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WHAT THE BIDEN PRESIDENCY MAY MEAN FOR AFRICA

Self-worth to boost your Emotional wellbeing

How to Deal with Difficult Prospects using this 3 Strategies

FEBRUARY: THE MONTH OF LOVE

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Editor's Letter



You are welcome to the Month of February, I call it the month of love. In fact with the current situation in the world it should be double love for each and every one of us. We are still in difficult times and the power of love we give in a time like this will mean a lot. We should try and wear love like clothes, give out love freely, have our positive vibes on because the much we give will come back to us.

A lot of people are going through hard times some have lost loved ones, some were retrenched from their jobs, some invested money in businesses and no headway. It is still a very difficult time some have been affected mentally, we should endeavour to look out for each other, use kind words be patient with others and show kindness, always remember that love makes the world go round and above all be closer to God Almighty. Do not give up completely because better days are ahead.

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Wishing you all the best in 2021. Stay safe.



Power of Perception

Changing your perception can help you achieve your goals. It is one thing to set a goal and it is a different thing to map out action plans in pursuing and achieving the goal. The zoom lens being used in viewing your goal matters a lot, if you use the lens of yesterday's failures to plan your today's goal you are obviously not going anywhere. And when you apply the same method over and over for sure you will arrive at the same destination. Achieving your goals requires a lot of things.

Naturally your brain is goal-oriented, we know our brain is our power house and it works hand in hand with our mind, when we set a goal, automatically the mind unconsciously start working out the arithmetic, how unlikely you are to achieve the goal, how big the goal is.

In all these, creating a positive perception can positively increase our focus, motivation and productivity. The power of perception can go a long way in influencing our personal and professional lives. Ordinarily human beings are very judgemental, and when you are not brave or self-willed, you can thwart your destiny because of other people's opinion. On a daily basis what you see, hear and feel can easily influence you. It takes split second for us to make quick judgment, good or bad. You have to be conscious of your actions, be intentionally mindful of how you perceive things especially your goals. If you are a business person have it at the top of your head that customer perception is equally very important to your brand. This can influence their buying decisions and their loyalty. Even though there can be a misconception, it is your duty to maintain a positive relationship with your customers.

You can do this by being open to feedback and immediately work on any wrong impression, be humble because the customers that took you up can also bring you down, above all be humble, always have a smiling face and endeavour to train your staff and see your business blossoming.

I love asking my young mentees what their perception is about their goals or any new project they have. I make them understand the hundred percent chances of being able to accomplish their goals if they perceive positively and visualise it coming to pass. I also let them know the major role their values and beliefs play. The power of perception is real and can drive in more innovative ideas.

Joy Echipue



WHAT THE BIDEN PRESIDENCY MAY MEAN FOR AFRICA

We have asked some of Africa's leading academics and thinkers to reflect on what the inauguration of a new US president means for Africa. This series is produced in collaboration with the University of the Witwatersrand's African Centre for the Study of the United States.

Since the first impeachment of US President Donald Trump in late 2019, developments in American politics have riveted African audiences on an unparalleled scale. Although the US Senate acquitted Trump in early 2020, the subsequent electioneering period alongside the ravages of the Covid-19 pandemic sustained Africa's year-long interest in the high drama that unfolded in the world's leading democracy.

President Trump's loss in the November 2020 elections and his refusal to concede to the new President Joseph Biden capped the politically exhilarating year. On 6 January 2021, the siege of the Capitol, the legislative branch of US government, by Trump supporters in a last-ditch effort to prevent the certification of President Biden's win, was the denouement to a year that will remain etched in African memory.

Over the period of President Biden's inauguration, I want to reflect on the implications of the events of 2020 on the Biden's administration's foreign policy toward Africa and African options in a rapidly changing world.

In recent years, African middle classes have become active participants in the global flows of news and ideas facilitated by the rapid proliferation of information technologies and social media. This proliferation is one key explanation for the emergence of the 2020 US elections as a growing concern and interest in Africa, more than ever before.

But equally significant, the elections could also be depicted more accurately as a global referendum on Trump's four years in office. Trump's polarising postures on an array of foreign policy matters invariably attracted global attention and unspoken yearning for his defeat. To most Africans, Trump's negative perceptions of the continent served to underline the legacies captured in the popular depictions of the Ugly American.

Sociocultural ties

Even though Africa has consistently played a secondary role in US foreign policy, deep socio-cultural and historical ties endure. Because of the tendency of most African-Americans to vote for the Democratic Party, African audiences often feel more sympathetic to Democratic administrations. Moreover, Democratic administrations have advanced some of the well-known US programmes in Africa: the Peace Corps under the John F Kennedy administration (1961-1963); the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, under the Bill Clinton administration (1993-2001); and the Young African Leadership Initiative under the Barack Obama administration (2009-2017).

There were high stakes, therefore, for Africa in the 2020 elections in anticipation of a Biden administration. A survey of the most searches on Google by South Africans in November 2020 ranked "US elections" as the second-most popular topic, capturing the remarkable interest in the electoral outcome.

Soon after the November 2020 elections, however, the convulsive events after Trump's rejection of the election outcome cast a shadow on African views of the stability of the political system and the US' global role in the critical area of democracy promotion and leadership of multilateral institutions.

President Trump's abdication of these roles through the misguided America First policy had already deepened Africa's dalliance with China and other countries that previously had tenuous and superficial relations with the continent.

More worrisome, the storming of the Capitol seemed to signal the weakening of American institutions in ways that may potentially undermine its resolve in reversing the damage to the global order underpinned by American power. Although Africa has had grievances about some aspects of this order, it has benefitted from the multiplicity of international institutions and the open and transparent rules that have underpinned this order. In addition, through institutions such as the United Nations, Africa has been one of the major recipients of global public goods such as security and development.

President Trump's second impeachment a week after the insurrection on the Capitol and a week before President Biden's inauguration may portend the return to domestic institutional coherence that is necessary to end perceptions of state failure. Similarly, it may lead to foreign policy predictability and certainty that most of the world has been yearning for.

But is this going to make a difference to the substance of US-Africa policy?

Depth of knowledge

The most optimistic scenario for Africa in the new administration stems from the wealth of knowledge that the Biden administration is able to assemble around its Africa policy. Given his previous role as Vice-President under Obama, President Biden has wide experience on core African issues and knows some of its leaders from visits to Africa. His designated ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, has vast African experience, having held various ambassadorial positions in African countries.

Typically, Democratic administrations tend to have more Africanists than Republican administrations because of the former's many actors and constituencies that gravitate toward African issues. Further, in just under two decades, Democratic administrations have produced two top leaders of African descent:

President Obama and Vice-President Kamala Harris.

Despite the expertise and potentially high level attention to Africa in the Biden administration, the reality is that given the scale of the priorities that will occupy the administration, Africa is not going to feature prominently in US foreign policy. Even before the domestic insurrection that seems likely to consume the energies of the new president in the short term, the United States was confronting the consequences of the Covid-19 health crisis and its economic fallout. In the current context of constrained resources and competing priorities, the most that the new Biden African team can do is to consolidate the gains from previous administrations in the realms of trade, health, culture, and security.

African countries will need to disabuse themselves of the notion there will be an increase in foreign assistance from the Biden administration. More vital, like before, is that Africa benefits more from US engagement with multilateral institutions than the purely bilateral programmes that African leaders tend to highlight. Thus, if the Biden administration re-commits to institutions such as the World Health Organisation and the UN system as a whole, Africa and the rest of the world will be better off than during the Trump administration.

In future, there is a need for a fundamental shift in how African countries relate to the US. Although Africa has struggled for a meaningful role in US foreign policy, Africa is not absent in the American imagination. Long-term cultural and educational interactions have fostered a multiplicity of institutions and constituencies which are more germane to strengthening US-Africa relations than US-Africa elite summits in Washington DC. The Peace Corps, for instance, has produced generations of cultural ambassadors in the US who make a substantial input in key African decisions across many administrations. In recent years, networks of US-African cities have started to build important relationships based on knowledge transfers and exchanges in areas such as planning, infrastructure, housing, urban renewal, and mitigating climate change. Similarly, Africa has a large presence in US academic institutions, contributing to the generation of knowledge and innovations that ultimately enhance Africa's development.

African agency

Thinking of the future also forces discussion on African agency with regard to the United States.

Africa's 54 states have never been able to present a coherent and confident voice to the outside world, despite feeble efforts at the UN and African Union (AU). It is, therefore, unrealistic to envisage the US listening to Africa when it speaks in multiple tongues. African agency is, at heart, a matter of transforming the inchoate voices from multiple states into collective positions about its aspirations and expectations toward the rest of the world. But these positions are not going to come from the annual summits of the AU, where states, for the most part, engage in platitudes and empty declarations. Rather, Africa has to show more seriousness in building regional institutions that break down barriers and borders in bids to realize the age-old vision of pan-Africanism and continental integration.

Africa has had many grand programmes that seek to build regional integration, including the recently unveiled African Continental Free Trade Area, but its citizens are still waiting for their implementation.

Combining the common continental African positions from above and the vibrancy of civic engagements from below will provide a solid anchor for US-Africa relations that transcend the electoral cycles in the US and Africa. Thus, while many Africans laud the inauguration of the new administration, within four years, the US will have new elections and probably a change in leadership. By then, too, African countries with rotational systems of power will have new leaders. The opportunity for the future, therefore, hinges on managing the uncertainties of the electoral cycles through an elaboration of core parameters and principles that lend stability to US relations.

Africa congratulates the Biden administration as it prepares to embark on restoring America's role in the world.

Gilbert Khadiagala

Gilbert Khadiagala is Jan Smuts Professor of International Relations at Wits University and Director of the Wits-based African Centre for the Study of the United States

FEBRUARY: THE MONTH OF LOVE



There are certain things that mark a year and make each month meaningful for various things. For instance, January reminds us of new beginnings, a chance to start off fresh, but also of snow, cold winter days and lots of comforting food to warm the coldness. February is the month right after it and while nothing in particular changed regarding the weather, people do feel very different about this month. It's still cold but there are numerous events and holidays that warm up your heart and soul and bring you closer to your friends, family and all the others around you.

CELEBRATE

As the month of love, February is the time when we celebrate Valentine's Day and we make time for remembering love, we emphasize on the importance of having someone special in our lives and how they make everything better. While this month is associated primarily with Valentine's Day, the journey of love doesn't stop there. It is the month where the Random Acts of Kindness movement is held where you are encouraged to do something for other people, randomly, and make their winter more bearable. This boosts faith in good deeds, in being humane, helpful and thoughtful. The International Friendship Month is, you guessed it, February, and the love doesn't stop there either.

RELATIONSHIPS

All these days and weeks that celebrate our relationships with the people around us give us the chance to make up for the lost time. To show we care and we remember all the good things they have done for us. And while we should be doing this throughout the year, February is the month when we take a step further and think of appreciation gifts to show this love. It's lovely to see hearts and chocolate everywhere (and heart-shaped chocolate), people planning getaway weekends, special dinners, making restaurant reservations and some marriage proposal here and there. You have to admit it's charming.

ROMANCE

Although this all is a wonderful way to uplift the spirit of the people and make them feel better, we have to remember that romance and to be romantic does not equate to expensive or materialistic items as presents. Tiny, personal gestures such as sending the favorite flowers, or cooking their favorite dish from time to time are as good as (if not better) gifts and presents in showing love. Try gifting outside-of-the-box-presents that will set a different vibe in your relationship. People show you their love in different ways. It is in all those details from knowing your favorite flowers to playing your favorite song. The important thing is that they try and do all those things that give you butterflies. Sometimes simplicity is the key to your partner's heart. Make sure to unlock it this February and relish it all year long.

Self-worth to boost your Emotional wellbeing



By Nengi Benstowe (Mental Health Coach)
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In my course of talking to people about ways they can improve their Emotional well-being, the one thing I have found quite common especially amongst the female folks is the issue of 'SELF WORTH'. A lot of these people I have had a conversation with in the past spoke very less of themselves and rarely had the confidence to place a demand on what they are truly worth. Having given this a lot of thought over the years, I realised that many factors have contributed to this blur lens through which many of these folks view their life.

A lot of times when you are around people like this, you hear their price tag from the things they say about themselves. I was having a discussion with a very pretty lady at an event about her relocation to Ireland and how she is settling in. It was some sort of a meet and greet session. As she went on talking about herself, she went on calling saying how stupid and dumb she is for ever living her home country and her former job. She called herself dumb and incompetent for not being able to secure another job in Ireland since she left her country. After ten minutes of the conversation and listening to her tearing herself down with her words, I no longer saw the beautiful and elegantly dressed lady I had noticed from a distance. I started to believe her and the things she said about herself. If I were an employer sitting at the other end and looking to recruit her for a job, I will have no choice than to believe the things she had said about herself even though her professionally written CV might suggest otherwise.

A lot of times the things that make us look down on ourselves and question our self-worth are out of our control. If you are not affected by racism, you might be attacked by an abusive relationship, an unhealthy work environment, social pressure from social media, financial challenge, the need to achieve certain goals, the need to reach a certain level that your colleagues or friends must have attained in order not to feel left behind.

All the above and many others have the tendency of changing our preconception of ourselves. What I have learnt to do is to a daily 'cleansing session' with myself. I do this by daily returning to my original blueprint. I am a very firm believer of the teachings of the ancient bible. I believe there is a God who created the world which includes me. If the bible says so, then it must have the blueprint of my life in it. A part of the bible says "*...You are marvellously made...*". I always read the part of the bible that says who I am. As I read it, I affirm it to myself.

Other tips that help me is avoiding certain environments where I am constantly looked down on. I once heard a story of a man who said to his son "Here is 200 years wristwatch your grandfather passed on to me. I want to give it to you but before then, go out and find out about the worth of it so that you can value it. The young boy took the old looking golden wristwatch to the jewellery shop, he was offered $100 because it looked too old. The boy felt disappointed and thought it was no good for him. His own wristwatch cost a $1000 dollar why should he stress himself over something that is so cheap. He returned home to give it back to his father. His father told him to take it to the Pawnshop. Out of respect of his father, he went. At the Pawnshop, he was priced $20 for it. The boy this time felt more devastated as he told his dad not to waste his time anymore. He was not willing to try any other shop. The father sympathised with him as he managed to convince him to try the Museum. On getting to the museum, the boy was amazed at how well he was treated for what he carried. The Curator looked at him with a big smile as he offered $375,000 for the wristwatch. He went on thank him for adding this precious wristwatch to their antique collection. The boy was shocked. He returned home to his father as he shared the offer and the special treatment he was given at the museum. The father replied him, " I was only trying to teach you a lesson about worth. The right place will always value you the right way"

The message stuck with me for a long while as I constantly evaluate my relationships and the places, I take myself.

You are the CEO of your life. You must take the responsibility to ensure you do not employ people who alter the value of your life. You must also ensure you return to your foundation constantly to affirm and remind yourself of who you are. The way you see yourself affects your emotional well-being. Don't allow anything or anyone change the way you view yourself.

YOUR LIFE IS A STORYBOOK. YOUR CURRENT CHALLENGES ARE JUST A CHAPTER. NEVER GIVE UP!



My first time experience travelling in an airplane was in 2011. It was an amazing experience. I was so excited that I couldn't sleep the day I was supposed to travel so that my "village people" would not make me sleep off and miss my flight.

I went to the airport a couple of hours before my flight to do some plane spotting. But I was so scared when I boarded the aeroplane from Lagos to Abuja. My head, brain, heart, mouth, hands, legs even my suit were vibrating as if rapture was about to take place in the plane.

I got the opportunity to fly in an airplane for the first time in my life when one of the biggest Churches in Abuja invited me for three days marriage program after reading my books. I almost spoke in tongues when I was called by the planning committee that they had booked my flight. Like seriously? It was more like a dream to me. My books opened the door for me. These were the same books that were rejected by bookshop owners because I was not Bishop Oyedepo or Rev Sam Adeyemi.

But today, the same books have taken us to high places and buyers and marketers queue to buy our books. We have sold thousands of copies within and outside the country by God's grace

My Dear, understand that rejection is not fatal. It is merely someone else's opinion. Never give up on that desire of your heart. Do not give up on your dream just because the path is hard. Of course, difficult journeys are often worth it in the end. It may be the hardest fight of your life right now but do not quit.

Fight the temptation to give up and walk away. Regardless of how many times you have failed, keep on trying. Satan, the enemy of your progress, will do everything in his power to keep you from moving forward. It is too late to stop now because your generation is waiting for your manifestation. Become a Finisher. Many life-changing ideas are sacrificed on the altar of the unfinished.

Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.

Eighteen Publishers turned down Richard Bach's Jonathan Livingstone Seagull before it was published in 1970. By 1975, it had sold 7,000,000 copies in the US alone.

Richard Bach's Jonathan refused to give up on his dream until it became a reality.

Your life may seem stagnant while everyone else seems to be advancing in leaps and bounds. Keep pursuing your dreams... Don't give up! You are closer than you think.

A brother had the opportunity to travel to US through one of his followers on his Facebook page. That one encounter changed his life forever. Keep giving values. Identify problems that are solved by your skills. Right there around you, there is a problem that can be solved by your unique skills - identify it and employ your skills to solve the problem to God's glory and for the benefit of humanity.

No matter how hard it gets, keep trying. Work hard. Try harder. Keep studying. Keep working. Keep growing. You don't know when your miracle will happen. With a single word, God can redeem your lost time. God can restore everything you lost.

Even if no one believes in your dream, believe in yourself that your dream will speak. When you finally get to the TOP, you become a TOPIC and your mockers will queue to promote what you do. Yes, result terminates insult.

Go and rent that shop. Open that Facebook page. Open that Facebook group and start giving values. Go and start that dream business, write that exam, go and learn that trade, open the bank account, plan that wedding, start that school, write that book and publish it, go and print your business card and begin to distribute it. Actively look for opportunities to put your skills and abilities to use. Serve in your community. Volunteer in your church. Help someone in need.

I wrote my first three best-selling books and bought my first car when I was single. My Wife met me fulfilling dreams. Single-hood is not a curse. Pursue and maximise your dreams whether single or married.

Start your dream now. Your miracle begins when you start. There will come a time in your life that you will not have the same energy level you presently have. Before then, begin to work on your dream. You should learn to invest your time wisely now, so that in the next twenty years, you will have enough to live on.

Remove yourself from every dream killer and continue in the purpose of God for your life. Things will get better. But you have to put God first. You have to pray without ceasing and study the Word. You have to try. You have to be consistent. You will have to fight. You will have to grow. You will have to believe. After all the hell you have been through, your story will end in testimonies. The world will celebrate you for not giving up.

May God give you the wisdom you need to fulfil His purpose for your life in Jesus name, Amen.

Thanks for reading. God bless you.

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POWER OF HUGS

There are loads of things we humans use to take for granted before the pandemic and life is teaching us how priceless they are. A lot of people hug in the past without knowing how important hugs are to our mental health. The need for hugs (touch) exist below the horizon of consciousness, there is this great groundedness only human body can bring, and that feeling is sorely missed now.

From research it is said that the human body is built based on touch gotten from caregivers

Hugs (touch) has a mega impact on our physical and psychological wellbeing. There are three basic words used to describe touch: love, warm and comforting

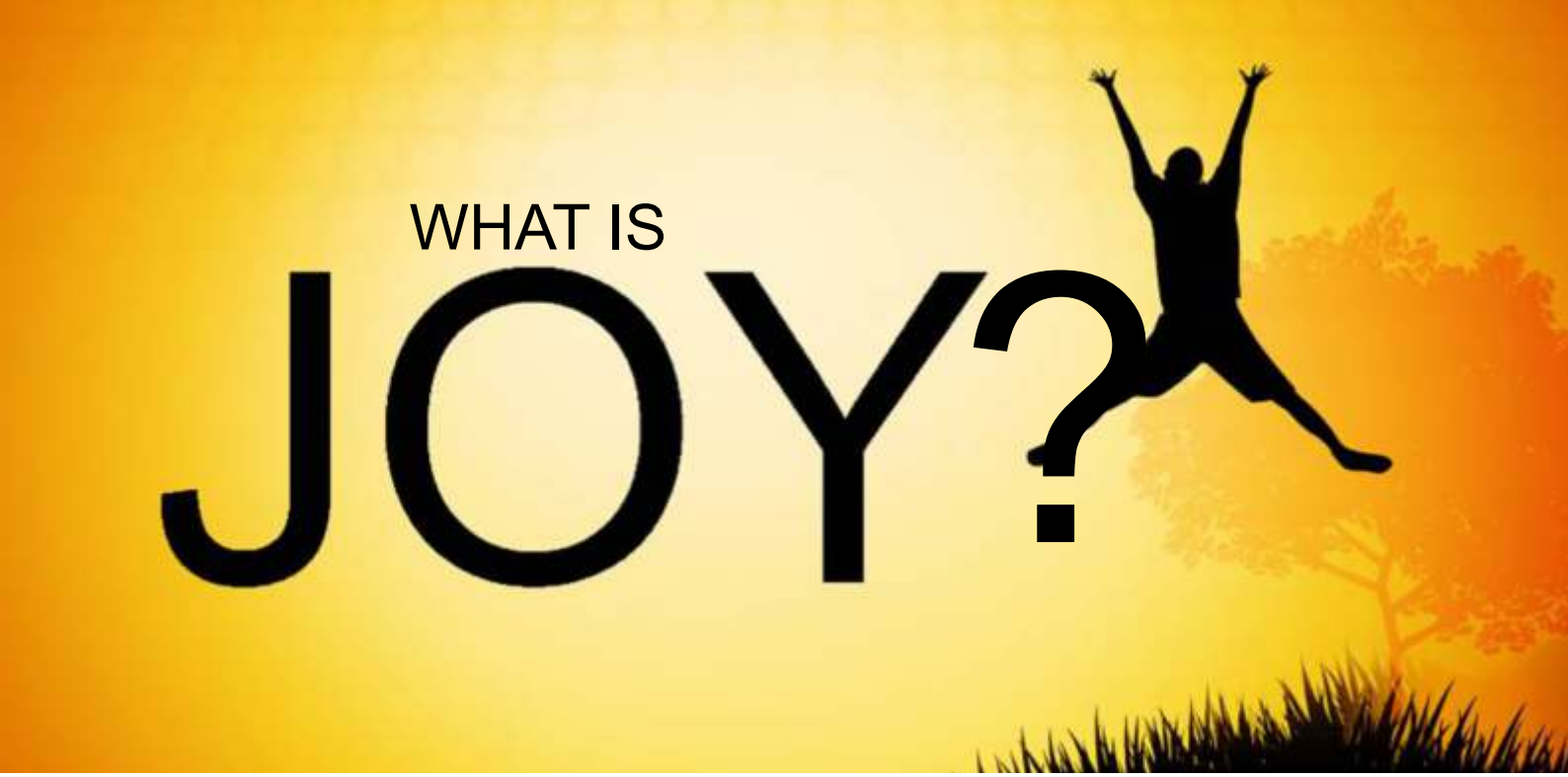
Hugs can reduce the effects of physical and emotional stress and pain. Lack of touch can increase anxiety says "Fotopoulou. In the events of bereavement, loss of job, divorce etc, having more hugs can help calm down stress. That is why living alone comes with its own stress. During high stress moments, our bodies react as if it can barely handle our emotions if there is no one to hold or hug us. A lot of studies support the theory that hugs (touch) gives the brain a signal to share its resources for coping because someone else is there to help share the brunt. This relaxes the body and goes a long way in reducing stress.

It was also discovered since 1995 these neurons in the skin of all social mammals transport slow electrical signals to the emotional processing parts of the brain. They play a crucial role in the development of the social brain and our ability to cope with stress. Touch (hug) is very powerful. In 2017 the Fotopoulou's team came up with a study that a mere stroking from a stranger can reduce feelings of social exclusion, but the situation on ground is not allowing that but if you have your families with you like children and parents, husband and wife, partners, or close friends try and always have an intermittently kind of touch, it helps in calming down nerves.

Be there for one another, the situation at hand will surely pass away, do not be too hard on yourself.



Praise Echipue



**1 PETER 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

WORDS OF WISDOM: Joy is an asset of inestimable value that is indispensable in the life of anyone who desire to maximize his or her destiny

It is the fruits of the born again spirit. Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. Joy manifests as a feeling of gladness, happiness, great pleasure and delight. Joy is a product of our relationship with God; a validation of our fraternity with God.

Joy is not the type brought by happiness of the world but the joy of belonging to The Lord. John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. The happiness of this world is temporal and based on material things but the joy of the Lord is eternal and spiritual.

This joy is accompanied by the peace of the Lord. John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Whenever your relationship with God is affected, it tampers with your joy.

This joy is not emotion, not feeling but a product and outflow of a person's relationship with God. Ps 51:12 Dictionary definition of joy is limited because it is based on emotion.

Joy is an attitude of gladness in your salvation regardless of the situations and circumstances that surrounds your life. Acts 16:34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. Joy is a manifestation of spiritual virtue rather than an expression of emotion. Joy cannot be formulated or created by human effort.

JOY OPENS DOORS

*MATTHEW 25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

WORDS OF WISDOM: Authentic divine joy is a door opener!

Joy is based on the Lord, while happiness is based on happenings. Joy depends on Christ not things. Acts 8:5,8. Joy is an inner attitude of rejoicing in one's salvation, regardless of outward situations. When you get this joy several doors will be opened unto you.

The door of supernatural strength, health and vitality will be opened unto you. Psalm 21:1 The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord ; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!* Nothing imparts you with divine strength like the joy of the Lord and you need to stay healthy to fulfill the number of your days here on earth. Psa 91:16.

The joy of the Lord opens doors of divine presence unto you. Psa 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. God's presence is what cancels death and imparts life unto anyone that embraces joy. 1 Chro 16:27. It also cancels shame and eradicates reproach.

The joy of the Lord opens the doors to answered prayers. John 16:24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. The more you pray and seek God, the more your joy overflows. When you rejoice in God, you have positioned yourself for answer from God.

The joy of the Lord opens doors to revelation. Isaiah 12:3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. Inspiration and ideas are great assets of high value in life. Depression would always lead to confusion.

*Make a choice for joy.

*Enter into a deep relationship with Jesus.

PRAYER POINTS

1.Father, I thank you for revealing your word to me in the name of Jesus.

2.Father, by the power of joy, all my doors shall open unto me in the name of Jesus.

3.Father, let the door of good health and divine strength be opened unto me this year in the name of Jesus.

4.Father, I make a demand that the door of your presence be opened for me in all areas in the name of Jesus.

5.Father, send your word to all our newcomers and new converts thereby turning their weeping to celebration in the name of Jesus.

6.Father, we make a demand that you heal everyone that is tagged sick in our midst today in the name of Jesus.

7.Father, by the power of your presence, let every shame and disgrace in my life be eradicated in the name of Jesus.

8.Father, let the door of fresh revelation about my destiny be opened unto me early this year in the name of Jesus.

9.Father, we ask that all our career members shall celebrate their promotion this month in a big way in the name of Jesus.

10.Father, we make a demand that all our Pastors and Ministers be anointed with fresh oil for divine impact for amazing results in the name of Jesus.

The Senior Pastor's prophetic declaration: Every good door that is closed against you shall be opened widely in Jesus mighty name.

By Pastor Matthew Morakiyo



HOW POOR CUSTOMER SERVICE CAN AFFECT YOUR BUSINESS

- Emmanuel Odoemelam

Recently, potential customers have wider choices than ever in making a purchase. It is now easier to compare services. With visible online reviews and customer engagement in a variety of channels, your business performance is under scrutiny. Clients and prospects have no problem switching over to a competitor if they consider them fit.

It is more expensive to get a new customer than to keep an existing one, so customer retention is crucial for business success and customer service has a drastic impact on customer retention. 89% of customers have stopped doing business with a firm after a bad experience and 58% will never deal with that firm again.

Loss of Business and Returning Customers

No matter how great your products are, if you don't meet the service expectations of your clients, they will never be happy with what you're offering them. Not listening to your customers and ignoring their needs will not just annoy them, but it will also make them leave your company. If your customer service is poor, you will have poor customer retention rates and you'll never meet your business goals.

Bad Reviews Online

If you don't take your customer's complaints seriously and you don't resolve those issues immediately and sincerely, you'll lose customers and this will impact your company's reputation. Most of the customers will reveal the truth about your poor customer service on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Negative comments and bad reviews spread quickly across social media and this will affect your reputation and your business's goals.

New Customers Stay Away

New customers seek companies based on recommendations from people they know, and they'll avoid a company when they hear first-hand accounts of poor customer service. People give more weight to negative reports than positive reports and they believe first-hand experience from their friends and family more than they believe impersonal sources such as advertising.

So if your customer service is poor, prospective clients may find your business but they'll choose what your competitors offer.

Employees Leave

Employees know when things are not right in the company they work for. If they see frequent occurrences of poor customer service, they'll start looking for opportunities with other companies. This is because dealing with dissatisfied customers makes their jobs hard and it makes the working environment toxic.

Management that doesn't treat its customers well probably doesn't care about the well-being of its employees either. High staff turnover tarnishes a company's name. It creates more costs because of the increased need for recruiting, hiring and training of new employees.





Tools for Digital Creation You Should Try Out This Year

If you are a digital creator or an online entrepreneur (you run your online business), there are a few apps that can make your journey easier.

And you may not even know about some of these. Even if you do, you may not know all you can achieve with these tools.

In this content piece, I will show you some of my favorite creation tools, and what you can do with them.

1. Venngage

Venngage is an online tool that allows you to create simple graphic content, even if you have little or no idea how graphic content creation works.

With this tool, you can create infographic content with just a few clicks on your device. This works for you if you're an entrepreneur who needs to communicate a huge amount of data to your audience, and you want to do this without scaring them off with charts, graphs, and terribly lengthy notes. The tool comes with customizable templates to help you meet all your graphic needs within the shortest possible time.

2. Airtable

If you are like me, you probably have a ton of ideas roaming around your mind at the oddest hours of the day.

Airtable helps you make sense of these, and organize them.

For a long time, I battled with keeping up with my content creation ideas and processes, until Airtable happened. So here is how it works.

This tool (as the name implies) is a collection of tables that come in handy when you are trying to get some work done. Think of it as a productivity app with some extra features/benefits.

With Airtable, you can collate content ideas, structure them properly, and even create a content marketing strategy right in the application. Think of this tool as a platform where you can do all the planning that comes with content management.

In the app's home interface, you can plan out your Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest (and other social media platforms) content, bringing into consideration all the nuances of these platforms like hashtags, images to use, captions, etc.

And yes, it comes with a free version you can try out right now.

3. Keywords Everywhere (KE)

This tool is for you if you run a blog (or you create website content for yourself/clients), and SEO is a major part of your brand expansion strategy.

Face it. Coming up with content ideas and knowing just the right keywords that will increase your visibility (which people are searching for) can be a daunting task.

Thankfully, K.E will save the day. K.E is a browser extension that allows you to see what keywords people are searching for. When you install the add-on in your Google Chrome/Firefox browser, simply open up your browser and type in any keyword you want to search for.

If it is installed and active on your

desktop, K.E will bring up a column of keywords and key phrases people are searching for on the right side of your screen. You can take the data from this over to another keyword research tool (like Ahrefs or answerthepublic) to conduct further research on the words and check how well they will serve to meet your needs.

4. Google Docs (GD)

G.D is my personal favourite. Ever since I lost a client's job after completing it (almost 11k words), I took the tool more seriously and it's been a lifesaver – literally.

G.D is a major part of Google Suite. This implies that you can use the tool from the time you create a Google account. As is the case with most Google Suite applications, G.D allows you to create, edit, and track your progress in a word document (.docx) in a collaborative way.

What this means is,

A. With this tool, you can create a document and begin working on it immediately, without having to worry that you will lose your data. If you're connected to the internet, G.D backs up your work to the cloud every time you add a character to the document.

B. You can add people to the document creation page and restrict/monitor their activities. You can add them up as editors, commenters, or just as viewers. This tool is best if you work with a team, and you want everyone to see what you're doing while you create the document. This way, you can make the necessary edits/changes as you go along.

C. G.D has a highly-interactive feature. As you create documents in the app, you can communicate directly with everyone who has access to the document via back-and-forth chats.

D. G.D integrates with some extra apps (like Google translate and QR Scanner) to give you a more seamless experience. What this implies is that when you have these add-ons installed in your G.D, you do not have to exit the app when you're working to access the functionalities in these apps.

E. The speech-to-text feature enables you to create your documents without having to type even a word. This makes the creation journey easier for you (not sure this feature is available on the mobile version of G.D).

F. G.D allows you to create different document formats without stress. All you need to do is to type and edit your document, before saving it as a PDF file (that you can upload to Amazon for publishing), DOCX, ODT, EPUB, TXT, or HTML document. Cool, right?

G. With this tool, you also have the option of publishing your content directly to the web.

5. Photofeeler

Just because I am nice, I added a bonus tool for you.

Okay, it's 2021, and in all honesty, that your profile picture needs to be changed.

This tool gives you insight into how good your social media profile pictures are. As at the time of the creation of this piece, it works like a collaborative platform where you submit your photo(s) for positive criticism.

Registered users of the platform (and the application's AI) vote on your photos and with their votes, your picture(s) are ranked. Their votes are based on some qualities including how competent you look in your photo, how suitable the photo is for the platform you intend to use it, and how likeable you appear in the photo.

Yep. you can get started for free as well.

And lest I forget. Be prepared to return the favour as well (Yhup. You'll need to vote on other's pictures as well).

There are many other tools that have helped my journey on this space, but for want of time, let me leave you with these five.

Now it's your turn. Did you learn something new?

Praise Ohanwe



How to Deal with Difficult Prospects using this 3 Strategies

I listen to a lot of calls each week that my clients send me.
This week, I listened to a closing call from one of their reps, and here is how the prospect opened the call:

Prospect: "Let me just tell you upfront that we're looking at a lot of different options right now of which yours is just one… "
Then: "And also, I'm not the decision maker on this, I am just an influencer. After this, I have to take this back to the board and let them know what I think."
Then (as if that's not enough), "And I have a hard stop in 35 minutes, so we need to get into it… "
Nice start, huh?
Actually, it is a great start, because now you don't have to be a salesperson and pitch, pitch, pitch (which you should never do anyway).

Here are the 3 strategies to handling this type of prospect:

Strategy #1: When he opened with, "We're looking at a lot of different options of which yours is just one… "
The strategy here is to address this and use it to your advantage. I would have responded by saying:
"That's great. Let's do this then. Why don't you tell me which option you like best so far, tell me what you like about it so much, and then I'll let you know if our program can match that or even give you more."
Then hit I'd hit mute and let them talk.

Strategy #2: When he says, "I'm just an influencer, not the decision maker," I would have again addressed it right then by saying:
"Thanks for letting me know. Does the decision maker take your advice-in other words-is your influence something that will sway the final decision?"
And if he then dodged that by saying something like, "Yeah, but it's up to them," I'd have layered my question with:
"And from what you know, what exactly are they looking for? In other words, what do they need to see from all these options to say yes?"

Strategy #3: And as far as the, "I have a hard stop in 35 minutes," I would have responded with:
"Thanks for the head's up. Tell you what, since I have a ton of info to give you, let's streamline this and you tell me what's most important to you, and I'll show you how we handle that."
And I'd hit mute again.

Here's the bottom line:
1) Prospects have all the answers. It is best to listen, question, and let them reveal those answers.
2) Take what a prospect gives you. The key here is you need to listen! If you do, then you can respond to what they tell you and get more information and learn the direction you need to go in.
3) Meet someone where they are, like with this prospect. You need to match them. Take your sales hat off and play their game. Don't be afraid to be as abrupt as they are; they'll appreciate it.
Keep these strategies handy the next time you run into a difficult prospect. They'll work better than you think.

Mike Brooks



HOW SOLOMON BECAME WEALTHY & HOW YOU CAN ALSO IMPLEMENT THE SAME IN YOUR BUSINESS

1. Wisdom—King Solomon was not only a man who sought knowledge but also a man who sought wisdom. He is one of the few rulers who falls under the coveted title of the philosopher king.
From a young age, he knew that, in order to set himself apart from his peers, he had to seek wisdom over fortune, knowledge over fame, and understanding over power. He knew that, if he sought wisdom and knowledge, fame and fortune would come.

King Solomon clearly understood the benefits of wisdom, a few of which are captured below:
- Wisdom allows you to see what others cannot see: hidden opportunities, traps, hidden friends, and secret enemies. You are able to deal shrewdly with your enemies and wisely with your friends. You are able to reduce the number of your adversaries and multiply your friends.
- Wisdom allows you to do what others cannot do; it allows you to learn to succeed where others fail. Although King Solomon ruled over a small country, he managed to outwit his neighbors––not by force, but by diplomacy––and he ended up ruling a territory far larger than any of his predecessors.
- Wisdom brings you honor. Monarchs came from near and far to pay homage to King Solomon. Alexander the Great, who conquered the whole world with his sword, is largely forgotten, whereas King Solomon, who conquered the world with his sagacity, earned far greater honor and glory.

2. Courage—King Solomon was brave, even for a young boy. Some scholars speculate that he was about 15 when he assumed the throne. Not letting age deter him, he immediately solidified his rule by getting rid of his brother and general, both older than him by 40 years, for attempting to usurp him because of his age. He also dealt with hostile neighboring rulers, who saw him as easy prey. Not one to shy away from taking risks, he spared no expense in expanding the kingdom's military and infrastructure. He took risks that leaders ten times his age would have thought twice about taking. King Solomon preferred to face his challenges rather than run from them, his courage allowing him to achieve great things.

3. Character—In order to succeed in business and life, people have to trust you—and in order for people to trust you, people have to have faith in your character. King Solomon built a reputation as a virtuous man; all throughout his realm and yonder, he was known as a man of honor. This also inspired the loyalty of his subjects. Too afraid of lesser men taking his place, they kept him in power for as long as they could.

4. Generosity—King Solomon gave a lot of his wealth away, investing a significant portion of it in public works. A good number of his celebrated wise sayings point to the fact that he was a practitioner of great generosity. Why?
- When you are generous, you not only win the hearts of those you are generous to, but you also win the hearts of onlookers.
- When you are charitable, it directly or indirectly makes people beholden to you.
- Being charitable has been scientifically proven to release the "feel good" hormone—the endorphin—which increases one's lifespan and helps fight stress, the underlying cause of 99% of the world's illnesses.
- Whatever you give, you receive multiplied. Therefore, givers—not takers—become rich.

5. Excellence—King Solomon was a teacher and practitioner of excellence. His building projects, especially the Jerusalem temple, were ancient wonders. People came from all over the world and were left in awe, furthering his fame and glory.
His writings, all literary masterpieces, have lived on; scholars, sages, and saints continue to study him. Two thousand years after he penned The Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the maxim "as wise as King Solomon" has endured, a true testament to his remarkable diligence.

6. Spirituality—The spirit of something is its essence. Human beings are spirits housed in a body; taking care of your spirit, therefore, is taking care of everything else. King Solomon was able to achieve all that he accomplished because he took care of his inner man. He enriched his inner man, and therefore, his inner man enriched him.

The benefits of spirituality include:
- The universe yielded all of its secrets to King Solomon. He had access to what could only be understood by the divine.
- King Solomon's spirituality made him wise, courteous, compassionate, and generous. It gave him all of the qualities that draw people to, and not away, from a leader.

By Matshona Dhliwayo, Philosopher, Leadership Expert, Columnist.







Seychelles

Seychelles is a beautiful country in East Africa with a population of 98,347 people. The Seychelles are of Creole descent. The main religion in the Seychelles is Catholicism, about 82% of the population belong to this religion, only few of them are Anglican Christian. Since the discovery of Seychelles have attracted people from all over the world and they are very friendly people. They speak creole English and French languages but English is the most common among others.

It is a very beautiful country and safe to visit. The capital city is Victoria and it is situated on the Island of Mahe it is on the North-eastern coast of Mahe Island, the largest Island in the Seychelles group. They operate the multi-party system of government. President WavelRamkalawan is the current president. Seychelles rupee is the local money used. The cultural life in Seychelles is influenced by the combination of European, African and Asian.

There are lovely places to visit in Seychelles like Seychelles national botanical gardens, Anderson source D'Agent, the Victoria market is a must visit. The AnseCoco Beach is another place to appreciate nature, you have the private boat tour to Praslin and La Digue Island, always fun. There is Kayaking and palms and pearls full day tour. Seychelles is a good place to visit in Africa.

Seychelles is not very expensive to visit, there is a package for everyone, for the food and accommodation it is very reasonable. You can start planning now because it is worth the trip.



Angela Okonkwo



Lo Mein Noodles

INGREDIENTS:

- 8 ounces lo mein egg noodles
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, julienned
- 1 carrot, julienned
- 1/2 cup snow peas
- 3 cups baby spinach

FOR THE SAUCE:

- 2 tablespoons reduced sodium soy sauce, or more, to taste
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon Sriracha, or more, to taste

DIRECTIONS:

- In a small bowl, whisk together soy sauce, sugar, sesame oil, ginger and Sriracha; set aside.
- In a large pot of boiling water, cook noodles according to package instructions; drain well.
- Heat olive oil in a large skillet or wok over medium high heat. Add garlic, mushrooms, bell pepper and carrot. Cook, stirring frequently, until tender, about 3-4 minutes. Stir in snow peas and spinach until the spinach has wilted, about 2-3 minutes.
- Stir in egg noodles and soy sauce mixture, and gently toss to combine.

Serve immediately



Bitterleaf Soup

INGREDIENTS:

- Washed and squeezed bitterleaf – A handful
- 10 small corms Cocoyam
- 3 cooking spoons Red Palm Oil
- Assorted Beef: Includes best cut, shaki (cow tripe)
- Assorted Fish: Dry Fish and Stock Fish
- Pepper, salt and ground crayfish (to taste)
- 3 stock cubes
- 1 teaspoon Ogiri Igbo (traditional seasoning)

COOKING DIRECTIONS:

- Boil the shaki (cow tripe), stock fish and dry fish in 1 litre of water till they are well done. First sign of a done shaki is that the cuts will start curling on itself.
- Wash the beef and add to the pot of shaki etc. and continue cooking. When the meat is done, add 3 cubes of Maggi/Knorr and cook for 5 minutes.
- Add pepper, ground crayfish, bitter leaves (if they have not been parboiled) and cook for 10 minutes. Then add the cocoyam paste (in small lumps) and the palm oil then go to step 5.

Note: If the bitter leaves were parboiled to remove the bitterness, then for step 3; add pepper, ground crayfish, the cocoyam paste (in small lumps), the bitter leaves and the palm oil. In other words, add all the ingredients at this stage.
Cover the pot and leave to cook on high heat till all the cocoyam lumps have dissolved. You can add more water if you feel that the soup is too thick.
Add salt to taste and the soup is ready.



The story behind the Expo 2020 logo

The Expo 2020 is expected to bring 25 million visitors to the Dubbrand new Expo 2020 site near Jebel Ali. This highly awaited international event will bring together global leaders in innovation, provide opportunities to budding entrepreneurs and become a catalyst for global economic growth. Today, we talk about the story behind Expo 2020 and how this particular ring symbol came to represent this historic event.

WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND EXPO 2020 LOGO?

The inspiration for the Dubai Expo 2020 logo is an artefact dating back to the Iron Age. The logo of Expo 2020 is inspired by a 4000-year old gold ring, unearthed at the Saruq Al Hadid site in Al Marmoom back in 2002.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai discovered the archaeological site himself while he was flying over the area and noticed the irregular ripples on the sand dunes. That is why Sheikh Mohammed himself unveiled this logo based on the ancient gold ring at a grand ceremony at the Armani Hotel, at Burj Khalifa in March 2016. The ring is now on display at the Saruq Al-Hadid Museum, which is one of the best museums in Dubai.

Location: *Al Shindagha area*
Timings: *Open daily from 08:00 am to 08:00 pm and Friday from 04:00 pm to 08:00 pm*
Ticket Price: *AED 20 for adults and AED 10 for children (7 – 12 years); Senior citizens and children under 6 have free entry*
Contact: *+971-4-359-56122*

(**Note:** Currently all museums in Dubai are closed to stop the spread of coronavirus.)

Archaeologists consider Saruq Al Hadid to be an ancient centre of copper manufacturing. The site contains large amounts of metal ores.

The site, which is now owned and managed by Dubai Municipality Architectural Heritage Department, was once covered by a 7-metre deep dune. The mound covers an area of about 15,000 sq.m but is hidden by shifting sands of the desert. So it is hard to decipher how it became an ancient settlement.

Using this historic symbol as the

inspiration for Expo 2020 showcases the tremendous journey of the emirate and connects its past to its glorious future.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF EXPO 2020 LOGO?

Sheikh Mohammed commented: "Over 4,000 years ago, the people who lived in this land had a deep creative spirit and today the people of this country are building the nation's future for centuries to come.".

Speaking about the archaeological site, he also stated that "this land connected ancient civilizations and we will continue to be a hub that connects the world."

This ties in with the theme of Expo 2020: Connecting Minds, Creating the Future. In other words, while Expo 2020 presents a vibrant vision of the future, and also pays homage to the distant past of the country.

There was a competition to create the official Expo 2020 logo in 2015. There were over 19,000 participants. The three finalists were Mohamed Souheil Bin Ali (graphic designer and architect), Mouza Al Mansouri (communications professional) and Valeri IInitki (computer graphics artist), who were awarded by Sheikh Mohammed on the same night as the unveiling of the Expo 2020 logo. And while the ring will be the official emblem of Expo 2020, there are plans for all of the short-listed designs to be featured at the Expo site.

So this was the story of the Expo 2020 logo. The ring has come to symbolize connectivity, resilience and heritage. The good thing is that you can even get the Expo 2020 logo on your car in Dubai.







ADVERTS PLAN ON U-ROCK PLATFROMS

Adverts Plan on U-Rock Radio
1 minute :- N5000
45 seconds :- N4000
30 seconds :- N3000

Programme Sponsorship
1 Hour N40,000 × 13 weeks
30 minutes N30,000 × 13 weeks
15 minutes N20,000 × 15 minutes

Interviews
1 Hour Interview- N35,000
30 minutes interview N25,000
15 minutes interview N20,000

Music promotion
Music promotion for one month N50,000
Music promotion with interview N70,000

Promotion in the mobile app
Small size N10,000 for a week.
Bigger size N30,000 for a week.

For advert in U-Rock Magazine
Full page advert N200k
Half page advert N160k
Quarter page advert – N90k

Sme Box advert- N20k.

2 pages interviews – N250k
1 page interview – 150k

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