offer, Africans will become more interested in learning how to produce and offer better services. Africans should begin to study the African economy before taking up courses and disciplines in school. We should know the courses we can study that will be relevant to our lives in Africa. There is no need to be an engineer in a country that has no provision to employ you and put your knowledge to use.

If the government of Africa does nothing as usual, tomorrow, another African child will go to school and be told to find 'X' which will be irrelevant to his life and future in Africa.

Promoting A Reading Culture

A not-very-popular bookstore had a sales boy who relaxed on his seat at the counter, playing games on his phone on most days because the store very rarely got many customers. The store was only busy during the days right before school resumption and some more days afterwards. This was because of the compulsory textbooks that schools instruct students to buy before the beginning of every school term.

One day, an elderly woman collapsed in front of the store; she had a cardiac arrest. The sales boy was so frightened because few weeks back, his mother had suffered a cardiac arrest and died before they could get her to a hospital. He was afraid the woman would die too, but immediately, a man ran to the spot and gave the woman CPR. The boy recognized the young man as one of their few regular customers.

After the woman had been resuscitated and taken to the hospital, he asked him, “How did you know how to do that? You're not a doctor.” The man replied, “I got a book from your store on how to give first aid, including CPR and also how to deal with some minor health challenges.” Instantly, the boy regretted living with books daily and not opening even one of them. He knew then that if he had been reading books, he might have known how to save his mother.

Someone had said, “If you want to hide anything from an African, put it inside a book.” Africans do not read; even when the books are free. Those who read books only do so for exams; if there were no exams, and no instant fiscal rewards for reading, the average

African would not read. The sales boy might have been able to save his mother if he had read the books in the bookstore, but he preferred to play mobile games only. When most Africans see other Africans reading, they ask, “do you have any forthcoming exams?”

If Africa is to lead, Africans must read. Africans should establish books clubs and buy books in order to inculcate a zest for knowledge. We should assign ourselves the objective of reading at least 2000 words per day and carry it out faithfully. Every African should have at least one book to peruse at their time of leisure.

African parent should teach their children from the very young ages to read by buying them books and encouraging them to buy books for themselves with their allowances. When an African child buys a book and reads it, the parents should compliment him more than when he buys clothes, junk or games. When Africans begin to read, Africa will become a better society. Africans who read have been shown to be spectacular in every field.

Africans who received early exposure to books have made the greatest academic achievements, even in the USA. One of the reasons black people were denied education during the era of slavery was that the slave owners were afraid of what the African child would achieve if he should read. True to that fear, Africans who read are leading in academia all over the world. It is time for Africans to read; when we do, Africans will lead the world in every field.

A n A ttitude of Gratitude

A barbershop in the USA had one day of free haircuts for everyone who could come. An African and a European had the opportunity to enjoy the offer. The next day, the barbershop received flowers and

a 'thank you' card from the European, and will you believe what the shop received from the African? A long line of other Africans looking for free haircuts.

Africans try to suck dry whatever means of help they are offered, without making any effort to 'give back' to the source in terms of appreciation. This is why we tend to lose friendships, aids and financial partnerships. The uncle of an African child becomes wary of his calls as they are always for requests. Godfathers of Africans wait in vain for appreciation cards. Brothers of generous African men do not stop taking from them until they have successfully bled them dry.

Wherever there are 'freebies', Africans quickly queue up. We always want to take without giving back. This is why Africans fall easily for ponzi-schemes, Internet frauds and more. 4 out of 5 Africans are victims of fraud. Ask an average African, you will definitely hear a tale about he/she being a victim of fraud; he had followed the African instinct to reach for free things they don't have to return and so ended up being defrauded. Africans naturally take and don't give back in appreciation.

I was on a public bus when the bus conductor nearly slammed the door on the fingers of one of the passengers who had forgotten to remove his hands from the door frames. It was happening so fast that I had to throw myself against the door so that it would not hit the hand of the passenger. When the passenger realized what could have happened, rather than thank me for saving his hands from being crushed, he picked a fight with the conductor for attempting to slam the door on his hands.

Gratitude is not part of the natural makeup of an average African. When you are grateful for what you get, you show appreciation by caring for it. Instead of a sincere 'thank you very much', when you

point out the lack of appreciation, an African would rather say, “I did not beg you, don't give me again, I can stay without your help”. If we are to grow as Africans, if Africa is to become the place to be, we must learn to give back. We must stop running after things we have not worked for. Africans need to appreciate and exalt dignity in labor; we must not keep returning to places where we have received freebies for more. We should no longer pick offence when we are asked to show appreciation; instead we should count it a privilege and see it as a huge favor whenever we receive help in cash or kind from anyone, even if they are our family.

Even God appreciates a cup of water given in His name to another person. If God who owns the water shows appreciation when we give His water to another person in His name, we should sure learn how to be thankful at all times and to everyone. The African society will not be better until Africans become thankful and appreciative of little favors. Africa will become the jewel of the world when Africans stop queuing up for freebies.

Stopping Exploitation

'Going Dutch' does not work on African dates. A certain young man went out on a date with a girl he liked; she invited her friends and encouraged them to eat as much as they could. The young man had to use an ATM to pay up the huge bills that accumulated from the extra people that came with the date.

Men are so afraid to take girls out for dates in Africa, because they are afraid the girls will take undue advantage of them. Due to this, when a man eventually takes a girl out, he devises means to make her pay back in kind, willingly or by force. This is not peculiar to the average African girl alone; it is a common trait in the African to take undue advantage of people. Whether you are in Johannesburg or Lagos, Accra or Kigali, Dar El Salaam or Harare, the spirit is the same, the average African wants to take advantage of you.

As a prospective son-in-law, your fiancée's family will try to milk you dry. Some African families will not let you off the hook when you are married to their daughters; they will keep demanding things each time their daughters give birth, after they have tasked the happiness out of you as bride price. Most African families try to get back everything they have ever spent on their daughters during her marriage.

Most entrepreneurs in Africa would want to use their staff like slaves with little or no pay. Firms in the private sector have no leave days for their staff, they don't pay their staff when they are on maternity/sick leave; some of these firms even fire their staff without reason or place them on a 'no work, no pay' condition.

African entrepreneurs pay themselves first and their staff last and least; they are almost always on the lookout for reasons to deduct from their staff's pay or not pay at all. Taking undue advantage of people is enshrined in the African mind; we think of ourselves and use others as we please.

In Africa, if you live with a relative, you will get to know that modern day slavery is real. The family will make sure you pay for your keep and more with hard labor. You will be treated like garbage. I lived with an uncle for 3 years and like a lot of Africans, I also got a taste of what it means to be exploited. My uncle's wife made sure that I did not have any leisure time to myself. To her, I did not deserve to eat or drink from the same quality of plates and cups as her kids. I could not dress in any way like her children; I was not qualified to eat meat, fish or anything that could cost extra. I was not allowed to sleep until midnight, and I was to be awake by 4am; I did not deserve more sleep. The woman made sure I was always working, and as a child, I did not have the opportunity to play with other children. This characteristic is not peculiar to my uncle's wife; it is typical of an average African. My story is the story of millions of Africans who have lived with relatives.

If an African pays you, you are in semi-bondage. The work conditions are inhumane as they tend to turn their workers into slaves with no regard to their personal lives.

If we are to grow in Africa, we must stop taking undue advantage of people; we must put our staff first. And Igbo adage says '*ihe a ghotara n'eze anaghi e juo afo*', it is transliterated thus, "something that is picked from the teeth can never fill the belly". The adage means that something you get by exploitation will never be enough for you.

We must learn to show every child under our care the same love and affection we give to our own children, because every child is our child. There is no profit in making other people's children look less than yours. When you snuff off another person's candle, it does not make yours shine brighter; however, when you help other people light their candles, when yours is off, you will be able to see with theirs.

African parents must learn not to over-task prospective sons-in-law; Africans should fight against cultures that take advantage of sons-in-law using marriages and child birth as a foothold. African entrepreneurs must put their staff first and allow them standard staff benefits as is obtainable in the rest of the world. Africans must respect fellow Africans, and make working conditions less stressful; everything must not be about profit. Africa will be the best place to live when we love those under our care and treat them in the way we would love to have our children treated.

Honoring the Living Before the Dead

The Nigerian film industry, Nollywood once made a movie titled, "Died Wretched". In the movie, a man had trained many people and had them set up financially. The people he trained all got

married and started building their respective empires; soon, this man went bankrupt. He became so broke he could not afford a meal for his young family. He tried to contact the boys he had helped when he was rich, but they kept giving him excuses after each pledging to help. Actually, each one expected the other to take care of the man and eventually, none of them did. The man could not train his own children and because of his many financial problems and the hunger he was experiencing, he became sick. He could not afford proper treatment, and so he died.

When he died, all the people that had benefitted from his benevolence came to their senses, they regretted their selfishness and decided to give him a state burial. The man who died because he did not have 30,000 naira for medical care was buried in a casket that cost six figures.

The story above explains Africans. Africans honors the dead better than the living. We spend more money and give more wonderful orations at funerals than we do when people are living. While a man is alive, no one thinks of saying nice things or doing great things for him. However, when he dies, people he has helped turn up from different places to give glowing speeches extolling his virtues; they eagerly sponsor lavish burials to show their appreciation of his generosity. Unfortunately, no one thinks of doing anything great for the man when he can still enjoy it.

Many people die every day in Africa because no one has told them they are beautiful, no one has appreciated them, and nobody has tried to make them feel that they are useful and relevant. People do not let other people know that they are loved or that they deserve some accolades until they die and then praises are showered on them posthumously. If Africa will become great, we must learn to share compliments, show appreciation, say nice things to people, show them we love them, be there for them, tell them how relevant they are, and never neglect them.

We should appreciate good and heroic deeds; we should also appreciate good looks, talent, and gifts. We should be sure to announce it when people do things that are worthy of note. African nations should have a system that awards special recognition to people who go beyond the call of duty to help others.

When we begin to help the living, we will have fewer funerals to attend in Africa; fewer deaths and fewer regrets. We will motivate ourselves to do better, and we will become our own heroes; we will begin to seek more inventive ways to make Africa better. If we appreciate our people more, we will become less dependent on foreign companies for products and services. We will become more patriotic to the African nation and more committed to our lands. It will become easier for Africans to help make Africa a better society. Africans who live in other continents are well appreciated and they have been outstanding in their various fields; imagine how positively Africans will be affected when they receive appreciation from fellow Africans, the world will be under their feet.

Placing Investments Over Pleasure

Some young people completed an international entrepreneurship course and were given \$100,000 each. They were to go to their respective countries and invest the money based on the skills they had acquired. After 10 years, their tutors called them back to know what each one had done with the money given to them; the British representative established a company which was then worth \$500,000; the American representative had a company worth \$400,000; however, the African representative had a duplex, a Range Rover Sport Car and less than \$5000 in his account. He was then looking for a way to travel out of Africa to work for any company that would take him in Europe. The tutor wondered what had happened to the African.

We know what happened to the African; his problem was that he thought like his fellow Africans. An average African man cares more about looking rich than staying rich and so he does not plan for the future. The young man went home with the money and built a house, bought a car, gold-watches and chains, accumulated more girlfriends and appeared rich, forgetting to invest the money for the future. His African friends would have seen it as the best thing to do; “at least, have a house and a car”, they must have advised him. If he had considered starting a company, he would have met the greatest discouragement from Africans. This is because the average African does not care about dreams and visions or plans for the future; they only care about what they can get immediately. Africans are concerned with whether you have a car or not, how expensive or cheap your clothes look, whether you have a gold chain or not and the type of house you live in. Therefore, for the young man to prove that he has made money, he would have gone to parties to spray money, built a house and bought a car alongside expensive clothes and jewelries.

This is why Africa has not developed; it is not because of a lack of capital to invest, it is due to the mentality of Africans towards the future. Our myopic view of life is our greatest stumbling block.

Someone said something I totally agreed with; he said, “Men of gold don't wear gold”. While an American jet owner is an entrepreneur who has plans set up for the next 50 years, the African jet owner does not even own a small company, his future security is some money locked up in a Swiss account. Until we stop caring about looking rich and start building for the future, Africa will never move forward.

A coach does not have the skills to play, but he organizes a team of skilled players. Africans who have the means should hunt for Africans who have the skills and talents to build things that will last rather than have their money locked up in international banks.

An African should not feel uncomfortable without an expensive wrist watch if he only has \$100,000 in his account. Africans should care more about the future, the services they can provide for Africans and the way they can help to develop Africa. We should ask ourselves, “what visions and dreams can we leave for our children to build on?”.

The rest of the world will migrate to Africa when Africans begin to put away the pleasure of today in order to build a better society. When every African has a long term investment plan that can provide goods and services to Africans, Africa will grow to become highly developed. There is really no race that is more intelligent than the black race. If we renew our minds and prioritize the **future** over the **present**, the world will crumble at the feet of Africa and Africans.

Discarding the African Time Mentality

A man who had been looking for a job for quite a long time received an email inviting him for an interview by 2:00 pm. By 1:30pm, he started to dress up, by the time he got to the venue it was 2:30 pm, but he was not in a hurry, he took his time and gently walked into the venue. When he entered the office, he was late, and the HR manager who was supposed to interview him was just leaving. The secretary informed him that he was too late for the meeting. The man looked at his watch and said, “no, I'm not. The secretary insisted, “you are late for the interview, Sir. Didn't your invitation say 2:00pm?” the man replied, “yes, but this is just 2:35pm.” The secretary said to him, “you were asked to be here at 2:00pm, this is 2:35pm, therefore, you are late.” The man still would not give up, “it's the same thing” he said, “2:00pm and 2:35pm, there's no big difference.” Exasperated, the secretary replied, “well sir, whenever you are done arguing with yourself, you can leave the office.”

That was not the first time the man's lateness to an appointment made him lose an opportunity, and judging from the way he adamantly refused to accept that he was wrong, it was not going to be his last. When an African is fired for turning up late to work, he does not accept that he is wrong for being behind schedule. In Africa, 'late coming' is not considered a crime; it is a part of life that you are expected to run with. This is one of our problems in Africa, we are always late to appointments and we do not think it is wrong to be tardy.

If a meeting of Africans is to start compulsorily at 4:00pm, the organizers will have to announce that the meeting will begin at 3:00 pm. Even at that, some people will be confused at the exact time to turn up, whether by 3:00 pm, or close to 4:00pm. Some 'wise ones' would turn up by 5:00 pm because they 'know' that the organizers intend for the meeting to begin at 4:00 pm. The African late-coming spirit would possess them and cause them to come later.

No African wants to be the first in a meeting venue; everyone wants to be the one others are waiting for and so everyone turns up late and things are left undone after days of meetings because everyone keeps coming late. When an average African says "I'll be with you by 1:00 pm", you would be better off if you expect him by 2:00 pm or later, and if you don't expect remorse from him, because he will not consider himself "too late" or even wrong.

Who did this to Africans? Why do we cling to an error so strongly even as it destroys our dignity and respect? Even when it makes us defer tasks that need to be carried out until later? Why is it that the 'African Time' syndrome has such a strong hold on us? Why do we dislike the thought of being the first ones to arrive at meeting venues?

To build a better Africa, we must learn to keep to time and be punctual to appointments. When we keep to our set time for activities, we will have tasks carried out early and be able to move on to other things. We will miss fewer appointments, and our word will have greater value. When we make statements, we will not need to swear for other people believe us. Being on time to our appointments will make the rest of the world to take our appointments with them seriously. When Africans take themselves seriously, the world will become serious in dealing with us.

Fairness to One A nother

In a joke by a popular Nigerian comedian, Uche Ogbuagu, he said that a man visited Lagos for the first time and was so amazed at the sky scrapers that he got lost while looking at them. One of the 'Agbero' (louts) noticed by the way he was looking at those buildings that he was a 'JJC' (Newbie in town), so he walked up to him and charged him money telling him, “ looking at those buildings cost 100 Naira for each one. I have noticed that you have stared at 5 of the buildings, therefore you will pay #500.”The man was happy to pay the money and left chuckling and saying to himself “I cheated him, I looked at more than 12 buildings and he only charged me for 5.”

The average African is constantly trying to exploit another person. Walking down the streets of Accra, I tried to make a purchase, but as soon as they noticed that I was Nigerian by my accent, they hiked up the prices of their goods. The same thing occurred in Harare when I tried to hire a Hall and also while I was in a cloth market in Addis Ababa. When they noticed the prices at which I purchased things, my friends from those places would just say, “it is because they noticed that you do not know the right prices and that you are a foreigner.”An average African is looking for whom to exploit because he too has been exploited. There is a circle of exploitation

in Africa; from the rulers to the ruled, and from the leaders to the led. “*bring the mugu mek we chop am*” is a common phrase in Nigeria meaning, “bring the fool and let us see what we can get out of him”. This phrase is commonly used whenever people are about to exploit a person who is either physically or mentally weak, with no care about the social consequences.

Hunters catch polar bears by firmly sticking a sharp knife covered in blood in ice. When the polar bear finds the knife by following the smell of the blood, it begins to lick it and while it does that, the sharp knife would cut open its tongue. The polar bear continues to lick up the blood without knowing that the blood is coming from its body, until it bleeds out and collapses. When we exploit others, we do not realize that we are exploiting ourselves. This is one of the reasons Africa has not moved forward.

Like the polar bear licking up the blood on the knife and eventually bleeding to death, Africa is bleeding because of the harm Africans are doing to the continent. Whatever one does to another, one has done to himself.

The government of Africa exploits Africans every day; the entrepreneurs do the same and so the sons of Africa continue to exploit and to suffer exploitation. Thus, no one moves forward in Africa. Africa has become a wild ground where you are either the predator or the prey; sometimes both. If we must grow as Africans, we need to stop exploiting people; we need to make Africa a comfortable place, even for the weak and ignorant. Let us all live honestly, respect the uninformed and feeble among us and quit trying to get things we have not worked for.

Prompt Payment of Debts

A man whose house rent was past due kept making promises to the landlord, "I'll pay you next week, I'm expecting some money then" when the next week arrives he would say, "please give me another week, I'll pay up, unfailingly." He continued like that for a long time with different promises, until he had lived and extra 6 months in the house without paying. The landlord became very watchful to ensure that the man does not move out of the house at night or in his absence to avoid paying his rent. Apparently, some other tenants had done the same thing to him in previous times, after repeatedly promising to pay their past due rent. He did not want a repeat of those incidents with this tenant, so he closely monitored him. The landlord was a part time taxi driver, and luck smiled on him one day when a lady hired him to take her to a hotel that was far from the main town. The man was apprehensive of her ability to pay the fare, so on the way he asked if she was sure that she could afford the fare. The young lady began to boast to him about 'her man', who she said was more than capable of paying the fare and in order to reassure him, she continued to share with him stories about how her man had spent so much on her the last three months and could definitely afford to pay more than the fare, no matter how high it was. The man was reassured and drove her to the hotel; when they got there, she called 'her man' to come and pay the driver. Surprisingly, when he got to the car to pay, he turned out to be the same man who owed him rent and who was using his children to manipulate the landlord and stop him from evicting him and his family. The landlord was shocked and he said, "you have refused to pay me for the past 6 months, yet you have spent a year's rent on your mistress." He could not say any more and he left the man and warned him to return that day with the rent.

The attitude of this man reflects that of most Africans. Until the African man is compelled with force and threat, he does not pay his

debts. Africans would rather pay for pleasure than make good their promises or pay their debts.

In the movie titled “The Game of Thrones”, Tyrion was able to hire the services of a prison guard even when he had no cash with him, just by telling him “The Lannisters pay their debts”. As soon as he had the means, he promptly paid without a reminder. Imagine an Africa that is reputable for paying her debts; a people known to honor their words, and keep to their promises. That is the Africa that can be great. In Africa, the government is constantly making promises they have no intentions of keeping; a synonym for “Politician” in Africa is “Liar”.

Africans do not trust each other's promises. How can you make deals with a man you do not trust? It is virtually impossible. If we must build a better Africa, we should first build trustworthiness because every relationship can only thrive on trust and not until we can properly relate with ourselves, we can't relate with the rest of the world.

To build trustworthiness, we must start from our homes. Keep your marital vows and the day-to-day promises you make to your spouse. Honor your promises to your children; do not lie to them, not even in seemingly “small” situations. Do not tell your children you'll do or get something for them, just to get them to stop crying or stop asking. If you promise to do anything for your child, keep to your promise and carry it through. If one can be trustworthy with their spouse and children; one can be trustworthy to the rest of the world.

To build a better Africa, we must begin to keep our word and pay our debts. Our trustworthiness as a nation would be built from our trustworthiness as husbands and wives, as fathers and mother and as individuals. Be the person who can tell a child, “I'll buy you

biscuits on my way home” and the child would confidently rely on your word. Be the husband who can say to his wife, “I’ll do that” and she will sincerely say, “I know you will.”

Creating A Fruitful Education System

Some time ago, a group of lecturers from the engineering faculty of an African university were hosted on a tour of a new aircraft in Africa. During the tour, they were informed that the aircraft had been built by some of their students; they were also told that the plane was about to take off for a test drive. As soon as they heard the news, rather than sit back and proudly enjoy the work of their students, they all jumped off the plane, except for one. The one who did not run was asked why he did not run, per when asked why he didn't jump out with the rest, the hosts reasoned that he had confidence in the abilities of his students to build a safe aircraft. However, his reply sent shivers down their spines, he said, “if this plane was built by my students, it will not start, let's not even talk of flying.”

While the above story is fiction, the sad situation is true of the African education system and the incredibly low level of trust that Africans have for it. Africans are taught theories and concepts that are irrelevant in the Africa we live in. We are building a system we have no faith in and no intentions of using.

We train bankers in Africa, but we bank abroad; we do not trust the banking system we have created. We train doctors but go abroad for treatment because we do not trust the abilities of our doctors. We train engineers, but we engage foreigners to handle all our engineering needs, because we do not trust the engineers we have trained. We organize skills acquisition programmes where we train Africans in various professional skill, yet we do not engage them afterwards, we would rather pay for the services of professionals abroad.

We have no faith in our education system, yet we do not make adjustments to it. We do not create an efficient system we can trust. We need a system in Africa that will effectively train and employ Africans in the areas in which they have been trained. We need to continuously update our curriculum until it can produce professionals, academicians and skilled men and women whom we can truly trust to provide the best services.

Most importantly, we must patronize the companies run by Africans and use the products and services that we have trained our young people to provide. The government of Africa and its leaders should use more made in Africa goods and services, and also make it a policy. When we begin to value the things we have made, the value of those things will increase.

Right A nd S elfless Voting

A certain man picked up a hen in the presence of his guests; he plucked most of the hen's feathers, hit it hard and squeezed its leg so terribly that the chicken clucked aloud from the pain. Afterwards, he released the hen; the man then brought out some chicken feed and the hen came right back to him to feed from his hands.

This man was trying to prove that no matter how wicked a person is, people will come back to you if you offer them something. He was showing his political guests his strategy for winning, after he had been brutal to the people during his last term in office. True to his word, this man won the election and retained the office.

Do you wonder what he did? He bought bags of rice and distributed them to the people. He promised people that the things he had failed to deliver to them during his first tenure, he would definitely deliver on the second one. He went ahead to accuse his

predecessors of being the cause of his failures and he promised to do better. During the elections, he doled out money to them. As each person voted, he/she was paid, and so he won the election and the people had to endure another reign of horror with him.

At the end of the two terms, when the man was leaving the office, he brought his son as a candidate for the same office. He was asked by his friends, “will these same people vote for your son?” he smiled and said to them, “the same formula on the same people will still give you the same result.” Just as he had predicted, his son won the election with the same strategy of giving out food and money.

Africans do not consider candidates for positions based on their honesty, empathy, selflessness or diligence. Africans vote for the man who gives out the most money today, with no regard to the terrible things he could do in future. It is only in Africa that you can see Africans fighting each other over a candidate who has failed the people woefully in the past, only because the candidate has given them money or promised them a position in his government.

We constantly complain about leaders that we set up ourselves, yet we are still willing to put them back in office if they can give out money. This way of life has made political positions impossible for honest men to attain in Africa. We do not root for honesty; we just vote for anyone who can 'share the money'.

Politics is a dirty affair in Africa, not only because the politicians are dirty but because we also are. We only vote for the one who is willing to pay for our votes, and we allow the money to blind our consciences, hindering us from voting rightly. On Election Day, even Christians join the queue; they sell their consciences and vote for the wrong candidate because they have received money from him. Afterwards, the same people return to church to pray against the same government officials who paid them for their votes.

If we must progress in Africa, it is time for us to stop behaving like the mindless chicken that returns to its cruel handler, just because he has food to give as he pleases. Let us stop betraying honest political aspirants; let us desist from voting for immediate monetary gain. Honest men do not give bribe, because when one gives bribe, he ceases to be an honest person. If we continue to ignore the people who do not give bribe and vote for the dishonest men who are eager to bribe us, we will never install the right people in the seats of power.

Role Model Change

The Hare and the Tortoise are the popular, African folklore heroes; characters we celebrated growing up. All the stories our grandparents shared with us under the tree by moonlight, the tales we were told in our kindergarten and primary schools during story time have the Hare and the Tortoise as heroes. Those characters were our models; characters we grew up wanting to imitate.

To our parents and teachers, they were just telling us stories and making us feel good, but those stories were deforming us mentally. For example, the tortoise was able to win races even against the cheetah although he could not run; due to its shrewdness and through tricks, the tortoise was able to do the impossible. At the end of each story, the tortoise would get away with its tricks without repercussions.

A member of the Rebrand Africa group brought this to my notice and I have seen that it is absolutely true. In Africa, we celebrate trickery and fraud in our bedtime stories, yet we expect our children to grow to be honest people and to work with integrity. How can our bedtime story heroes be the tortoise or the hare who always win by trickery, yet we expect the African child to desire to win by honesty, hard work and the fear of God?

Africans have found ways to pass exams through trickery; examination bodies must be so ashamed of the kind of people they have certified in the present day Africa. The average African child no longer studies and he is not afraid that he might fail exams, because just like his bedtime story hero, he has a perfect trick to implement and pass his exams.

In the same way, African politicians in Africa, do not care about faithful service. They are confident of a second term because they know the perfect trick to play on us in order to be re-elected.

Civil servants also hoodwink the civil service commission. A civil servant might not show up to work for a whole week, yet, he/she would have a perfect attendance record. Civil servants who are due for retirement suddenly become younger. African national teams are filled with overage players who have evidence to prove that they are much younger.

If Africa must become great, Africans must have new heroes. Our heroes should be characters who win through honesty, diligence, patience and selflessness, and the tricksters should become the villains. We should tell our children stories of young men and women who conquered the world through honesty, diligence, selflessness and the fear of God. We must change the characters we unconsciously encourage our children to follow, we must give them new heroes.

A Positive Attitude

One of the Rebranders shared a story about Haiti and Japan. There was an earthquake in Haiti and when rescue helicopters came, Haitians fought each other over who could get into the helicopters first. In the struggle, a lot of people were trampled; the elderly, women and children were terribly injured in the process. More

people died as a result of the people's selfishness than from the earthquake. However, when the same natural disaster took place in Japan and rescue helicopters arrived, the Japanese organized themselves. They let the elderly people, women and children get to the helicopters first, in that order. More people were rescued in Japan because of their orderliness.

Why are blacks so desperate for comfort that they neglect order? Why do Africans lose their cool when faced with money or food? Why can't Africans wait in queues to get services? The answer is the mind; the average Africa has a poor sense of plenty. The African man feels inferior and insecure, and so he feels that he must always fight for security and comfort. No matter what he has, he does not feel like he has enough, so he fights for more so that he can feel secure.

This insecurity and the poor sense of plenty has been handed down to the African for generations. Most Africans have always been faced with poverty and so whenever there is an opportunity to escape discomfort and lack, Africans become so desperate that they snap and ignore ethics, morals and orderliness.

The African child needs to be sensitized to value courtesy and to respect other people. He must be trained to value people and put other people first before himself and his desires. We must raise the African child to be sensitive to the needs of others in the same way that he wants his needs to be recognized.

True satisfaction comes with peace in our souls and love in our hearts that finds expression through our love for others. If we continue to train the African child to value possessions more than people, we will end up raising people who behave like beasts and not like humans. We must teach the African child that if he can be patient and show love and care to others, everybody can win.

