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2014

PREFACES



Faces are the summary of essence. The bridge of purpose, The glimpse to reason.

Faces are the treatise of every single story.

These single stories are the world to us.

And they connect us to our world.

FACES is a story of young people, experiences, strengths, weaknesses, mistakes, opportunities, gifting, experiences and love.

This is the story of a budding generation of Philosophers, Politicians, Scientists, Artists, Soldiers, Strategists, Culturists and Futurists.

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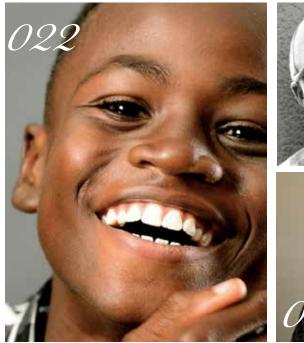
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AFRICAN GIRL

I am the African girl. I am born into a world where I am considered weak, unable, defenseless. I am the African girl.

I am made to overcome the stereotypes of mediocrity set for me by those who came before. I am the African girl.

I go through several trials and obstacles in order to become who I am meant to be. I am the African girl.

I am tested and tried daily. I am the African girl. I am undermined, misunderstood, misused and abused by people.

But, I AM THE AFRICAN GIRL.

I exhibit the raw beauty and grace of Africa.

I am the living proof of the strength and belief in Africa.

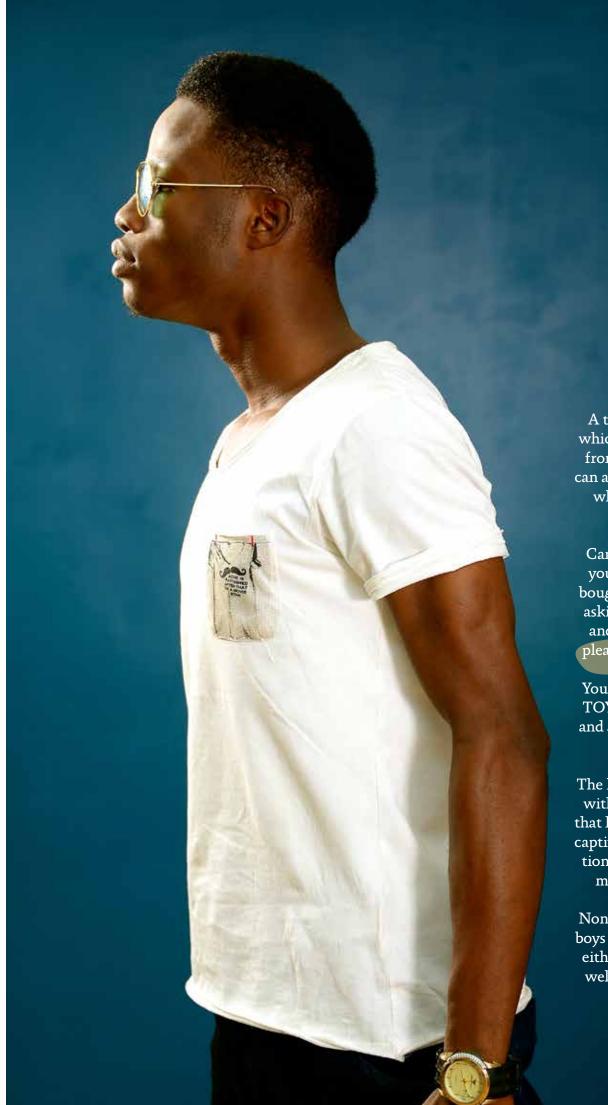
I prove to the world that Africa is not weak, unable, or defenseless. My love for my people and family unify Africa.

My determination saves lives and creates better futures.

I am the calm of African breeze and the fury of the African storm.

I stand tall while representing my Africa because I am not only **The African Girl**.

I AM AFRICA.



BOYS & TOYS

A toy is something every boy dreams to have, a toy is something advertised on TV and every boy start begging their parents to get one for them and the toy company starts making a lot of money. These toys when gotten are very addictive some children make these toys their best freinds. Being best freinds, they communicate, the kind of things they talk about may not be the most educational of things. And the children tell parents of their conversations with the toys but the parents might just think it is an overactive imagination. But it might not be so. Soon they cannot sleep without the toy by their side, they become so addicted that anything their parents tell them to do they ask the toy. This might just Be the devil at work trying to poison their young minds. This is for people that have the toy. As for people that don't have the toys they have no choice but to watch the toys on TV advertisement, watching the toys and their endless wonders. Just wishing and imagining what life would be like with that toy. Then finally children with minds that are not built with the foundation of the word of God might just have had enough. They might just steal some money from their parents just to get that toy, eventually Justice catches up with them and they are punished.

This is why parents need to build their children up in the way of the lord so that they may not be tempted.

A toy is an inanimate object which children derive pleasure from when playing with it, it can also be a form of distraction which can cause a child be wayward at times.

Can you remember a time in your life when your parents bought you a toy you had been asking for, in fact begging for and it brought you so much pleasure eventually when you got it.

You see, Boys are so hunted by TOYS (Temptation Of Youth) and as a result, Boys are almost extinct.

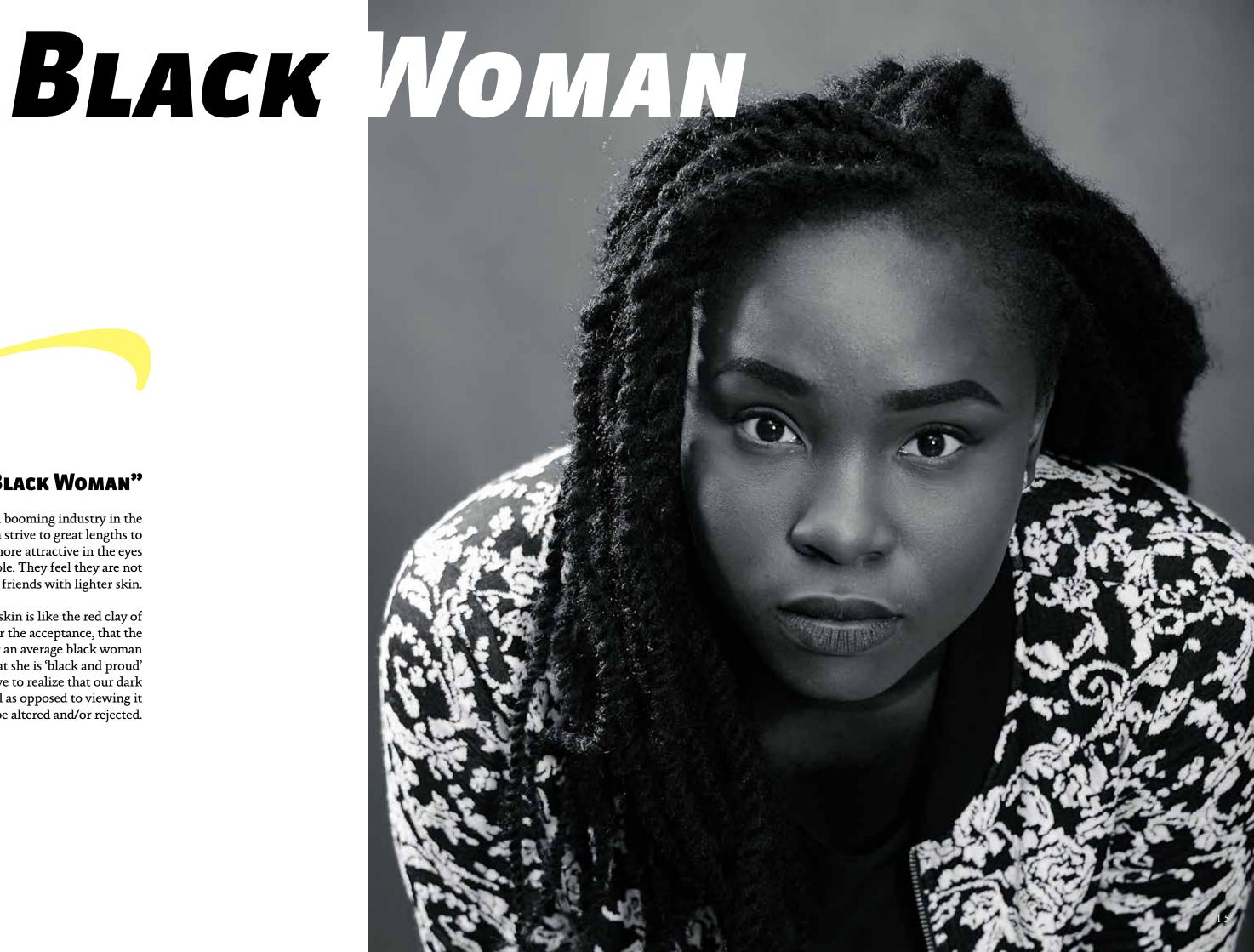
The kinda toys boys are dealing with in this generation is one that has held the minds of many captive. For example, Masturbation. It's a stronghold that has many boys wanting more.

Nonetheless, toys are good and boys are good but they both can either be a blessing and can as well be a curse depending on 'How' and 'When'.

"BLACK WOMAN"

The skin bleaching industry is a booming industry in the contemporary world. As black women strive to great lengths to lighten their skin in an attempt to look more attractive in the eyes of the opposite sex and society as a whole. They feel they are not as "pretty" or "desirable" as their friends with lighter skin.

A wise woman once said, "My dark skin is like the red clay of the earth. Naturally beautiful" It is after the acceptance, that the beauty eventually evolves. It is absurd for an average black woman to be unable to agree to the fact that she is 'black and proud' Women, black women to be precise have to realize that our dark skin tone makes us unique and beautiful as opposed to viewing it as a constraint that needs to be altered and/or rejected.





Study is the strength of Meditation
The Spirit is the power of the word.
It's safe then to say, The Spirit is Meditation.
Meditation is the difference between reading and studying.

When we meditate, we write down
And before we write anything, we think about it
So when we write down, what we think, about
what we read
We meditate;
And when we meditate, we Contextualize
We render our understanding in scenarios,
Analogies, metaphors, disciplines, experiences,
We do this through language
This becomes the strength of application
Because whenever we find ourselves in these
situations

Our meditation comes to fore
The mind remembers what it has meditated upon
Because the hands wrote it down, as the mind
thought about it
After the eyes had read it
Consequently, we prevail
Because there's strength of Will
That comes from imbibed truth
Just because we meditate.
This is 'WHY' we Meditate.

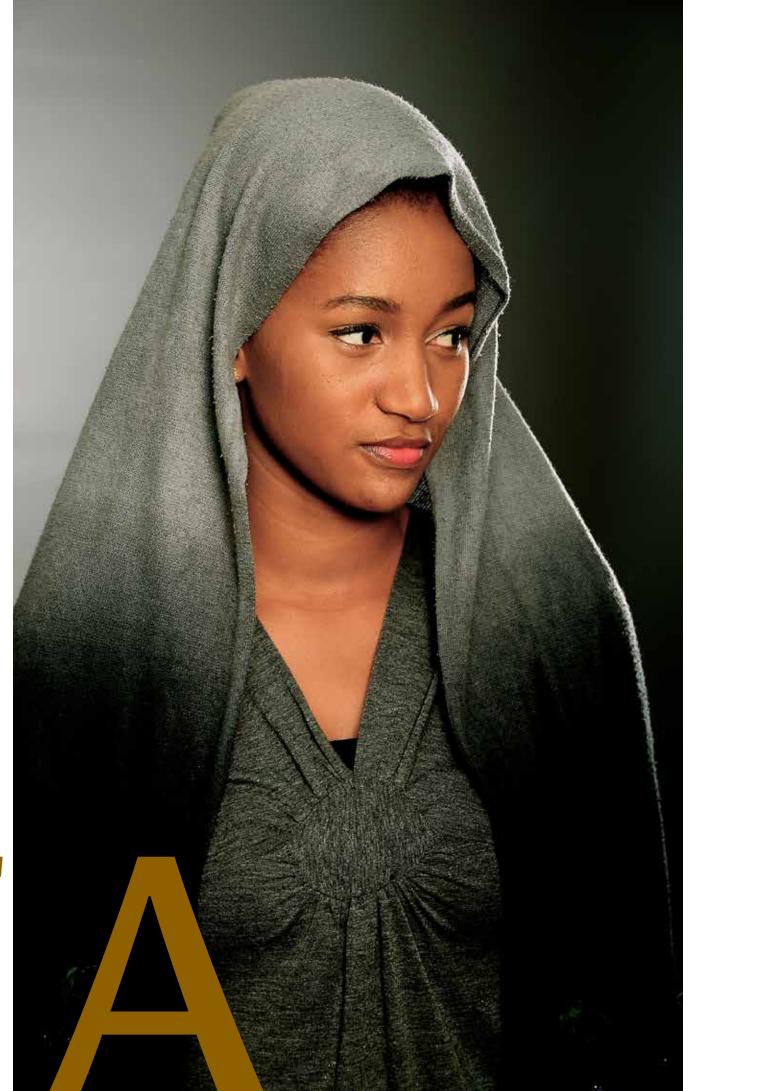
When we meditate, we understand not only 'what', 'how', But also 'WHY'
Meditation is Reason.
That's why it happens in Heart.
Convictions are the treasures of thinking
Domiciled in the heart
Out of which Mindset is framed and shaped

Today, there's one thing you do M E D I T A T E.
This has been the missing link.

Did you know that there was once a time where it was considered cool to be modest?

Did you know that at one time your reputation would depend on how much clothes you wear? This was a time where purity and modesty were valued. So what happened? When did covering become uncool and prudish? As teenagers now it seems like the LESS clothes you wear the MORE popular you become. Personally, I believe that that is horrible. Unfortunately, this is a belief that a majority of the WORLD believes, not just teens. So when did keeping ourselves pure and innocent become unusual, weird, or strange? Do not even mention ABSTINENCE unless you want to be ridiculed and ostracized by almost all your peers. Let me tell you a story.

I was attending summer school this summer fo&r prep for exams. Two guys started some harmless teasing of me which eventually led me to telling them my views on abstinence and keeping pure until marriage . They laughed at me. They said I was dreaming and that it was better to just get it over with now. I remember feeling really hurt by their blatant dismissal of my views. Needless to say the teasing increased.



This experience really opened my eyes to the fact that keeping pure and chastity has become an archaic concept. It has become old fashioned. A girl who covers herself up is said to be stiff, cold and a prude. A guy who chooses abstinence is considered a wimp or a lesser man. Honestly, I believe that mentality is wrong on so many levels. So here is what I think. Let's bring back Purity and Chastity. Let's make it not only acceptable but cool to value oneself and one's body. Let's bring back respect for members of the opposite gender.

Now I am not saying wrap yourself up top to bottom and run from members of the opposite gender. No, I am saying dress and act modestly. Dress like you are something valuable and not meant for everybody because the honest truth is that you are valuable. So choose to Abstain and Maintain what you have that is valuable and believe me, you will never regret it.

Today, it seems like youth have decided to choose the impersonal over true intellect. Let me explain. Rather than using the basic abilities we have such as Reading, Writing, Speaking and Thinking, we have chosen to instead use texts, skyping, pinging and all sorts of stuff. This stuff isn't bad, not at all, but I believe that as youths we have lost that personal connection we used to share with people. I think that we need to get back to the basics. This is how:

READING, SPEAKING, WRITING AND THINKING

It seems like most teenagers nowadays don't like to read. They find it boring or useless. I mean come on, if you really need to information just ask Google, right? The thing we don't realise is that reading enables us to connect with what is going on around us on a deeper level. It makes room for a certain amount of closeness among people. This is because reading helps you to UNDERSTAND. It opens you up to the thoughts of people. It answers the questions of 'Why?'. This helps us to become better people especially when dealing individuals who don't have the same views as us. Yes we may not like their opinions, but we understand where they are coming from.

This is where Thinking comes in. Once we have read something, we need to start making our OWN opinions, not just following what is popular. We need to get our own minds and thoughts back. We can't just be sheep who follow whatever is in at that moment. This is why we need to start Thinking again. There is no way we can ever positively lead and influence our generation if our thoughts are just like everyone else's. Once we have established our own minds, Speaking and Writing come easily. I know that this isn't always the case. I have the tendency to stutter when told to present stuff in public. Yes it is tough, but the truth is these two are vital for us as youths. They are the quickest and easiest ways to express who we are what we want to say. They do this through WORDS. Words are so powerful. They have the ability to build people up and destroy a person too. But let's get honest here, most of us can't even be bothered to speak it correctly talk less of actually writing it. Yes, I am guilty too. This isn't bad when talking to friends and family but when it starts to affect the times we want to express ourselves, then it becomes a major issue. Before we can adequately communicate, we have to first learn HOW to communicate.

That's basically it. As youth it is way past time we start using our minds instead of just going with the flow.

Let's get INTELLECTUAL.

"INTELLECTUALIS" stroke genius burning passion The information The drive to deliver a message of value All these can inspire reading and thought An internal battle of ideas for the expression of originality With the aid of a pen, a voice or a book Putting definite strings of relevant sentences together instinctive Polished pieces of valuable vocabulary personality Different entirety Bringing about a sweet serendipity

"This activity's so easy I was born with the ability It seems kind of weird when I do it when no one's around me But there's always one somebody Just might be unknown to me But their day's a bit brighter When I do it and they look at me This thing is so easy Not only doesn't cost electricity But also brightens up your day, oh yes I got that from somebody And check this out I use it as makeup, Easy to apply just when I wake up To another new day, a new life, and The fact that I can wake up Who would have thought such a Great God Would upon a girl like me lavish His love And so I do this thing especially for Him Cause He'd rather have me look good for Him I might not know you, but I know this You look so much better when you just do this And in case you didn't guess on time, This activity is a simple smile If it seems strange cause you haven't done it in a while Just look in that mirror you'll look so much better when I know You're not afraid to let that joy flow Let's get your cup full till it overflows From the depth of your heart to the overflow

SMILE!"

Laentity

".....FOR WHOEVER WILL SAVE HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT, BUT WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE AND THE GOSPEL WILL SAVE IT".

Right now a lot of us are grappling a host of questions that are abstract. Questions like: 'Who am I? Why am I here? How have I come to love the things I love? What will become of my future? Will this euphoria of being in love eventually fade'? But how long are we going to allow ourselves struggle with the anxiety of discovering who we truly are and how our present choices will evidently give us the future we believe we want? The mystery of Personal identity poses a host of questions that will continually persist over time.

Has anyone had that familiar feel of watching an old video of themselves, probably as a toddler and wondered how that bubbly being smashing their 1st year birthday cake is them? Why do you have to believe he/she is you? After all you have little or no memory of that particular day – you could have been cajoled to believe that kid is you. Well it's true that a series of physical happenings can be traced from the body you can see to yours, so we can say the body is undeniably yours. But the same series of happenings has rendered the child's body entirely different from the one you saw in that video. It's obvious that the very fragment that composed of that body, even our points of view & thought process are no longer present. You have continued to exist, through all of life's adventures and challenges, the surgery, the loss of your mum, you are still presently undergoing changes and yet still continue to exist.

In this passing phase called life, we all want something NOW that we propel us into our desired future, a planned out career path, marriage, having kids, our dream home, a new car, we ardently believe if all of the aforementioned finally clicks, then our "Future Selves" are gratified. We treat our "Future Selves" as though they are offspring's decades from now, constructing tomorrows that we hope they can enjoy from us.

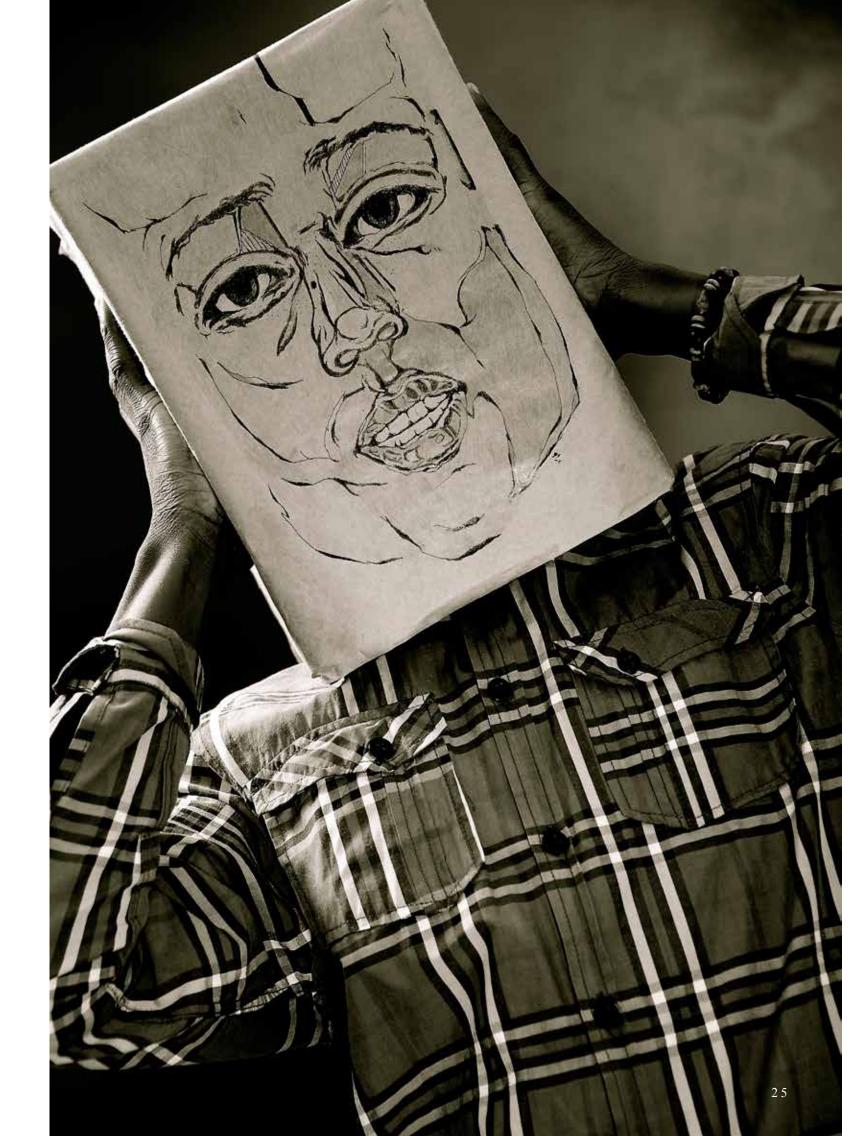
We toil so hard to give them "Our Future" what we believe they will eventually like, then like typical offspring's they take the road less likely to be all we planned, they run the opposite way, raising their brow and thinking "Why would you think I will like all of these"?

One thing is certain, our present selves are undisputable different from our past selves. As humans we remain fluid, we are all a work-in-progress that mistakenly think they are finished products. We really can't fully discover ourselves and account for clarity in personal identity. The person you are now is transient and the only constant in our lives is CHANGE.

True identity can only be discovered in knowing Christ and not idolatry. By being an image bearer of Him and saved by FAITH, Not through our moral ethics, set principles, passions or underlined discoveries. In Christ we are loved, catered for, forgiven, redeemed, we are removed from our past and the future we have forecasted wouldn't matter anymore - learned behaviors, personal habits, principles, after changing events will eventually return to their present state.

"Real life doesn't really begin until self has been taken out of the way". As Paul said, "I face death everyday", if you are going to be relevant, we have to daily kill our every day desires or passions. Until we allow Him completely care, we will never truly find ourselves. In Christ our hope for today, tomorrow, the future is found.

The famous "Prayer Of Serenity" is a prayer of complete surrender to trusting God and His will, that we might find fulfillment and be reasonably happy in this life, "Living & enjoying one moment at a time".





There are radical people emerging They carry the word as a sword The truth as a shield heir feet are swift to spread the good news Of the riches of the kingdom of Heaven They wear the Joys of their salvation as a helmet Gird all about with no seen armour yet ready to quench any fiery dart With one voice they shout and sing the praises of Their faces shine so bright Anywhere they go they reflect The Light Ready to lay down their life Fighting the God fight All fall in line Due to their understanding of the times With renewed minds and eager hands Unafraid to take the gospel to new lands

I love families... The family is the smallest unit of every society which provides a foundation for individuals in the society to thrive. Although every individual has a family, the concept of Family can be classified into two; Given Family and Chosen Family. The concept of given family and chosen family stems from the idea that though we are all made to happen by the consummation of a "father" and a "mother", sometimes these biological parents (given family) do not fulfill their social obligations, hence we identify with a family we connect with; hence Chosen Family.

As we see today, especially with the complexities of our social systems, the concept of chosen family is becoming more dominant. People seek solace, love, care and support more from their chosen Family than their Given Family i.e their biological parents or siblings. Either given or chosen, these two categories are critical to the foundations of every member of the society. Families are the birthing place of Foundations either solid or weak.



A solid Foundation is critical to the success of any individual. It is what keeps us grounded and gives us balance for everything we do in life. foundations are the bedrock of our lives. It is on it we build our lives on. Even the bible states "If the foundations be shaken, what can the righteous do". Several elements such as Identity, Faith, Values, Belief system, make up our foundation and once all that is compromised, we become vulnerable.

In my early years as a child, my foundation was compromised. I had no sense of identity, no belief system, no value, nothing! Of course I was vulnerable to different forms of abuse amongst other things. Would I have been protected if I had a solid foundation? Certainly! Some of the situations I found myself in could have been avoided.

A chat with a friend about the decadence in some community within the Niger delta region made me realize how critical foundations are especially in the life of a growing child. He spoke about the harsh realities young children face within their families and society at large. He ended by saying "I can never raise my child in that community because the social system has been compromised ". Social systems don't just get compromised, families make up societies and these families are made up of individuals whose action and inactions influence the social systems.

Our actions and inactions are determined by our thoughts and our thoughts by our mind and our mind by words. The core of every solid foundation are WORDS. Words are so powerful, they have the inherent power to create or destroy. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God... ". Interesting! Isn't it?

THE ANGELS

Hmmmm, wondererd Thaddeus, there was unusual activity in the plane that afternoon, the cosmos was crowded, moreso than usual when planes flew...

Spying Aemon, one of the Mighty Ones seemingly standing duty at the top of the aisle, Thaddeus called out, "Aemon, are you serving here today? I thought you had been called to watch duty at the Wall?" Typical of his usual silent strong stance, Aemon merely nodded. So it was with the Mighty Ones, "perhaps it's from spending so much time with Yeshua and the Father, their brilliance and depth is enough to silence anyone" Thaddeus pondered. Still he pressed, "Do you know why there are so many angels here today?" Thaddeus persisted with his questions not really expexctng an answer, "that Aemon, his thoughts ran deep as a river", no matter, he would attend to his duties as a Watcher, now where was Akin seated.... seat no....18E, yes there he was...

Thaddeus, angel of God and watcher over Akin since his birth into the kingdom, settled in his usual position arms outstretched over his charge and began to sing, hum and speak things that were pure, things that were true, things that were honorable over him. Again he looked around and wondered why the cosmos seemed more busy than was usual.... lots of Watchers like him on the plane, but also lots of reapers like Aemon and lots of the others as well.... those of the other place... "I will serve purpose and trust in the Master's plan" he concluded.

Exactly 48 minutes into the flight Thaddeus understood in full...as the plan spiralled to the ground, steady on its course, wailing screams, shouts all around, Thaddeus wrapped his wings around Akin and spoke urgently of Jehovah's peace constantly reminding him of truth to still Akin's heart until he felt a tap on his back, Aemon, Mighty One and reaper of the saints spoke, I have come for this one, much beloved of Yeshua....Akin, come, enter into his rest....

As his spirit rose to meet his reaper, Akin turned and looked back and spoke incredulously, "it's my time, I'm done?" he asked. "Yes, replied Aemon, your Father awaits you with great expectation and joy. Joy unspeakable filled Akins heart, for this purpose he was created.... but yet, one question he had for Aemon, "Toyin, my babies, and my family, HOTR?"

Strongly the reaper spoke, "The Fathers everlasting arms will encompass, his love will wrap and his balm will heal, in time they also will see in full and know and be known in full."

I GOT INTRODUCED TO MASTURBATION AT THE AGE OF 8

I got introduced to masturbation at the age of 8. I remember taking a shower with my nanny at the time and that was it. I picked up a bad habit. I saw her running the tap over her vagina and got an invitation and that was it. I got stucked! Awkward isn't it? You probably don't think any kind of pleasure would come from that. Well, at the time it did.

This struggle went on for many years and it did feel like a hell hole. Being stuck in my mind in a place that constantly made me subjected to a will I thought I had no control over. Hmmm! It sure was a terrible place to be in.

It wasn't a habit I was obsessed about, it was simply a medicine for getting things off my mind each time I felt frustrated. What could have been frustrating this little girl at such a tender age? LIFE! The issues of life. You see, I had been sexually violated by quite a number of folks (family and outsiders) way before I was eight. I grew up in a violently abusive family where I didn't feel safe or protected or happy. I also got bullied in school that I had to stay away from school without my parents knowledge. I was just 8.

The state of my wellbeing at the time was a factor that fueled my desire to cool things off in the shower. Of course I never told anyone about the habit or the issues I was facing. Although, one time, my parents eventually found out about me missing school because my teacher decided to pay me a visit. I can never forget how scared I was that very day.

To cut the long story short, apparently someone had been praying for me, hoping that one day I would find Him. Yes! I found Jesus, the Game Changer. He literally took the taste of masturbation away from me. He left me with no choice because what was seemingly pleasurable became so irritable and painful. Although, the game changed over 10 years later, He kinda' made sure I didn't lose my life in that process. Oh yea! It was a process.

3 0

'I HAVE FOUND PEACE, JOY AND A CONTENT SPIRIT IN HIS PRESENCE'

Like every other person I had great expectations in regards to my physical, material and spiritual needs. I had them all outlined in my prayer journal, ready to be dissected with, fasting, prayer and thanksgiving. I expected that as the year unfolds, I will gradually start ticking certain 'needs' off my list and somehow give a 'ground-breaking-teary-eyed' testimony on how some financial or material expectation miraculously got met.

But things didn't turn out as I had forecasted, I got it different this time. For the most of 2014, I noticed a common voice from those close to me, they 'believed' I was always happy. They saw in me joy and happiness I didn't even realise I had received through my present relationship with God.

My testimony(ies) went beyond my material needs, My present walk with God literally stripped me off all my vain expectations. Instead I found unspeakable Joy, undeniable peace, fellowship of love, happiness, and most importantly I found comfort in being content with my present condition(s).

"Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth" - This feeling of "contentment" has greatly surpassed every other material, emotional or physical need - It made me learn to be most grateful in immaterial things.

Every moment life has thrown its merciless curveball at me; I have somehow basked in peace knowing that all will/is well, God granted my weary soul peace. He didn't let my adversaries terrify me. I can't even give any sense of reasoning to all of this, how I have conquered the fear of 'what it should be'. I no longer touch the ground with my own feet, His word has been the light that illuminates my life, it gives me so much hope.

My soul is extremely grateful, (Thank You Lord) for the fellowship of love; He has been my ultimate source of fulfillment. I hadn't realized how much of His grace had been manifested in me until I realized my thought-process unconsciously focused on things that were "noble, right, pure and lovely.

I can only anticipate the greater things to come as I immense myself with more of Him.

BUT I TOLD MYSELF THAT I WASN'T GOING TO DO THIS AGAIN.

But I told myself that I wasn't going to do this again. That I wasn't going to give in to the game. The battle of the mind began. Torn between the satisfaction and pleasure it might

but also the shame and filth I might feel. I'm slipping away

Could one more game do any harm? Into the dark I went, hoping not to be found. I took one more sniff And with no where to turn to.

One last feel

The satisfaction it brought, I enjoyed Now I face my demons I realized what I'd done And in due time I had given in to the game. I will rise Falling right into temptation What disgust I felt What shame it brought What disappointment I became. And for one more time

"I told myself that I would set away with the T.O.Y.S" Temptation .Of .Youth

It's like I'm giving in to my demons Allowing them to take over me That I would set away with the toys Not taking control of my own self being. Causing my own storms and getting upset when it rains. bring, Slowly...

Falling deep into the Darkness

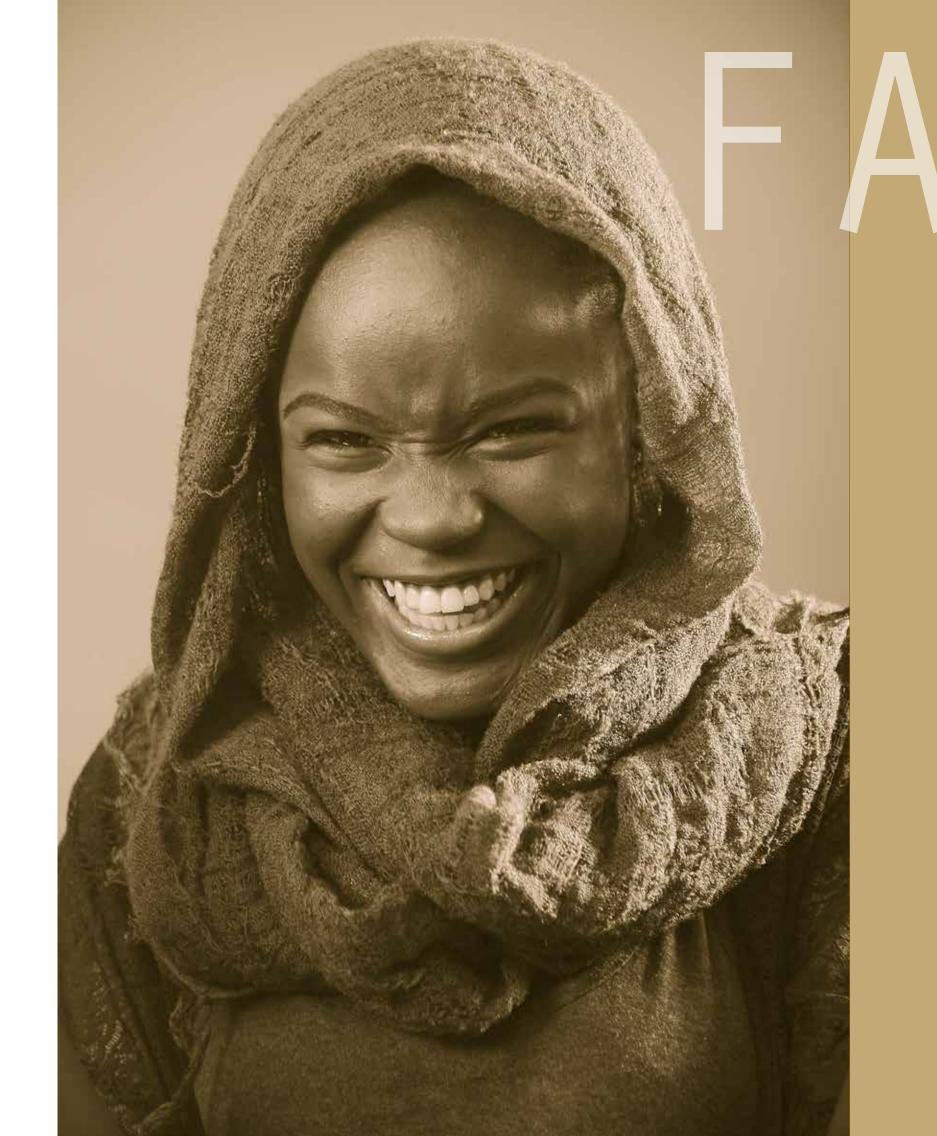
And not being able to find my way back And then "Lost" is were I find myself

One more look But a light who is God One more shot That shun so bright Gave me sight

It felt good, really good. Allowing me to take my flight Guiding me in such dark night!

But then suddenly with much delight

3 2



(phone ringing)...me: hello?

Female voice: Hey, Baron right? well there's no time for intro...but I know you love God and just wanna say that if you don't get in a relationship with me now, you won't be able to please God and infact your relationship with Him would be stagnant!
me: sorry?

Voice: yes, lemme tell you more bout me. I'm known as the shield! my fiercest rival is FEAR. He's just another weakling who just delights in snatching my lovers, makes them believe their rel with me won't profit them, that I might fail them and all that. but I'm hoping that won't be the case with you... me: I'm kinda confused here...

voice: I am the one behind "believing in things not seen"...I make my lovers say "I can" "I am strong" and stuff like that...but don't get me wrong, I'm not Courage. Courage is quite secondary because I am more biblical...if you're not a believer you can't have me but unbelievers can have courage cause he's ...maybe natural? ya...

Me: still don't get...

Voice: don't worry, with time. I can say that I've gotten into quite a lot or a few blind dates though it's called "having little faith"...that's the situation where people try to have both I and FEAR under the same roof. it has never worked because I always show forth first before they let FEAR take over (like in the ase of Peter and Jesus, if you recall that). Well don't be shocked if I tell you that God has me too... His ownership of me is what assures Him that you would fulfill His purpose here on earth which is the reason why He'll never "leave nor forsake you"

Voice: (cuts in) so having said all this, I'll throw you a quick question and I need you to answer me real quick because I don't wanna exhaust my airtime as I have so many others to call before FEAR ruins them. Would you get in a relationship with me?

Me: are you for real now?

Voice: Yes, I am

Me: hmm...
Me: sorry, what'd you say your name was again?
Voice:
Me: hello?
Voice: my name is FAITH!!!

MUSIC, NAIJA & INDUSTRY

"Great! Great industry indeed, no doubt! Much talent in there! Creative producers, good lyricists, directors, what more can I say? One of the best in Africa, if not the best there is. All varying as most of them came up with their own styles, some hip hop, some jazz, some afropop, dancehall and so on. Taking entertainment to another level as they all got a thing or two they refer to (love, religion, money, the nation etc.), I mean, there's just so much to say about this wonderful and flourishing industry! Marvelously great!" ----someone once said (non-Nigerian pal though)

So what about bringing it home, looking at it from an "it's my homeland" perspective? what went wrong? where did we miss it? I consider these questions rhetorical. Now knowing fully well or rather not forgetting that the industry has a very large role to play in nation building, which I think as a point we already missed, I have a suggestion. It's so obvious that 62.8% of our young ones today actually listen to music more than they listen to or even heed advice given to them by elderly ones. We all are doing a great job actually, kudos and thumbs up jare! but how about putting some life (life life, reality, authenticity) in those lyrics? It's true we stay up late working really hard, ya, but I'm thinking, "is it really worth it?" like "so I actually sacrifice all my sleep and everything, just to end up talking about one fine girl or how much cash I have in my wallet or some name brands?"

we know things have changed a lot, I mean, we all know the happenings in our nation but have we thought about acting towards all that through good music because we can't just keep blaming the leaders off the nation as some of "these problems are just problems waiting patiently for us to realize they are not problems". Imagine our youth listen to songs and grasp something from them each time...that's Naija going beyond already! Music, I'd say, is the best medium to reach out to people, so why not inspire people other than just make them jump and dance to the beat like dancing will really make here better! A song like Ice's "Whiskey" can make you pause and ponder 'fore you go down into that alcohol ditch you want to fall into...more of that and I see an even greater Naija Music Industry.

the book "the purpose-driven life" reads..."there's nothing like Christian music, there's only Christian lyrics" so I guess our producers are out of this for now, hahaha. So I'm talking to you 'upcoming artiste', you, yes you! be a futurist! think about the ahead while making up for the now! and each and every one of us there, 'our nation needs us'....US who? THE NAIJA MUSIC INDUSTRY!!



 $3\,6$





The emergence of 'Shoki' —the youth-dance movement of the moment—resembles the arrivals of 'Azonto', 'Etighi', from its backlash to its origin to its mass appeal.

Throughout the last few years, new forms of dance expression has continued to evolve despite the obstinacy of many in the society to accept anything that takes them out of their 'comfort zone'.

Shoki, once limited to native music and dance has become a widespread form of dance exhibited and enjoyed by young people home and abroad. Shoki is no longer limited to Naija music and Afrobeat; today it represents the explicit expression of self identity as free individuals who challenge the status quo. 'They' attempt to break away from the established or commonly expected Naija social Standards and cultural values. It represents a particular young population attempting to redefine Nigerian youthfulness, individuality, freedom, community, collectivity, and meaning of life.

PURPOSE&IDENTITY

It's actually rather quite astounding the level of power, identity has over us from the way we talk, to the way we dress and the way we invariably behave. It defines us, Our self-concept – how you see and define yourself – is a composite, defined in no small part by how others interact with and react to you.

In fact, our identity doesn't only influence the choices that you make but it offers much greater longer-term rewards (e.g. a life of fulfillment from choosing a suitable career path).

So whenever possible, base your key life decisions on the person that you are. And so I realized the truth about identity is that, we can either let the world tell us who we are or let ourselves become self-aware of who we are by discovering our purpose through the qualities inherently imprinted in us by God.

"IDENTITY DOESN'T ONLY
INFLUENCE THE CHOICES THAT
YOU MAKE BUT IT OFFERS
MUCH GREATER LONGER-TERM
REWARDS"



RECONNECT "I KNOW I'VE BEEN SAVED FROM SIN BUT HERE I AM STILL LIVING IN IT, I KNOW YOU'RE BIGGER THAN MY PROBLEMS BUT I STAY WORRIED ALL THE TIME. WHAT NEED I DO TO GET OUT OF THIS CONFINEMENT? THEN YOU SHOWED ME TO JONAH 2" (**Y'ALL CHECK IT OUT**). THERE'S ALWAYS THAT POINT IN TIME WHEN YOU FEEL YOU'VE BEEN A BIT FAR AWAY FROM GOD, MAYBE LESS MEDITATION ON THE WORD OR SOMETHING ELSE. YOU DON'T NEED TO SET TIME AHEAD FOR THAT 1 HOUR PRAYER, JUST AT THAT POSITION YOU ARE IN, SAY "FATHER I KNOW I'VE BEEN A BIT FAR BUT YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN WITH ME, I APPRECIATE! **MORE GRACE" THEN DO** WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE!! THIS IS A JOURNEY NOT A **DESTINATION AND SO THERE** IS A NEED TO RECONNECT!!!

"REFUSE TO BE A LOCAL CHAMPION. HANG AROUND THOSE WHO CAN FEED, NURTURE AND CHALLENGE YOUR DREAM TO GO TO THE NEXT LEVEL"

DREAM



DANCE BATTLE

THE COMPETITION OF OUR TIMES

"I bet I'd beat you to that!". The competitions of our time can be likened to a dance battle, I mean it's all about comparison. People compare with others their money, clothes, accessories or even school grades, it's about trying to prove or proving to the next person (considered the opponent in the case of a dance battle) that you're better than they are by battle it out. funny enough, we even hear stuff about celebrities trying to prove they have a greater fan base than another celebrity, crazy huh?. it's everywhere, I might even say it's one of the commonest things in existence and it can come in us forms.

Actually, there was some competition in the days of Jesus, between himself and the Pharisees which became very obvious when they kept throwing at Him their takes on 'The Sabbath' and all that. Note that, in a dance made that "best move", who sampled his "X-factor", an who dropped that "Ultimate Wow Move" which put him ahead of whosoever it is he was up against! having said that, i'll take it Jesus just couldn't lose because "His life was His X-factor!"...Also while battling, it's allowed to turn your opponent's attack into your own attack thereby making yours more fierce which is exactly what Jesus, knowing fully well the rules of the game did because the Pharisees seemed to be winning when they had Him up on that CROSS! but He turned that into his "Ultimate Wow Move" when He resurrected from the dead, and showed 'em who's BOSS!

So then, in the competition between 'good and bad' 'right and wrong' light and darkness', it's very obvious which the winning team is....so all you gotta do is, choose what team you're on and then victory or loss is sure! Because "there really ain't no neutral ground" (matt12:30-the message bible) And once again I looked my opponent in the face and said to him - "ANY-THING YOU CAN DO, I CAN DO BETTER!!"







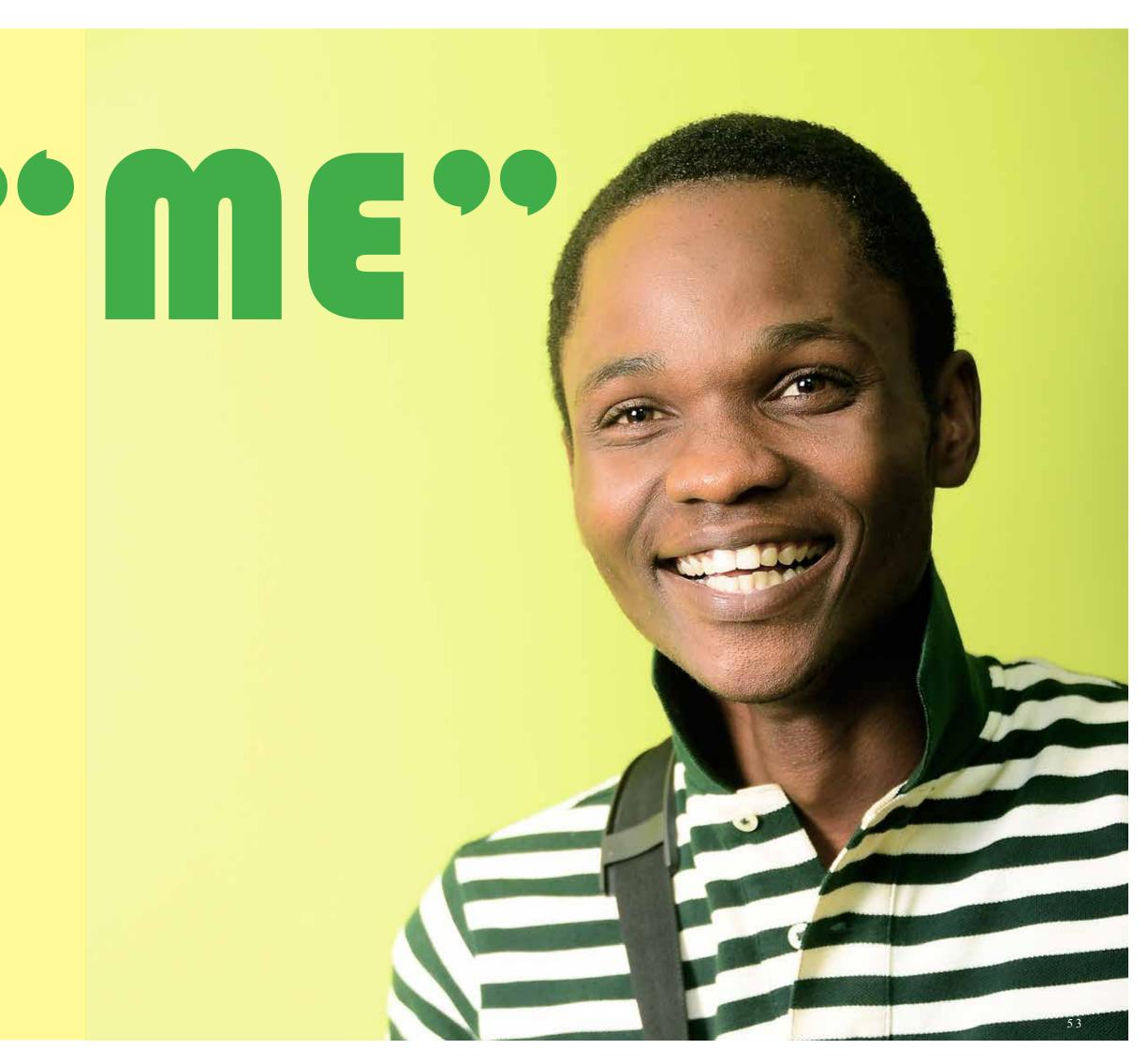
These and many more are some of the questions we ask ourselves when we find ourselves in situations that question our essence. The truth is, answers to these questions can only be found when purpose is known. If inanimate objects could speak, imagine your Car asking you, "what am I doing in a garage?". Well, if only the car knew its purpose, it would realize it is exactly where it needs to be at that time. Same as humans, we find our essence, in the knowledge of our purpose; It's beyond biography, or demography, it is Discovery.

You see, Purpose is what gives birth to identity, which reveals the sum essence of a thing. It can also be seen as the full expression of purpose. A man without identity is a man unclear about his purpose.

The quest for identity is one that never really ends. The question actually never ends. There is always a desire discover more. You see, discovering ones identity is not a function of age or anything external rather it is a function of our inherent capacity to metamorphose into everything greater that we can be. At the core of it all, is what we call POTENTIAL.

The beautiful thing about POTENTIAL is that it is limitless. It is even more beautiful because we are constantly at the intersection of stretching ourselves to the degree with which our Purpose stretches such that when purpose says, "World Richest"; though a local champion, your potential stretches to the point of actualization.

Never be afraid to BE! At the centre of all of the questions in your mind are unlimited answers. Look up to God for purpose and Look within for Identity and remember you have the ability to become everything purpose says you are that you have not yet become



IT WAS A DAMNING BATTLE

It was a damning battle, a futile struggle and an almost foregone conclusion. No hope at all of victory, I had given up in the battle against masturbation, pornography and chronic lust (It was that bad!). This began from a tiny age, having an unusually high libido for a kid, and also seeking ways to express them. Advice from my parents fell on deaf ears, as I pressed on with the infamous goal of breaking my chastity before marriage. I found friends who could help me, and in the end, I became addicted to pornography and masturbation.

It was so awful and strong, that I had to become creative and formed newer styles of achieving this peak. Little did I know that Jesus had other plans for me (note that I was a church goer, child and grandchild of a Reverend and Pastor, but it counted from nothing), despite my constant denial of His offer. I gave my life to Him almost 500 times, but never truly allowed Him control it. But the desire to transform was burning inside of me, yet I was scared of what my friends and girlfriends might say of me(This isn't a cliché, I experienced it).

Still Jesus kept on aligning my path to His will, bringing me into a group of Christ-Addicts, a fellowship called FECA, miraculously. There and then I just knew that my change was coming closer although I was still masturbating, even as a fellowship member (please don't look at yourself as evil or too bad to come into God's presence, that is exactly where your problems expand. God enjoys seeing the worst people before Him). Then in August 2013, after receiving a revelation from 1John 3:9, Jesus Christ broke the chains of lust, masturbation and pornography at a Feca Convention I attended. I was baffled! Instantly, scales fell off my eyes and I began seeing myself in a totally new light!! When my discipline, willpower had failed me, Christ came in and renewed me, restored me and set me on a solid Rock!!! All glory to His name....

CHIBOK

I just turned seventeen
And I am marking my birthday in this camp.
I am sick and I haven't been eating,
Only God knows if this pain I feel is still a cramp.

I have lost hope
I swear to God I cannot cope!
I just want to lay here and die,
Or imagine this to be a dream by the time I open my eye

I was preparing to take my WAEC exam
Reading by a candle, struggling with math
Before I knew it, a man was grabbing my arm
Flung me inside a truck and struck me with a bat

Sitting behind the van with only a wrapper across my shoulder

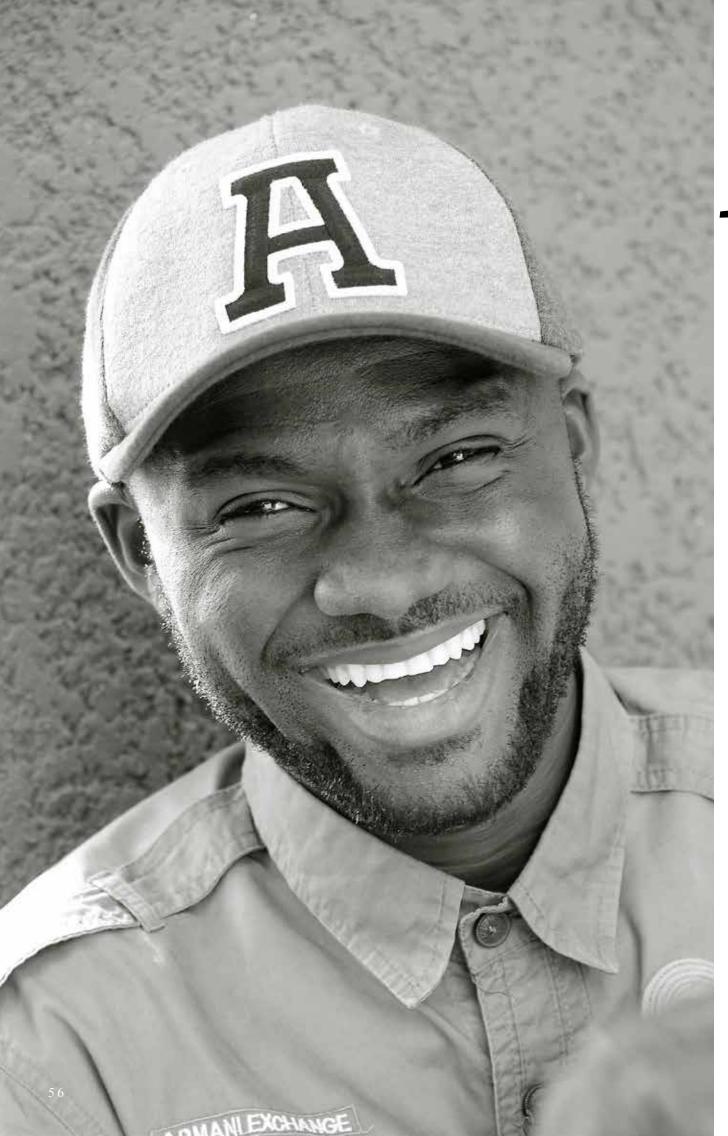
The breeze that blew that night made my soul weak and colder

All I could think of was my very dear Mother O the sacrifices to pay fees from one class to the other

Now I am a cheap slave
Diseased, dejected and damaged
Lesser then an object but with much rave
Haplessness and no one to come to my save

So I count down to the day it will happen When I will be free or die inopportune This body may be weak and my soul attacked But somehow I believe, 'This too shall pass'

54



EQUALITY

Now we have
No Category
No Class
No Colour
No Demarcation
No Gender
No Race
No Status
No Tribe

For when we became baptized
We became like Christ
Ceasing to chastise
Reaching a consensus to aim for one prize

We became conjunctive and not disjunctive No more cursing Adam or blaming Eve Loving one another and not misperceive For the same God is whom we all Believe

> Right or Good Wrong or Bad Majority or Proper Minority or Improper We are one knot Whether we like it or not

We are the same lineage of Abraham's offspring And like words of Martin Luther King The fight for Equality must persist For we are all Heirs according to promise

[Galatians 3:28-29]

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[Galatians 3:28-29]



He sent her letters everyday
but she wouldn't open them he knew
she liked to think she was strong
but her heart just couldn't bear reading his words when he
wasn't near
she would stack them all on her bedside table and smell
them every morning
she would hate him in that moment
he knew

Every morning, she would wake up and smile at the heavens then look to her side and sigh missing him She would then wear one of the dresses he loved and put on the lipstick he bought She would send the kids off with a kiss and start the day's chores Then settle with a book to distract from waiting for him

she would have lunch and pop a bubble gum in her mouth
to keep awake
she would fall asleep
he laughed

The bare bunks weren't why he was cold each night
He knew for her the bed wasn't any warmer
Spending himself was nothing.. He missed his weakness.
He was bound by duty to his country
But it was her words that echoed in every gun cock and pin
drop
"Come back!"
He would

He waited at the door and looked at his watch
it was just a little after lunch
she would be asleep
He tried to imagine
How through misty eyes she would scream
Then kick him and embrace him
kiss and bite him
He knocked



Friendship is like a missing piece in the life of every man. A necessary part of our human nature that someone else special must fill.

Many things we have achieved in life, many things we couldn't do on our own but we did its 'cos we have a friend.

We have not always been able to make it on our own as much as we think, there is always that special someone around us who tells us not to give up, its 'cos we have a friend.

When the world is against us and it looks like there's no hope for tomorrow, and it seems there's no strength for us to move on, there's a voice that whispers in our spirit saying come on you can make it. The voice of a FRIEND.

A Friend

.... Is there to pat your on the back when the world turns Its back on you.

...Is always willing to tell you the truth even if it will hurt.

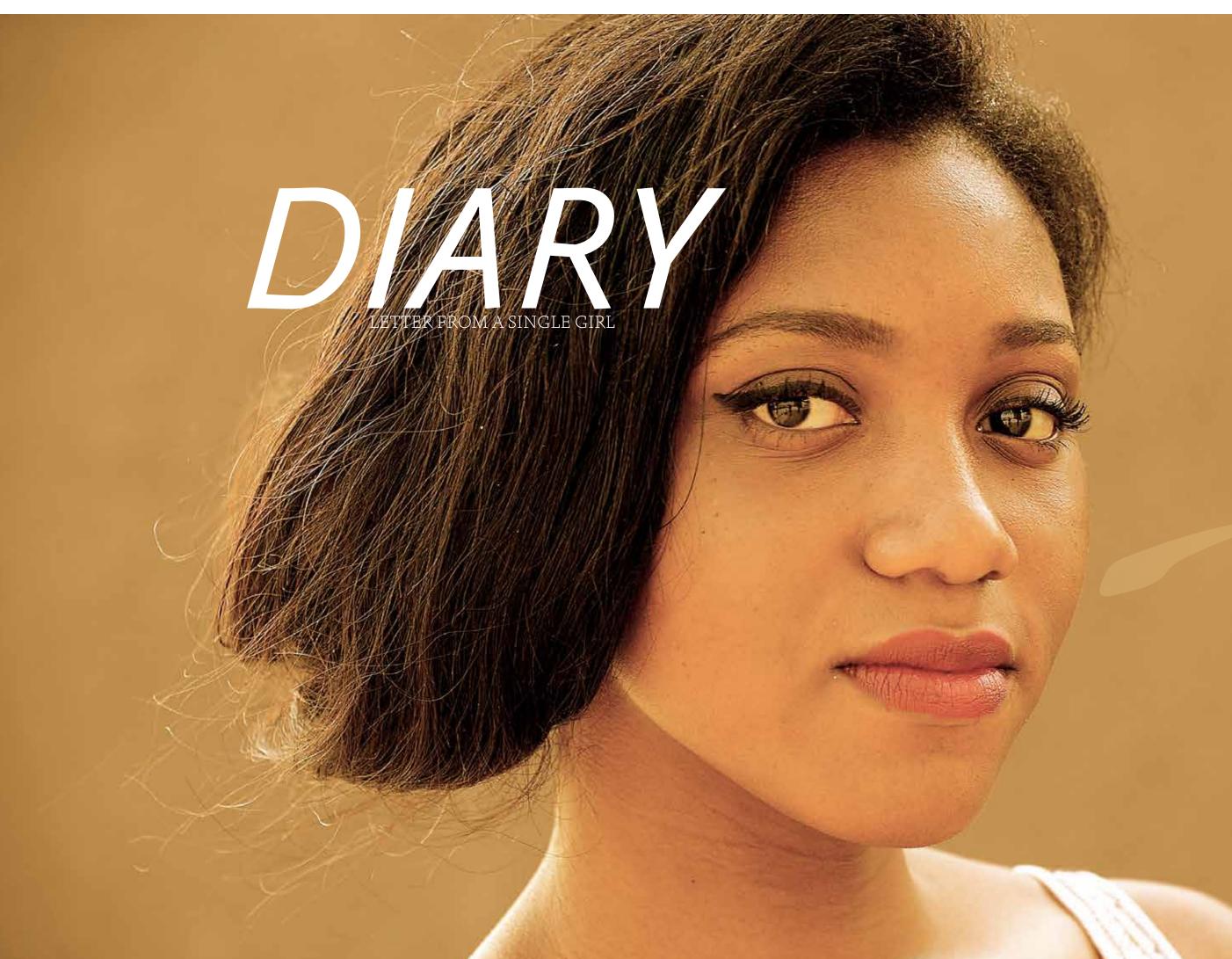
...Is that person who shares your pain and joy like it happened to them.

...Is one who is willing to lay down their lives for you.

...Is the one who is crazy enough to get hung on the tree to safe me.

JESUS my Special Friend.





"In your head lurks insanity
You sing songs so outdated
I love you in your abnormality
Cause been normal is Soo overrated

I love bee crazy at random And you love to mellow me out Our friendship is Soo amazing The kind people hardly know about

You act like a little kid And annoy me beyond belief Then you turn my frown into a smile Like a kind of comic relief

We're meant to be like jam on bread Funny enough no string attached And in all the whole wide world I couldn't have found a better match

So this poem goes to you
My forever other part
You'd never be off my mind
Cause your name is forever in my heart"



Someone once said, "Never spend, Always Invest"
How then?
When we invest; we buy something that lasts longer!

Time is the base of our human existence
Resource is our legal tender for fellowship and community
So it's an advantage to have increased lifespan of acquisitions
Be it Shoes, Knowledge, or even Joy
This vantage is brought to bare through choices
Because
Life is option
Living is choice
Quality therefore is hinged on clarity regarding options and choices

We daily choose one thing over the other
One person over the other
One idea over the other
One belief over the other
One deed over the other
One color over the other

These choices are the base of our 'investing' or 'spending'
A life of spending has no returns at the end
A life of investing has profits at the end of times
Investing is a classic
It's Vintage, it's Style, it's Victorian, it's Brown,
It's White, it's Blue, it's Pearl, it's Rock

We gain what we invest and lose what we spend
If a Man gains the whole world, yet looses his Soul; He Spends
But should anyone seek first righteousness, He gains All; He invests
Timeless investment in Timeless righteousness
Brings to bare Timeless and 'Spaceless' Gain, Love and Quality

If Every Word, Coin, Breath, Second be an investment We need not worry about Gain Because maybe we see it or do not We Gain.
We succeed



'Truth' changes us and not itself, Whilst Lies keep changing yet unable to change anyone, probably because these lies are human convictions based on his obscured intuition subjected to factors which keep it in the realm of change. The word is God and God is Truth, "God-Truth" never change; therein is the Power to Change and Transform us.

Absolute truth can only be found in God.

When we think of the words chastity and purity together, we often think of being completely pure and abstaining from sexual relationships.

Being "clean"... but it's much more than that. Charity and purity have to do with the mind, body, spirit and soul. When I say 'soul', I'm also talking about 'will'. One must be in a state where they are completely blemish-less and pure, free from any form of 'sin'. It is honestly very hard to be pure. It is hard to set aside some things and be 'clean'.

Most times we think that by cleaning up after ourselves we are being 'clean' but it is so much more than that. All those pecadilloes that we commit knowingly or unknowingly contribute to our state of purity and chastity. There's a popular saying, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness". Cleanliness in this context is not only regarding physical appearance but also psychological wellbeing. It's safe to say that cleanliness is a state of mind. In fact, complete cleanliness is Godliness. If you're able to abstain from sin and hold unto your essence of purity then you are in fact Godly.



CLASSIC DILEMMA

The Classic Dilemma
Routine or Change
It's said that successful people have mastered specific daily routines
It's also said that the only constant thing is change
The dilemma is, Routine and Change needs the 'Will' to be
The Will to create Routines and Build Habits
Now, we wrestle the Will to Change and Liberate
It's sometimes like we tear down what we build with same hands
This dynamics make understanding ever so complex

Until Mary made a Discovery
She discovered she carried in her womb an idea;
A belief that bridges Routine and Change
A process that through suffering is hopeful
A death that kills death and ushers life
A gift that's free yet unending

Because of this D I S C O V E R Y
We can now work a job for 20 years
And still look forward to Monday morning on Sunday evening
We can now create routines and remain refreshed
We can now do a meager thing in an exceptionally extravagant way
This discovered idea brings contentment in little
And fosters humility in the midst of abundance

We now know that routines is made out of things
But change is made out of people
And we may have routines even as we change
So that we live a '2 "tri-mentions'
Full awareness and presence in both the seen and the unseen
In all of this
I consciously change by my discoveries
And unconsciously, routines are created.

The attempt to create routines to introduce change
Opposes divine order
The ignorance of the 21st century
But divine order, eliminates chaos
As it introduces Exposure, Difference, and Boundaries.

If you've not seen this movie before, I am short of words to describe you with [Just kidding, lol]. This award-winning thriller featured the sleek and stunningly beautiful Angelina Jolie, as the main protagonist. She was a skillful and determined tomb thief, who stole antiquities and treasures for herself and also for others. A hitch occurred when she was urged, by circumstances, to retrieve a piece of a triangle to be used for a hideous purpose. There were many obstacles on her way, but by sheer determination and focus, setting her eyes on what she came for, she came out victorious against all odds!

Now, relate this to a story about a young man, many years ago, in the country of Israel who went through a similar life pattern. He came down to earth, all the way from heaven in order to change man's standing with God, which at that moment was totally off-course and in tatters. Just like Angelina Jolie, His mission was definite. He knew what He came for, pursued it, and against all odds, He got it. Satan, who plays the role of the antagonist, Powell, took man's dominion over death, sin and the world by deceit, not by force though. So man became subject to Satan instantly. God, who loved man deeply, sent a Tomb Raider to go and retrieve the dominion and right standing that man had. The Tomb Raider had to undergo a training period and process, during which He honed His skills and set forth, totally prepared for the mission. In this movie, Jolie always used her femininity and beauty, combined with astute skill to outwit men, supposedly stronger than she was. Then in Christ's story, He used love, happiness, grace and wisdom to beat even the most skilled and educated teachers and humans who tried to prevent His advancement of the mission! It was even recorded that He was, at the age of 12, leaving some teachers dumbfounded in the temple with His questions and answers.

The main events began from the cross, where He exchanged His life for man's death, His wealth for man's poverty, His soft, fleshy heart for man's stony heart, His perfect health for man's ill health! and thousands of other exchanges that took place on that piece of wood. When Christ gave up His life, Satan thought that he had won, at that point, but just like the movie showed us [In a certain scene, Jolie had been totally overpowered by Powell, and he was looking victorious, but the tides turned and Jolie came out of the tomb, having killed him with his own dagger] Jesus' death meant deep trouble for Satan, HE JUST NEVER KNEW IT! Jesus' body was laid in a natural tomb, but His Spirit went down to the spiritual tomb, raided and ransacked the whole place, preached to those who were dead [1 Peter 4;6] and took the keys to life dominion and prosperity from Satan's hands, which were shivering at this point. Speak of The Ultimate Tomb Raider!!!

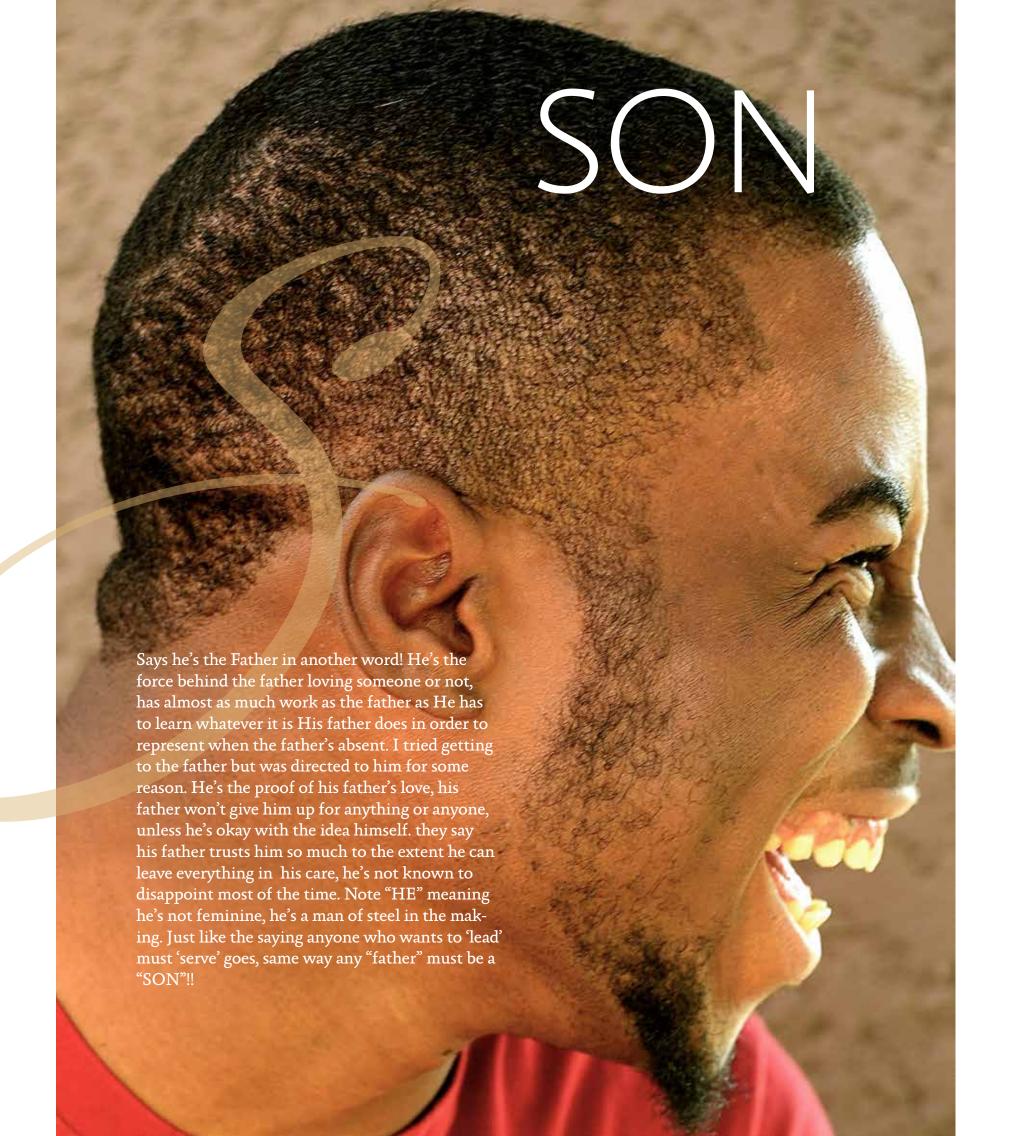
He left His comfort zone, just like Jolie did [she was a very wealthy girl], went into a place of unease and chaos, and brought order and peace into this realm. We have all been restored, renewed and reset for this new life, all we got to do is just believe in Him, grasp a hold on Him, and it's ours! Magic? Not at all. With God, opportunities don't just come once, but in millions [ah, why wait till it gets to millions nah? You can grab this opportunity now] All this is possible because The Ultimate Tomb Raider, Jesus Christ, succeeded in raiding our worthless souls out of the tomb!!...

DAUGHTER

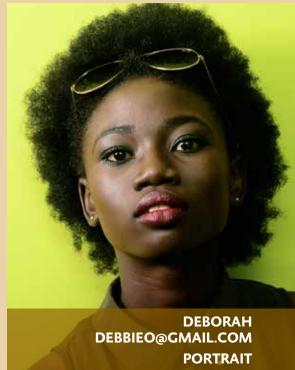
Growing up as a young child was an okay experience for me. Though they were ups and downs it wasn't so bad after all. I don't really remember most if things that happened then but most of all I remember how much I wanted to grow up. I've always dreamed of being a teenager as I am now. I didn't have these dreams cause my childhood was horrible or because of any reason in particular maybe just so I could do grown up stuffs. I could finally be allowed to watch PG13 movies, handle money and at least be allowed to go to some places. I mean I just would feel so free and responsible with myself. Little did I know that there was more to growing up.

Things changed completely, I began to ask myself so many questions like who I'm I? and why was I brought into this earth? So many of these questions I could not answer but then I still wouldn't give up. I've always been someone who's very patient and I believe in waiting for the right time to do things. Having to keep up with all the problems I was going through wasn't easy at all. School especially was quite hard and everything. I mean like no one to really stand up for me cause like everyone had their own sort of backup. Either their boyfriends, best fiends, brothers or sisters. I had none of that but I got to realize that I had God and He had and has been there throughout everything. He was truly indeed my brother, best friend and most especially my father. Well I learnt a lot though. Being single isn't also bad actually not like I've ever not been single. To think of it, even as much as we might be in some sort of relationship or something we are still just one person. There's no two of you or I, and every situation that comes our way we go through it on our own and not with anyone else.

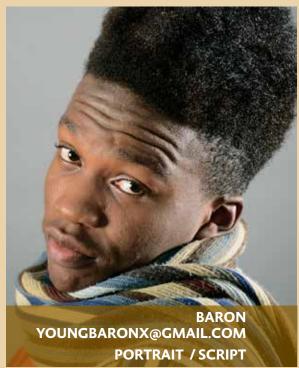
The only difference is that I have God with me always. Being single comes with a lot of freedom. I mean I don't have to be so conscious of how I look cause someone might be watching my every move and me. I can be and hang around anyone I want to. I don't have to satisfy anyone's needs. Oh and also anyone could flirt me (just kidding). Just so you know it will happen at the right time who knows when. Oh well that's my story I guess. I hope it wasn't too detailed though and it was an interesting one also.



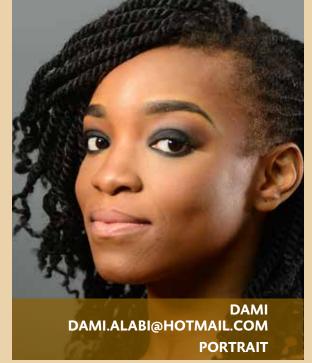
CORRESPONDENCE



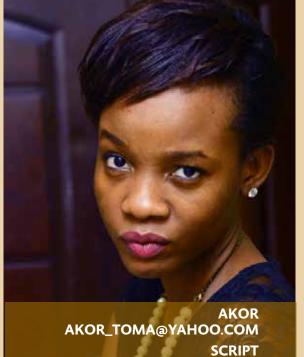
#THE AFRICAN GIRL
#DISCONNECT



#'SHOKI' #SON
#MUSIC, NAIJA & INDUSTRY
#DANCE BATTLE
#LOGISTICS ASSISTANT
#FAITH



#THAT MOMENT #POSE DIRECTOR



#11:59



#DIARY
#BLACK WOMAN
#MAKE UP ARTIST



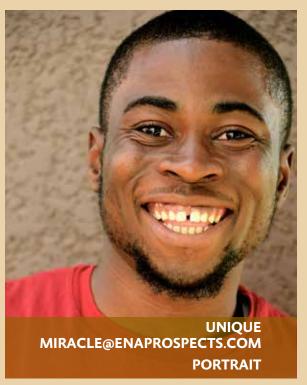
#INTELLECETUALIS



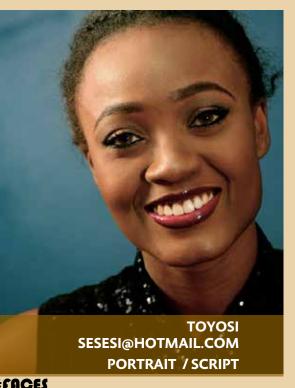
#EQUAUTY



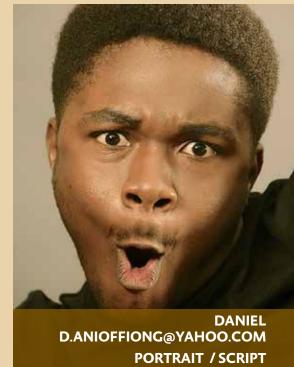
#FAMILY



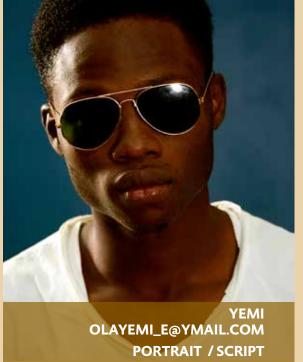
#SON



#FACES
#BLACK WOMAN #TOMB RAIDER
#11:59 #DISCONNECT



#PHOTOGRAPHER 2
#CINEMATOGRAPHER #DISCONNECT
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
#PURPOSE& IDENTITY



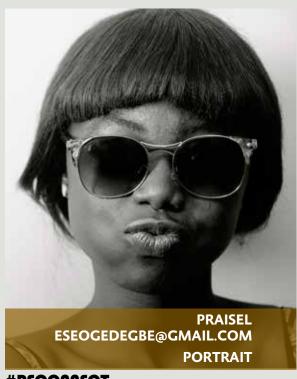
#BOYS&TOYS
#GALA&COKE
#LOGISTICS ASSISTANT



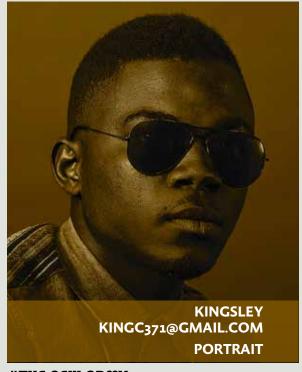
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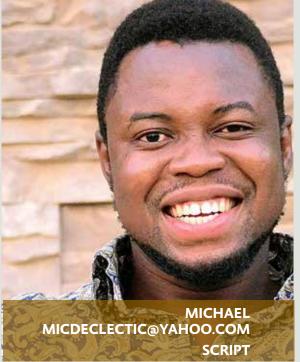
#AYE MARIA



#RECONNECT
#'A FRIEND'



#THE NEW ARMY



#PURPOSE & IDENTITY
#SHOKI



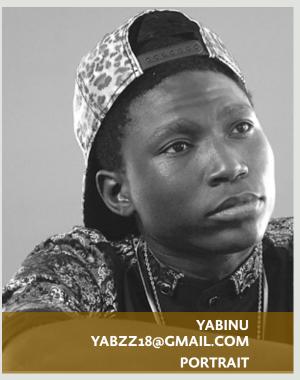
#TRUTH



#SMILE



#ME



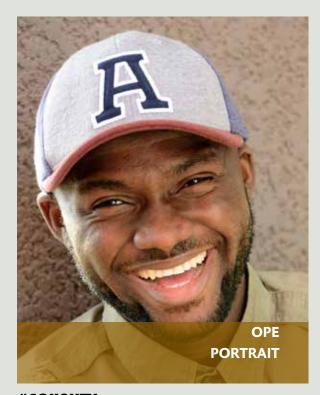
#MUSIC. NAIJA & INDUSTRY #LOGISTICS ASSISTANT



#TOMB RAISER



#DAUGHTER



#EQUALITY



#ME #FAMILY



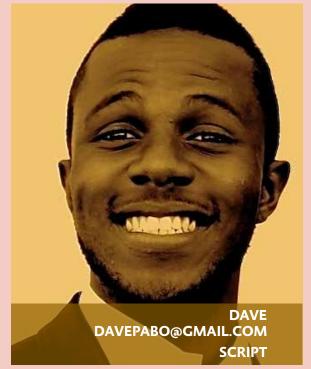
(CORRESPONDENCE



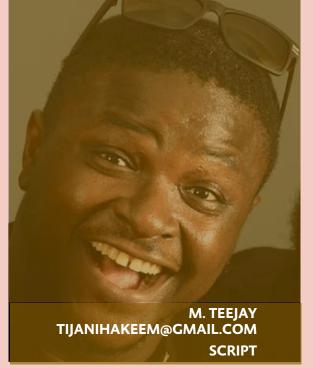
#PURITY #CHIBOK #FAITH **#PUBLIC RELATIONS**



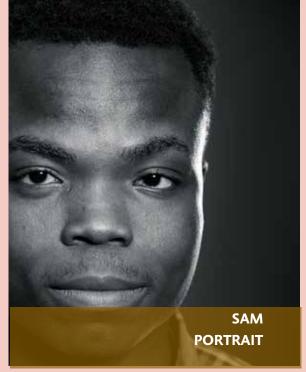
#THE AFRICAN GIRL #AYE MARIA #INTELLECTUALIS



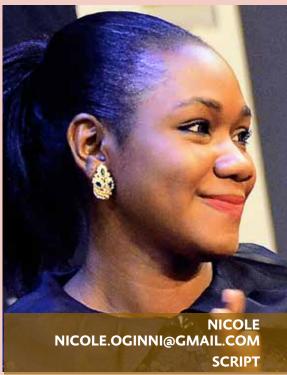
#THE NEW ARMY #INTELLECTUALIS



#'A FRIEND'



#IDENTITY



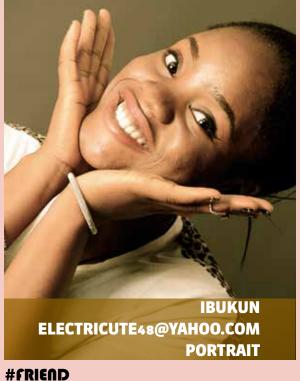
#IDENTITY **#'FOUND PEACE IN HIS PRESENCE'**



#PURITY



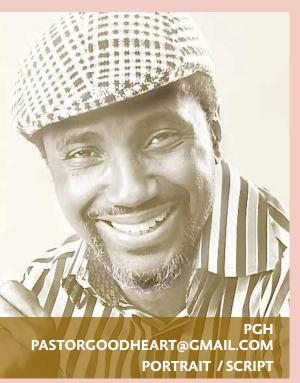
#TRUTH



#DAUGHTER



#FAMILY



#DREAM



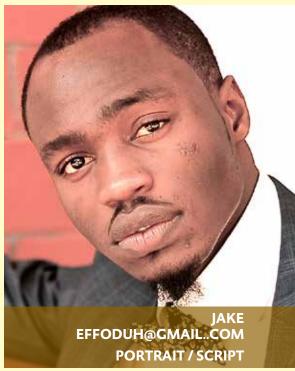
#INVEST & 'SECURE'



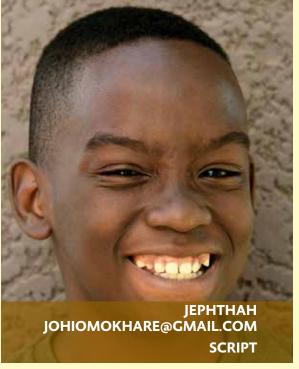
CORRESPONDENCE



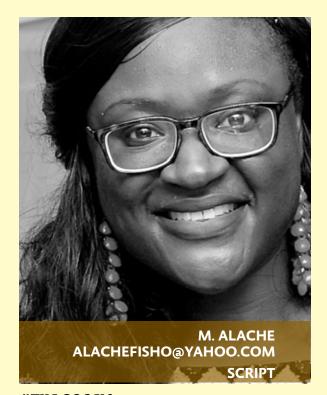
#DIARY



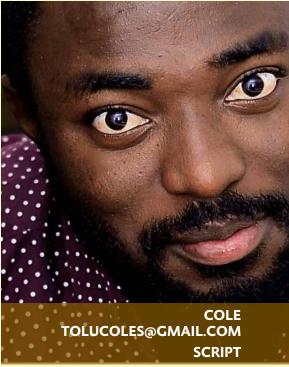
#CHIBOK
#EQUALITY #MEDITATION
#LEGAL ADVISER #SET DESIGN



#BOYS & TOYS #COKE & GALA

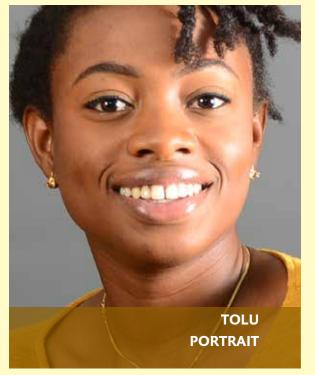


#THE ANGEU



#MEDITATION #LAYOUT ARTIST
#CLASSIC DILEMMA
INVEST & 'SECURE'
#PHOTOGRAPHER

#BRAND STRATEGIST



#CLASSIC DILEMMA

