

NIGERIA LEADERSHIP IN THE 21 CENTURY: IN SEARCH OF CHANGE MAKERS

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BACKGROUND

Today, crisis has enveloped quite a large part of the world, the principal causes attributed to either a long period of misrule, absence of good leadership and a complete disregard for the yearnings, aspirations and interests of the people by those who are suppose to be leaders. From America to Afghanistan, from Greece to Cote d'Ivoire and from Libya to Syria, it has been the challenge of youths uprising, unemployment, loss of jobs, etc. The world seems to be at the highest level of turmoil without being at war. A cursory review of the happenings around the world seems to point to shortage of visionary leadership as a major factor responsible for the sorry state of our world.

You can imagine what our planet earth would be today if America did not go to war in Afghanistan; if there were not to be youth graduate unemployment in Tunisia; if Laurent Gbagbo would allow a free and fair election in Cote d'Ivoire, etc. All the issues confronting us as a globe seem to be traceable to leadership challenge. Only a few of the disturbances and dislocations that have happened in the world are traceable to natural disasters.

Africa is ravaged by poverty. Poverty is said to be caused by lack of access to income and capital assets, lack of political voice and incidence of natural disasters. Of the three, the first two are man-made accounting for the highest challenge of our time. Interestingly, Africa is one of the least continents affected by natural disasters. Indeed, it is one of the most naturally endowed continents in the world. Notwithstanding these God – given endowments, we remain the most backward continent as we are unable to put our acts together and harness our resources for the collective good of the citizens. For me, everything seems to rise and fall on Leadership.

Africa's poor state of political leadership is more profound. The unfortunate situation of Africa was aptly captured by Professor Robert I. Rotberg of Harvard Kennedy School of Government when he said in 2004: ***"Africa has long been saddled with poor, even malevolent leadership: predatory kleptocrats, military-installed autocrats, economic illiterates and puffed-up posturers. By far, the most egregious examples come from Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe – countries that have been run into the ground despite their abundant natural resources. But these cases are by no means unrepresentative: by some measures, 90 per cent of Sub Saharan African nations have experienced despotic rule in the last three decades"***.

To drive home the point, Rotberg continued, ***"Under the stewardship of these leaders, infrastructure in many African countries have fallen into despair (disrepair?), currencies have depreciated, and real prices have inflated dramatically, while job availability, health***

care, education standards and life expectancy have declined. Ordinary life has become beleaguered: general security has deteriorated, crime and corruption have increased, much-needed public funds have flowed into hidden bank accounts, and officially sanctioned ethnic discrimination – sometimes resulting in civil war – has become prevalent”.

Ayn Rand of blessed memory (died in 1982) in her masterpiece ‘Atlas Shrugged’ (1957) gave us an eloquent insight of the signs to watch out for:

‘When you see that trading is done, not by consent, but by compulsion;

When you see that in order to produce, you need to obtain permission from men who produce nothing;

When you see that money is flowing to those who deal, not in goods, but in favors;

When you see that men get richer by graft and by pull than by work, and your laws don’t protect you against them, but protect them against you;

When you see corruption being rewarded and honesty becoming a self-sacrifice – you may know that your society is doomed’.

These assertions from Professor Rothberg and Ayn Rand fit into the description of Nigeria. A country where we live on hopes, potentials, aspirations and dreams. Nigeria occupies the unenviable 156th position on the 2011 World Human Development Index and 134th on Corruption Perceptions Index. Nigeria is the 7th most populous nation in the world and by 2050 would move to the 4th position. Nigeria citizens were ranked to be the happiest people on earth but more than half of its population (about 80 million people) live on below \$2.00 a day. The unemployment rate, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) keep on moving up from 19.7 per cent in 2009, to 21.1 per cent in 2010 and 23.9 per cent in the first half of year 2011

In the US, the top one percent owns 35 per cent of the privately owned wealth, while the next 19 per cent own about 50 per cent. Invariably 20 per cent of the US population own 85 per cent of private wealth. But those 20 per cent are the wealthy entrepreneurs (e.g. late Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, etc) and the managerial professionals and small business owners. The interesting thing is that the top one per cent, mostly entrepreneurs make their money from wealth creation through innovation and product development that impact lives and change the world. The whole world becomes their market place. In Nigeria, the top one per cent controls about 80 per cent of the private wealth, leaving only 20 per cent for the remaining 99 per cent. The Nigerian middle class had collapsed due to the neglect of small business sector. Most of our own top one per cent who cornered 80 per cent of our wealth are politicians, top military officers and bureaucrats who were privileged to be placed in sensitive government positions to address the key challenges that we face but who have decided to convert our common wealth for their own ends and that of their

families. Those among them who are entrepreneurs also made their money from government contracts, public subsidies in one form or the other and allocation of oil blocs, and not from serious wealth creation initiatives.

There is no sign that anything is working. Electricity remains unavailable in spite of all the hue and cry by the populace, the huge resources that have gone into them and more importantly, despite the realisation that making uninterrupted power supply available can double the size of our economy in less than 5 years. There has been a total collapse of our economic and social infrastructure, where they are available, and they are not even available in a lot of places and times – transportation, health care, education, etc.

The situation is so bad such that everywhere you face, you see the same thing – of systems that are not working, of a society looking for redemption and of a people who seems to have resigned to fate. May be we should take examples from few areas of our national life to drive home the unenviable and incredulous state of our existence.

The educational institutions/public school system has collapsed at all levels. Just last month (October 2011), the Institute of Management Technology (IMT), Enugu had accreditation for all its OND and HND programs withdrawn by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) on account of mass producing graduates having mobilised a whopping 15,000 graduates for the national service in just one year! School principals and their teachers, who are the custodian of our values and to whom we entrust our children for learning and inculcation of right morals and attitude are the same people who chose to encourage and arrange the students to cheat during their exams. A mother was going to obtain the GCE form for one of her children last year and she was asked to indicate the kind of form she wanted as she was offered three options: one where the student would sit for his exams unaided; where he would be assisted in the exams hall or where he would not need to appear for the exams at all! This is the position we found ourselves today; it has become difficult to trust the certificates held by secondary and university graduates because you never know, the certificate held may not truly reflect the holder's actual intellectual capacity.

Yet, rather than drill down and confront the rot in our school certificate and university admission examinations, individual institutions resorted to doing their own candidate validation examinations and interviews through what has controversially become a post UTME examination. As staff and students in the ivory tower, I believe you have a better appreciation of the rot in the tertiary educational system in Nigeria. The only thing for me as an employer of labour and a stakeholder in the affairs of the youth is that we are mass producing what Dr. Mrs Oby Ezekwesili succinctly described as ***“miscreants, the disaffected, the misdirected, the unlearned, the angry, the wronged, agitated and hopeless”***.

We can speak of similar phenomenon in virtually all aspects of our national life. We are a country where engineers will sign off or write a report of completion of projects that they never visited. We live in a society where professionals of all shades – accountants, engineers, medical practitioners, etc violate the ethics of their professions as they compromise on minimum standards and acceptable behaviour. And these behaviours lead to loss of economic assets and loss of the lives of innocent persons.

And the people in the legal profession? Lawyers, just like accountants, have been accused of being a major group that have contributed to the level of decadence in our society today. Both at the bench and at the bar, as employees and as employers, issues of corruption and bad leadership have featured prominently in the legal profession or among trained lawyers, not necessarily among just practising lawyers.

Every time, the media – print and electronic – is awash with stories depicting the challenge of leadership in our country. We all know leadership is the bane of our nation at all levels. Nigeria is in need of credible leaders. But are you as an individual ready to be one credible leader? Are you ready to be the face of a new leadership, a change maker? What does it take to be a leader?

WHO IS A LEADER?

The literature is replete with various definitions and concept of leaders and leadership. While there are differences and divergent opinions, there seems to be some consensus about the fundamentals of leaders and leadership. For our purpose here, we consider a leader as one who **influences others towards a common goal, does the right things and focusses on getting results**. A leader is possessed with a vision and that is why Rosalynn Carter was right when she said that *‘a leader takes people where they want to go...but a great leader takes people where they don’t necessarily want to go, but ought to be’*.

An effective and successful leader must, of necessity, possess most of the following attributes:

- Create an inspiring vision and values
- Lead change
- Lead by example
- Demonstrate confidence
- Inspire and energise people
- Empower people
- Has tremendous personal energy
- Action-oriented and result-focussed
- Communicate openly

- Involve everyone and use team approach
- Monitor progress but does not micromanage.

We have few examples we can point to in our recent history of leaders who were bold, visionary and dared to be different. Leaders, who, despite the allure and trappings of the office, remained resolute in doing the right thing and get results. Few examples are worth mentioning here:

- Dora Akunyili risked her life in order to transform NAFDAC and reduce the incidence of counterfeit drugs in Nigeria;
- Olikoye Ransome Kuti was the father of primary health care services and took preventive health care services to a lot of rural areas in the country through the policy he spearheaded as a Minister of Health;
- Dibu Ojerinde changed the waiting time for the release of JAMB results from months to less than a week;
- Nasir El Rufai confronted the powerful elites in the FCT to restore the Master Plan of Abuja;
- Fola Adeola has demonstrated leadership quality in business in the successful yet ethical way he ran Guaranty Trust Bank and made it the first company in Nigeria on which the Harvard Business School developed a case study;
- Gani Fawehinmi earned a reputation as one who used the instruments of law to fight for the common man and for the common good and earned himself the unofficial but acknowledged title of 'Senior Advocate of the Masses';
- Ishaq Oloyede's leadership propelled the University of Ilorin to the forefront in the university ranking in Nigeria and made the university one of the most sought after by candidates because of minimal interruptions to academic programs ;
- Olaolu Ali has demonstrated the concept of service, mentoring and support for the less privileged;
- Adeniji Adeniran, a youth corps member posted to Yashikiri in Baruteen Local Government Area of Kwara State, succeeded in reopening and turning around, a 19-year old Health centre that had been converted to a store for grains by the community by mobilising the community towards a successful execution of a model antenatal centre, blood transfusion laboratory, family planning centre, medical laboratory and ultrasound scanning centre;
- Nicholas Onyeagbala, a youth corps member also in Kwara State was able to mobilise the sum of N140,000 to erect a digital caution display on a notorious junction in Ilorin thereby saving lives and improving free flow of vehicular traffic;
- Patrick Oneh was able to mobilise the Lata Nna Community in Edu LGA of Kwara state to build a block of three classrooms thereby ending the embarrassing

phenomenon of overcrowding in the village school where 70 pupils occupied a class meant for 25 pupils.

We can keep on counting. They cut across gender and ethnicity, age and areas of specialisation. And their influences have all been in both the public and the private sectors. These are some examples that we can see that are reported or visible. How about the Dean of your Faculty, the head of your Department and your lecturers? How about the Principal of the secondary school you attended? When you remember the teachers who taught you in your primary and secondary schools, who among them are you really proud of? Who among them had the greatest impact on your life that did his job to impact lives? How about the king of your town or village, the chiefs, the councillors in the local government? How about your own parents? Would you say they are or have been a good influence on you? The fact is that there are very few of those impacting leaders in our midst.

Leadership is not about title. John Maxwell said it all that ***“all leadership is influence”***. In our families, we may discover that one of our siblings is well respected, his opinions count and he can rally others to achieve the goal we wish to achieve and yet he may not be the eldest. In our association, we may have one or few individuals who others defer to even though they do not hold any position or title. Even among yourselves as students, you would find few students who inspire others and are great mobilizers and do not hold any executive positions. In some organisations, there are junior and middle level officers who are well respected and can get the staff to act in a particular way without coercion or an instrument of office. These are the leaders. The leaders are not necessarily title holders and senior executives. Mahatma Gandhi did not hold any elective office, yet it can be said that he is the father of modern India. The change makers we are looking for are the leaders without title.

As lawyers, you are all professionals. And as professionals, there are expectations of your professional ethics and code of conduct. Look for what is required to be a thoroughbred professional. But beyond this, aspire to be a leader in whatever role and whatever level you find yourselves. If you look into history, lawyers seem to have affected our political life more than any other professional. It may be because, quite a high proportion of men and women who have held political offices were trained lawyers. This is not unexpected since by your calling, you have been schooled in the art of governance!

But professionals all over the world are expected to be natural leaders. In Nigeria, once you are an undergraduate, everybody begins to look at you as a potential leader. In a country where to be a graduate literarily holds the key to greater opportunities and access to good job, a typical graduate is seen differently. He is seen as someone who has not just been trained in a specific field but also to be a role model wherever he finds himself. For the lawyers, it is even more important. This is why I agreed with Vincent Lombardi Jr. that ***“the educated man is the natural leader”***. To me then, a learned man is much more a natural

leader. Your education, training and calling have placed you at a vantage position to naturally assume leadership position.

However, do not get me wrong. You can become a leader at whatever level you find yourself; you do not need to have a title, nor an office. You do not need to hold a political or administrative office to be a leader. Even as a student, a potential barrister and attorney-at-law, you are a leader. There has always been the argument whether a leader is born or made. We can say that a lawyer is a born leader.

To be a leader, you must be a great person. Unfortunately, as you step out of school, quite a lot of you will fizzle out and go into oblivion while some few names would become visible; it seems that the natural law is a pyramidal one as only few people would have become leaders and be seen as such. This is because only few people would have learnt the art of leadership. As you step out, quite a significant lot will be pursuing wealth and fame at all costs and in the process would never become leaders as they will compromise their integrity and character and soil their names.

Another fundamental principle and differentiating factor that I want you to know today is that: ***To Lead, You Must Serve***. I want you to be inspired by the words of Albert Schweitzer that ***“the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve”***. From today, think through the small ways you can begin to learn and practise the act of serving others. I was opportuned to be at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in August 2011 when the new students resumed. As part of their one week orientation program, they were asked to pair themselves in two's and go to town in Cambridge, Boston to perform an act of service of their choice. They were asked to prepare a report of their experience. In Harvard, emphasis is more on developing the students to see themselves as agents of change who must go back and serve humanity. A lot of lawyers as demonstrated by the likes of Gani Fawehinmi have taken service to a great height. In what ways will you also serve?

THE SECRETS OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

To be a great leader, you must be a great person. There are about twelve secrets that we will share with our selves today. If you master these secrets, you will most likely end up a success and be acclaimed as a leader.

1. KNOW THYSELF

The first law of success and making impact is Self Knowledge. Nobody is going to make success when you can not understand your passion and work at making excellence out of it. You cannot improve on something you do not understand. Even though you are a trained lawyer, some of you would discover that you are not cut out for practising law, in any of its

variants. The same thing applies to other students in other disciplines. In my career in banking, I have had occasions to work with medical doctors and architects. I have also seen quite a lot of engineering graduates who have veered into accounting and finance. We all know that in our country today, a lot of students end up studying whatever was assigned to them either because they could not make the scores to study the course of their choice or simply because even as at the time of filling the admissions form, there was no proper counselling. A host of students wish for and actually enrol to study Law, Medicine, Engineering and Computer Science. In fact, there is this inner unexpressed feeling that students who are in these disciplines are more brilliant and are likely to be more successful. Statistics have shown that more than 50 per cent of those called to the bar every year drop the practise of law and embrace something else after one year. So, applicants struggle to enter for these courses which may not be the best for them. It is imperative to try to understand yourself and look for ways to do what you are best at doing. This may require taking on another vocation, which you must go and learn.

Furthermore, you must have to work on your self-image. You would realise that the elevator to the top is always out of order. The only route to the top is through the staircase. You must have to pay your dues; you must have to work hard. There is no shortcut to greatness. The foundation of the stairs to be climbed is self-image, followed by your relationship with others, setting goals, attitude, work, desire and few others.

Unless you can lead yourself successfully, how can you then lead others. This is the reason why people make jest of people with broken homes or with no clear means of livelihood and yet aspire to hold political office. If you cannot lead your home successfully, how can you lead an organisation or a community. If you have never done anything successfully in life before, how can we trust you that you will be able to provide leadership in a higher realm. A way to achieve this is through continuous self improvement. However, self leadership flows naturally from self knowledge. Remember that no man is free who is not a master of himself. You need to continue to work on your body, mind and soul. You need courage and also need to stretch yourself.

2. SET CLEAR GOALS

As young men and women, you have your future ahead of you. But if you do not set clear goals of what you want to become in life, you may not become a success and make the kind of impact that match with your potentials. The fact is that a lot of young people, especially in our own part of the world, are encouraged to take whatever the world throws at them due to absence of proper counselling and guidance. Yet, life is too short to be left to wondering about without a direction.

The great American billionaire, H. L. Hunt, was once asked the secret of success. He answered that success requires only two things and two things only:

- a. You must know exactly what you want
- b. You must determine the price that you will have to pay to achieve it and then get busy paying that price.

As Robin Sharma (in his book, 'The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari') told us, about 60,000 thoughts come to our mind every day. By writing down your goals, you can send away the balance of 59,999 thoughts that are not needed. In an interesting study the Harvard Business School conducted on its 1979 MBA graduates, it was discovered that 84% of the graduating students had no specific goals; 13% had goals but that were not put in writing while only 3% had written goals and plans. Ten years after graduation, the university discovered that the 13% that had some goals, though not in writing, were earning twice as the 84% without goals. The research also discovered that the 3% that had written goals were earning as much as ten times the other 97% put together. Clearly, the art of goal setting has been discovered to be responsible for the pyramidal nature of success that we saw earlier. The fact is that great minds have purposes, while little minds have wishes. I therefore would advise you to follow the recommendation of Elbert Hubbard to ***"know what you want to do, hold the thought firmly and do everything that should be done, and every sunset will see you much nearer the goal"***.

It is also important to remember that if you do not set goals, you are not likely to know whether or not you have reached your destination. You can imagine an aircraft or a ship without a compass or rudder; or you may be placing your ladder against a wrong wall. And your goals must pass the test of the well known acronym of SMART – Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Timely.

3. WORK ON YOUR ATTITUDE

Perhaps, this is the most important factor for our success and for making impact. What really is attitude?

Our thinking (facts) is really only about 10% as large as our feeling (attitude/emotions). A study by Harvard University revealed that 85% of the reasons for success, promotions, and other forms of accomplishments were due to attitude and only 15% would be due to our technical competence. This may partly explain why a lot of brilliant students with high flying grades go into oblivion so soon after leaving school while those with average performance become the toast of success years later in life. The import of the findings of Harvard is that we are utilising about 90% of our time and resources to prepare ourselves for the factor that

account for only 15% of our success. We spend less than 10% developing that critical aspect of our life that would determine our eventual success or failure in life. The truth is that both students and teachers alike are not equipped to produce proper guidance on the art of building a proper foundation for positive attitude.

Attitude is a vast area of study. For the purpose of this lecture, I would wish to emphasize the import of optimism as one of the most important attributes you should cultivate. Nigeria is in need of optimists who would take action rather than look at the problems as insurmountable and do nothing. As succinctly put by Zig Ziglar ***“the optimist takes action, the pessimists take a seat. An optimist takes a look at a half glass of water and says it’s half full. The pessimist looks at the same half glass of water and says it’s half empty. The reason is simple. The optimist is putting water in the glass. The pessimist is taking water out of the glass. It is almost a universal principle that the person who is taking from society with no real effort to contribute to society is pessimistic and often fatalistic because he fears there won’t be enough for him. The person who is doing his best and is making a contribution is optimistic and confident because he is personally working on the solution”***.

As lawyers, I know that for most of the firms, they pay small salaries to pupil lawyers. And the tendency is there for you to grumble and not to put in your best. The fact is that if you work for a salary, you will get a salary but it will be too small. But if you work honestly for the firm and for its betterment, you will get personal satisfaction, improvement and possibly still bigger salary sooner than later. Your contribution to the company would be noticed, your colleagues will respect you and you may be on your way to greatness without your knowing it.

The issue on attitude was aptly captured by Keith Harrell: ***“the people who do best in life are those who realize they have the power to choose their attitudes, just as they have the power to choose their clothing, their cars, or their inner companions”***.

4. GET MENTORED

At times, it is not a matter of what you know but who you know. Mentoring enables you to develop much more rapidly and give you the opportunity to learn on the wings of experienced persons.

Look for those who have accomplished in your prospective careers and pursuits and find a way to be with or around them. Sometimes, mentors are useful by just watching what they do and how they do them. Mentoring is not necessarily a classroom phenomenon. Mentoring can also be accomplished through reading of biographies and autobiographies of

great people with whom you share or would like to share their values. You can get a lot of lessons and inspirations from the story of their lives.

Furthermore, try to cultivate relationships that would expand your network of friends, associates, professional colleagues and people you look up to. The more people who know you and like you, the more doors they are capable of opening for you.

5. PURSUE EXCELLENCE IN ALL YOUR DEALINGS

For anybody to be an effective leader, he must be a reference in his chosen area. And excellence cannot be attained if you have not paid the price. Malcolm Gladwell, the author of the popular bestseller, *The Tipping Point*, has argued that you need to put in about 10,000 hours of your time to be able to lay claim to excellence in any field of human endeavour. This translates to over 400 days of uninterrupted practice. While some spread the 10,000 hours over a short period of time, say 4 to 5 years, others may take longer time to attain excellence.

6. CULTIVATE EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

If there is anything that God gives equally to everyone, it is time. Everyday, we are individually credited with 86,400 seconds. This deposit of time must be fully utilised as the balance is nil off at the end of the day, to be credited with a fresh allocation the following day. While some people have mastered an effective management of this limited resource, some others fritter it away like natural gas that is being flared away in our land. For the wise, they prioritize their activities and spend 80 percent of their time on the most critical 20 per cent things that give them 80 per cent result. At this age, if you sleep for 8 hours a day, then by the time you are 60 years old, you would have slept for 20 years.

There are many time robbers among which are interruptions, shifting priorities, poor planning, waiting for answers and procrastination. The greatest enemy of man is procrastination. As a young leader, you need to be conscious of the importance of time and know that procrastination and these other items are enemies to you. Unless you really identify what constitute time wasters in your life and you effectively deal with them, you would continue wasting time in the same pattern for the rest of your life.

Every day when you wake up, try to itemise what you really want to do and prioritize them. And you must be able to answer the question: is what I am doing today what matters to me in my life? When your daily activities reflect your governing values, you experience inner peace and that is when you can begin to talk about success.

7. BELIEF IN GOD

Believe in God and uphold His laws. It is amazing that Nigeria can boast of a huge population of Muslims and Christians who take their religions seriously. From the level of corruption in our land, the hatred we show to our neighbours and other human beings, it seems like we are religious but not Godly. How do you explain stealing money and committing part of it to religion houses or activities? It is because a lot of people confuse activities with accomplishments.

Those who believe in God and worship Him sincerely know that their lives must be guided by His laws and commandments. To know happiness and attain fulfilment, it is imperative to commune with God. It is also important to spare time every day for self meditation. Every day, you need to ask yourself the purpose for your creation and whether your conduct aligns with your spiritual objectives. You would only have accomplished if your activities align with the purpose of your creation.

8. CULTIVATE SELF DISCIPLINE AND PROTECT YOUR CHARACTER

One of the major leadership challenges of our time is corruption. There are those who believe that but for corruption, we would have been the best country in Africa, the wealthiest and the one with the highest level of per capita income. And corruption is in various facets at both the public and the private sectors.

There is no need to want to cut corners and take what you do not deserve nor belongs to you. This country will make unimaginable accelerated progress if we can produce leaders of exemplary conduct who could shun corruption. There are those who believe that you can not be successful or become rich unless you amass wealth illegally. I tend to believe that corruption is a disease and you need to take a vow that you will never allow the disease to infect and ruin you.

But the ability to shun corruption requires strong character and self discipline. Be incorruptible. The very mistakes that people who find themselves in positions of authority make in Nigeria is that they believe it is a life opportunity to acquire as much wealth as they can so that their generations yet unborn would not know poverty again. But that thinking is absurd.

9. SEEK KNOWLEDGE AND PRAY FOR WISDOM

Attaining leadership requires that you become a respected person in your profession. And as we have discussed above, nobody will attain professional excellence if he does not invest his time and resources in the knowledge of the profession. You need to learn everything you need to know to become an expert in your field. Interestingly, yours is a profession where the major distinguishing factor is knowledge and wisdom. “For the rest of your life, the knowledge content of your work, and your ability to communicate it, is largely going to determine the value of what you do, the amount of money you earn and the overall quality of your life”.

Much more importantly, we are in the Communication Age. We are in an age, where acquired knowledge becomes obsolete in the shortest possible time. Just think about this: it took about 6,000 years to go through the Agricultural Age, 150 years to pass through the Industrial Age, 20 years each to pass through the Service Age and the Information Age. The brain power is the power of the world now and that is why human capital would remain the greatest asset of any corporation, community or nation. You have to be on top and ahead of the issues in your chosen area of endeavour by constant reading, research, and attending training, conferences, workshops and seminars and further certification programs.

In addition, nourishment of the mind is something that an effective leader must consciously cultivate and do. Seeking knowledge through reading and listening to motivational materials open us to the world of enthusiasm, positive disposition and the will to carry on.

10. BE A DOER; DEVELOP EXCELLENT EXECUTION SKILL

The world is full of critics and orators who can only talk but cannot execute. And they abound in all aspects of our public and private lives. A major barometer for measuring good leadership is on the capacity to deliver results. Those who will be great leaders among you will also have to go and learn how to move from talking to planning and from planning to executing. As you can see, Nigerians can give you the best of concepts and papers on any area of interest, but we remain backward because we have not mastered the art of execution to achieve desired results. As I advance in my career, I have come across so many brilliant minds who lack the capacity to deliver on projects. In all my engagements in and out of work, I have since learnt to be guided by the philosophy of Andrew Carnegie, an American millionaire philanthropist. He said ***“as I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say, I just watch what they do. And as I’ve watched what people do, I’ve discovered that the ones I want with me are people who make things happen. They never make excuses; they always find a way to make things happen”***.

One of the key elements that separate the successful and the achievers is their ability to get results in the face of daunting challenges. They do not make excuses. They just find the ways

to deliver results. Positive attitude, good time management and avoiding procrastination help a lot in achieving this.

11. THE PURSUIT OF WEALTH

One of the things that would occupy your mind in few years from now is how to make money and become rich. There is no doubt that having enough money is very crucial to living the kind of life of freedom, happiness, opportunity and self – expression that you desire. And in fact, lawyers have been adjudged to be among the richest professionals in Nigeria today.

There are three good phenomenon that would make you to achieve financial success. The world has become a global village where new opportunities are coming up driven by new technological innovations, new information and knowledge and increasing demand for professional services of law, finance, engineering, etc. Furthermore, our country is at the tipping point of blossoming into a land of opportunities enhanced by sustainable democratic and political culture backed by large population and economic opportunities. Finally, there is a good news from those who come from poor background. Most wealthy Nigerians today, who made money from legitimate sources, started off with no family inheritance. They are self made and that shows that there is hope for everyone.

The fact is that we live in a world of abundance where there is plenty for everyone who knows how to get it. As rightly pointed out by Brian Tracy, the only major contribution you have to make is your sweat equity. It is your willingness to work and work very hard at achieving your goals that would define you in the next few years.

However, our country is in confusion today because rather than having clear goals and working very hard, quite a lot of professionals, including, unfortunately, those in all aspects of the legal profession, resort to corrupt practices to make money. It is as if they believe that the only way to become wealthy is to steal and become corrupt. And some pursue wealth to a level of greed and insanity and would just want to continuously amass wealth.

I should warn that those who are rich and are happy are those who do not make the pursuit of wealth the only reason for their existence. They are also those who have learnt the secret of becoming rich and that is to create value in everything you do. By creating and adding value to your work, firm, client, etc you will be creating increased earnings. The more value you add, the more valuable you become. You should know that “more gold has been mined in the thoughts of men than has ever been taken from the earth” (Napoleon Hill).

12. HAVE FUN AND BE A GOOD FAMILY MAN/WOMAN

Leaders are workaholics. But then, they also cultivate the time to relax and share banter with people around them. One is always tempted to continue to be obsessed with pursuit of wealth, fame and other grandiose things to the neglect of the family and friendship. A lot of lawyers in particular in Nigeria put off happiness for the sake of achievement. Yes, it is good to engage in a pursuit that truly challenges you so that you can attain personal satisfaction. However, I need to remind you that happiness is a journey and not a destination. Do not be obsessed with the thought and action of primarily chasing riches and life pleasures. Slow things down and enjoy the beauty of things and people around you. And never put off the things that are important for your wellbeing and satisfaction to a later time. Live every day in full.

Your family will become another area of your life you will need to pay attention to. As you will eventually settle down and become comfortable, do not follow those who approximate taking care of their families to throwing money at them. What this has done for us is that it has become one of the reasons why we are having various challenges among the youths including cultism and corruption. It has also accounted for the growing rate of broken homes and divorce in our society. Create time to entrench core values of hard work, sacrifice, pursuit of excellence and integrity in your children. That way, they will come around to be part of the solvers of the challenge of our time and not part of the problem. Even if being a successful family man or woman is the only major thing you can point to as an achievement, you would have ended up an inspiring leader.

CONCLUSION

Distinguished audience, the leadership question is a recurring decimal in our national life. There are so many challenges confronting us as a nation and these call for actions at all levels. I have no doubt that the bane of our nation is shortage of good leadership. Every aspect of our life that you turn to, there is deficit of role models, people who are ready to serve, to impact lives positively and to get results –right from the family to the national life and in all spheres – religion, education, health, administration, etc. If we get the right leaders, at all levels, we will be among the best countries in the world. However, right leadership cannot emerge by accident; we need to have as many people as possible to possess leadership qualities, everywhere, at all levels.

We are in search of change makers. Nigeria is looking for uncommon and unreasonable men and women; those with unusual passion and talent to provide leadership at all levels, to lead a life of exemplary leadership and integrity. Nigeria is in need of role model husbands, wives, employers, employees, attorneys, solicitors, judges, teachers, school administrators, business managers, business owners and entrepreneurs, social crusaders,

clergy men and women, public servants, administrators, political office holders at all levels, policemen, military personnel, etc. Nigeria is in search of young men and women with vision and with superb execution skills who would not just be talkers and noise makers. We are in search of optimists and those with selfless spirits. Nigeria is looking for pious men and women who would handle office holding as sacred and handle with fairness and integrity. We are in need of disciplined and courageous people who are incorruptible and would not be trapped by the allure of office and position.

We are in search of those who will convert our potentials into beneficial products and services. We are looking for selfless people who will make impact in any endeavor they find themselves. We are in search of young Nigerians who will be driven by the passion to serve mankind and succeed in whatever legitimate undertakings they decide to pursue.

And it is natural that these change makers come from your generation. This is because you are favoured by our demographics. The median age of the Nigerian population is 19 years! Less than 20 million Nigerians are over 41 years while only 41 million people are in the age bracket of 21 to 40 years. However, about 89 million are under 20 years out of about 157 million people representing 53%. So, the country belongs to you, today and tomorrow.

I wish to call upon you today to be ready to rise up to the occasion. ***“Don’t spend your time asking why the world isn’t a better place. It will only be time wasted. The question to ask is: How can I make it better? To that, there is an answer”.***

Are you ready to leave your foot on the sands of time? The journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. Begin today to becoming a leader. Ask yourself what can I do to make impact in this university before I leave? What can I do to make impact in my village, my community, my mosque, my church, my family, my association? What needs to be fixed and what can I do to fix them? And you do not need to be a lone ranger, running a race like a horse. It may be better to run in a team like a camel. As you know, leadership is not about doing it alone; it is also about rallying ***“men and women to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence” (General Montgomery).***

You must make a difference. At the end of our lives, we must all be able to positively answer the question posed by Brendon Buchard in his bestselling book, Life’s Golden Ticket: ***“At the end of our lives, we all ask: Did I live? Did I love? Did I matter?”***

Thank you for your attention..

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