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### EDITORS NOTE

## MAKE MOVE

Many lived all through their lives without discovering who they are and suddenly get knocked off by the unexpected call of death. Death makes my heart grieve because life is too short to just live without purpose or making impact before one depart. God planted you in the world and not in the ground. The day you go to the ground is the end of the game. Unfortunately, one of the things we don't usually see is the fact that we are not like trees. Trees are stagnant, always losing their freshness from age as their bark harden with each passing day.

Trees lack ideas, they can't think, they aren't multidimensional in reasoning, worst of it all, THEY ARE MOTIONLESS. They lack the capacity to move from where they are to another location. No matter the circumstance around them, they simply can't take a positive step forward. Despite how unfavourable the weather is nor the climate change, they can't uproot their adventitious roots. Oh! What a boring life for helpless trees. I bless God who planted humans in the world with the freedom of movement.

We can move from where we are to where we ought to be, we can step forward for greener pastures, we can surmount the highest mountains and face life challenges, we can take forceful advancement from unfavourable condition into an excellently favourable one. We have the aptitude to rewrite our stories in a manner that it will become a history for legends to read and posterity to enjoy. We can turn our dirtiest stories to the most amazing autobiography in human history if and only if we maximize our advantage over these trunks. If we can move our mind, strength, thoughts into something more resourceful.

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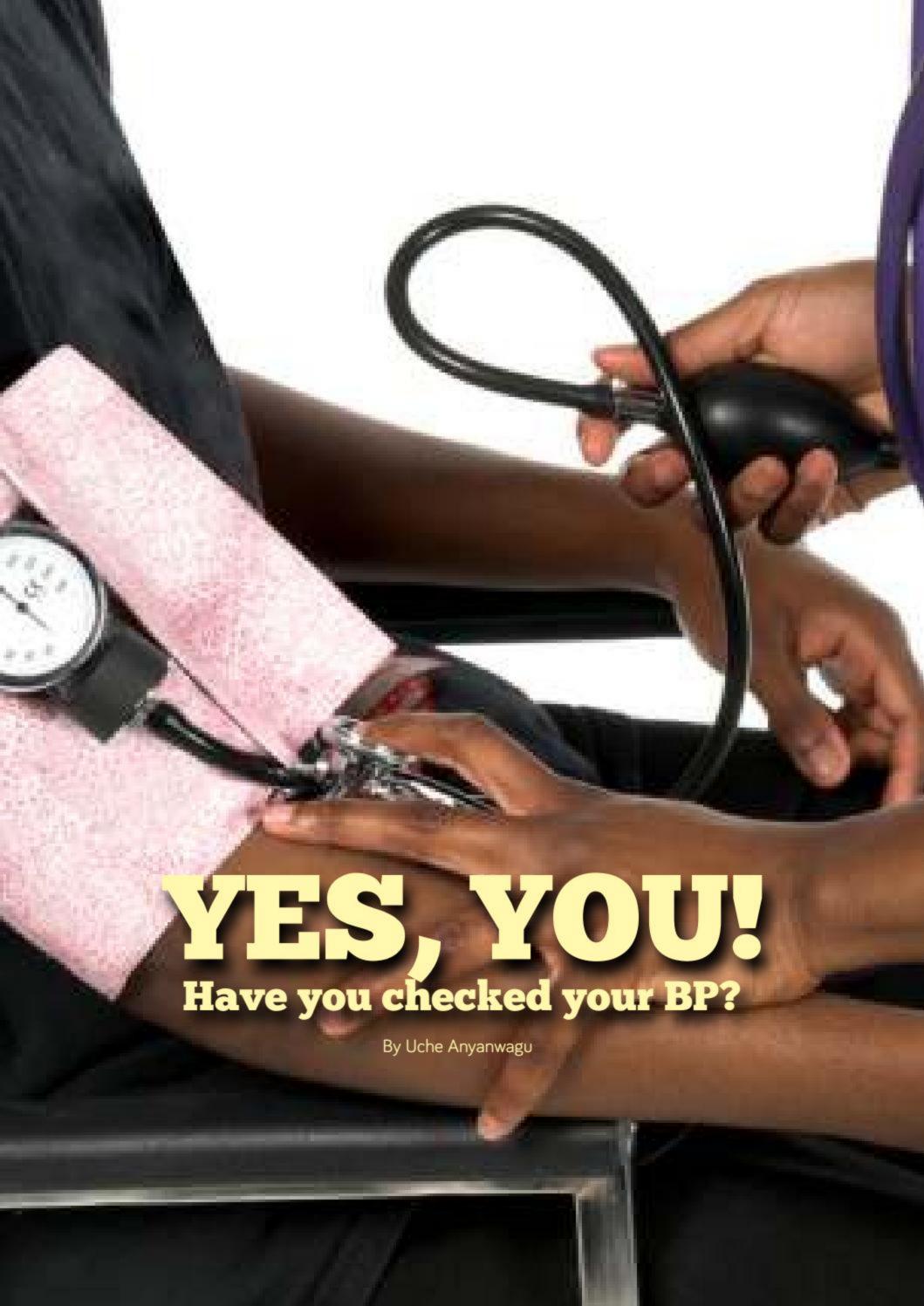
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The question struck us like the proverbial bolt from the blues. In a way, it struck us back to reality.

This was my feeling and that of many other medical students as we encircled our consultant in her clinic.

.As meticulous doctor, she took time to take the blood pressure readings of the elderly lady, and later assessed her current medication.

She seemed a bit displeased that the lady was not regular in keeping her routine medical appointment. Sadly, she was non-complaint as well with her medication too.

.She took time to count her remaining tablets and subtracted their sum from the number of days when she saw her last and got a fair idea of how long the lady had defaulted in taking her meds.

Expectedly, she was unhappy with her current BP reading and a florid of symptoms she came with.

.As we all shook our heads in pity, she took a swipe at us all through her thick lenses and threw us all aback by this very simple and easy to answer question: "You!..." (pointing at no one in particular) "...Yes, you! Have you checked your BP?

.We all starred at one another, wondering who the question was actually meant for. She kept repeating: "You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?..."

We were all in our late teens and early twenties but she has a valid point

."You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

"...Hypertension is no longer a disease for the elderly alone. It now occurs in almost 5% of children and this is even worse in blacks...

...Childhood obesity seems to be its major driver... I na-agakwa Mr Biggs (as you go to eat junk food), be absolutely sure you may be knocking on its door...."

.She continued while we quickly brought out our notepads and pen to joke down the stuff she was "vibrating".

"...Com'on, throw away those jotters and listen very well to me. This is for you children and not for exams..." we were startled but she seemed undeterred.

"You..." pointing at no one in particular, "...as you keep expanding laterally, o kwa high BP ka I na-akpo oku (it is high BP that you are calling). Obese children adolescents are three times more likely to develop hypertension...

....You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

"Bia nwa, imakwa na (do you know that) Hypertension can be diagnosed in young people.

As you all know, hypertension can be primary/essential (with no cause) or secondary (with an underlying cause)..." We all nodded.

.You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

"...you must know some risk factors that may make you likely to get hypertension even as a youth.

...If your parents (or any member of your family) have hypertension.. Nna, Have you checked your BP?...

...If you are black, Nne, you have a greater chance oh, compared to whites. Biko nu, have you checked your BP?..."

.At this stage, we all joined her to echo: "...have you checked your BP?"

....As your age increases and your body weight and body mass index (BMI) climb uphill, they all tick towards this scale... I ask, have you checked your BP?...

...As we daily consume so much salt and salty food, we are twice likely to have raised BP compared to those with low salt intake. Can you slow down now and ask yourself..."

We took it from her and shouted "...have you checked your BP?..."

.You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

"...because that severe headache you have, or that visual (eye) problem you complained of yesterday may be high BP.

...That irregular heart beat that almost floored you yesterday or is it that heart racing that pounds your heart like pestle on a mortar (palpitations) may be high BP oh ... "

You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

"...Have given a thought to that chest pain that radiates to your shoulder, or that fatigue you attributed to stress and even that blood in your urine? These may all be a sign that your BP is climbing Mount Sinai...

...Oh you have no symptoms at all, and you think you are free. Mbok, hypertension is a silent killer. It is largely symptomless. Inu! So, You! Yes you! I ask again: have you checked your BP?..."

.You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

"...Do you know that BP can easily measured? People can easily walk into any chemist to have it checked. You have no excuse.

.You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

"...To confirm a diagnosis of hypertension, I taught you in class that we need to document elevated BPs on 3 separate occasions at least one week apart. Please do not forget white coat hypertension too. It is real..."

.You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

"...Hypertension is a silent killer. It crawls in unnoticed and gradually takes its toll. It fears no age.

Even children with hypertension have been shown to have reduced/impaired cognition compared to their peers without..."

.You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

People with hypertension have a high chance of dying from heart diseases.

You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

What about the kidneys? Hypertension and Kidney impairment are intertwined like the rings of the Olympic logo. Both can lead to the other.

Kidney problems can lead to heart disorders and death. The risk of hypertension extends even to stroke, heart attack, and others.

You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

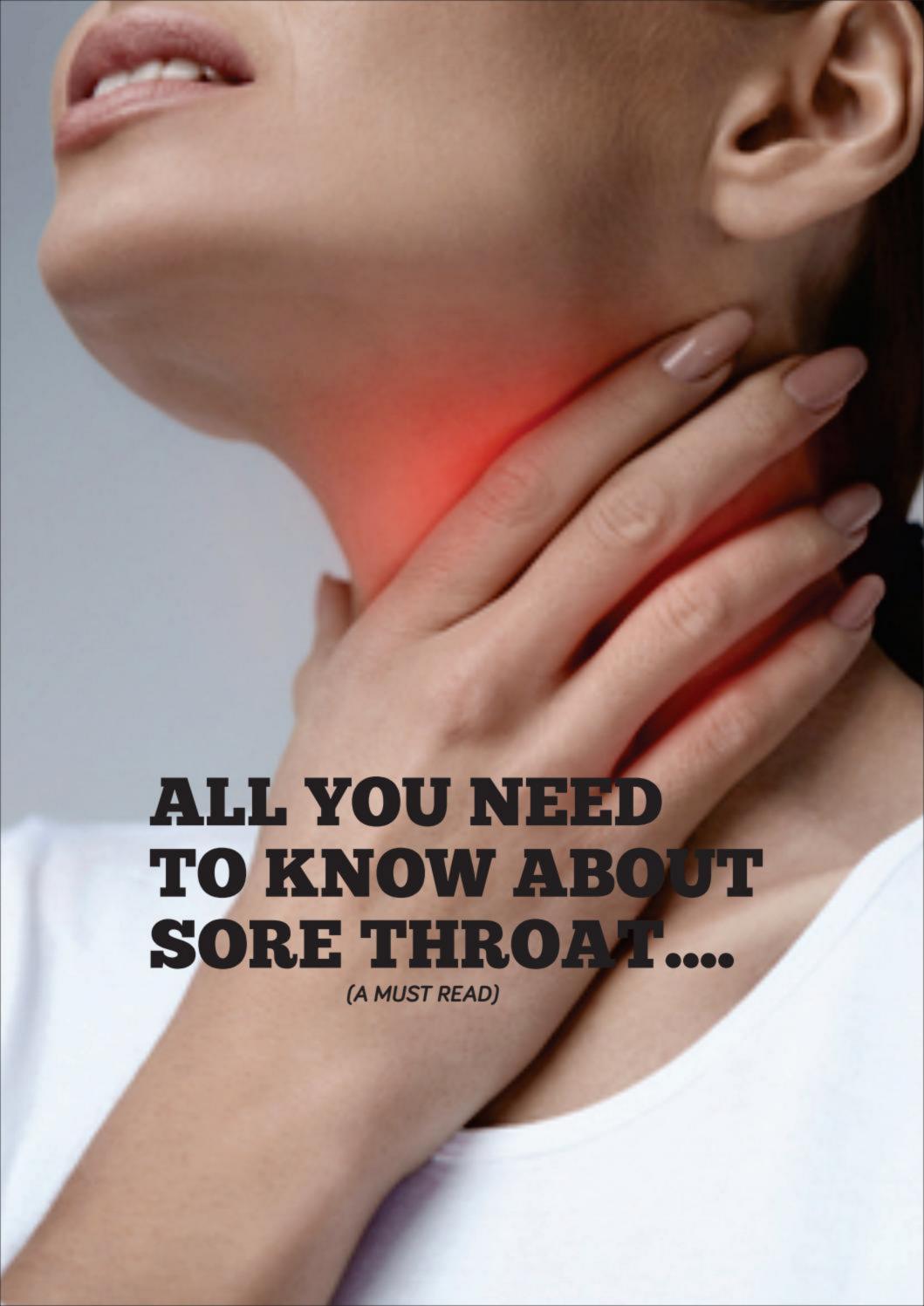
"...There is a way out as we know. While we know we cannot control our race, family or age, we can manage our diet, control our weight, reduce our salt intake.

You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP?

If it is high, abeg go see your doctor NOW.

The voice of that lovely doctor echoes now even louder.

You! Yes you! Have you checked your BP? My name is Uche Anyanwagu. I just checked my BP. Have you?



A sore throat is pain, scratchiness or irritation of the throat that often worsens when you swallow. The most common cause of a sore throat (pharyngitis) is a viral infection, such as a cold or the flu. A sore throat caused by a virus resolves on its own.

Strep throat (streptococcal infection), a less common type of sore throat caused by bacteria, requires treatment with antibiotics to prevent complications. Other less common causes of sore throat might require more complex treatment.

### Symptoms

Symptoms of a sore throat can vary depending on the cause. Signs and symptoms might include:

Pain or a scratchy sensation in the throat Pain that worsens with swallowing or talking Difficulty swallowing Sore, swollen glands in your neck or jaw Swollen, red tonsils White patches or pus on your tonsils Hoarse or muffled voice

Common infections causing a sore throat might result in other signs and symptoms, including:

Fever Cough Runny nose Sneezing Body aches Headache Nausea or vomiting

When to see a doctor

Get immediate care if your child has severe signs such as:

Difficulty breathing Difficulty swallowing Unusual drooling, which might indicate an inability to swallow

If you're an adult, see your doctor if you have a sore throat and any of the following associated problems occur

A sore throat that is severe or lasts longer than a week Difficulty swallowing Difficulty breathing Difficulty opening your mouth Joint pain

Difficulty opening your mouth Joint pain Earache

Rash

Fever higher than 101 F (38.3 C) Blood in saliva or phlegm

Frequently recurring sore throats

A lump in your neck

Hoarseness lasting more than two weeks

### Causes

Viruses that cause the common cold and flu (influenza) also cause most sore throats. Less often, bacterial infections cause sore throats.

Viral infections

Viral illnesses that cause a sore throat include:

Common cold Flu (influenza) Mononucleosis (mono)

Measles Chickenpox

Croup — a common childhood illness characterized by a harsh, barking cough.

### **Bacterial infections**

A number of bacterial infections can cause a sore throat. The most common is Streptococcus pyogenes, or group A streptococcus, which causes strep throat.

Other causes

Other causes of a sore throat include:

Allergies. Allergies to pet dander, molds, dust and pollen can cause a sore throat. The problem may be complicated by postnasal drip, which can irritate and inflame the throat.

Dryness. Dry indoor air, especially when buildings are heated, can make your throat feel rough and scratchy, particularly in the morning when you wake up. Breathing through your mouth, often because of chronic nasal congestion also can cause a dry, sore throat.

Irritants.

Outdoor air pollution can cause ongoing throat irritation. Indoor pollution — tobacco smoke or chemicals - also can cause a chronic sore throat. Chewing tobacco, drinking alcohol and eating spicy foods also can irritate your throat.

Muscle strain. You can strain muscles in your throat by yelling, such as at a sporting event; talking loudly; or talking for long periods without rest.

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). GERD is a digestive system disorder in which stomach acids or other contents of the stomach back up in the food pipe (esophagus).

Other signs or symptoms may include heartburn, hoarseness, regurgitation of stomach contents and the sensation of a lump in your throat.

HIV infection. A sore throat and other flu-like symptoms sometimes appear early after someone is infected with HIV. Also, someone who is HIV-positive might have a chronic or recurring sore throat due to a secondary infection, such as a fungal infection called oral thrush and cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection, a common viral infection that can be serious in people with compromised immune systems.

Both oral thrush and CMV can occur in anyone, but they're more likely to cause a sore throat and other symptoms in people with weakened immune systems.

Tumors. Cancerous tumors of the throat, tongue or voice box (larynx) can cause a sore throat. Other signs or symptoms may include hoarseness, difficulty swallowing, noisy breathing, a lump in the neck, and blood in saliva or phlegm.

Rarely, an infected area of tissue (abscess) in the throat causes a sore throat. Another rare cause of a sore throat is a condition that occurs when the small cartilage "lid" that covers the windpipe swells, blocking airflow (epiglottitis). Both causes can block the airway, creating a medical emergency.

Risk factors....

Although anyone can get a sore throat, some factors make you more susceptible, including:

Age. Children and teens are most likely to develop sore throats. Children are also more likely to have strep throat, the most common bacterial infection associated with a sore throat.

Exposure to tobacco smoke. Smoking and secondhand smoke can irritate the throat. The use of tobacco products also increases the risk of cancers of the mouth, throat and voice box.

Allergies. Seasonal allergies or ongoing allergic reactions to dust, molds or pet dander, make developing a sore throat more likely.

Exposure to chemical irritants. Particles in the air from burning fossil fuels and common household chemicals can cause throat irritation.

Chronic or frequent sinus infections. Drainage from your nose can irritate your throat or spread infection.

Close quarters. Viral and bacterial infections spread easily anywhere people gather, whether in child care centers, classrooms, offices or airplanes.

Weakened immunity. You're more susceptible to infections in general if your resistance is low. Common causes of lowered immunity include HIV, diabetes, treatment with steroids or chemotherapy drugs, stress, fatigue, and poor diet.

Prevention.....

The best way to prevent sore throats is to avoid the germs that cause them and practice good hygiene. Follow these tips and teach your child to do the same:

Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently, especially after using the toilet, before eating, and after sneezing or coughing.

Avoid sharing food, drinking glasses or utensils.

Cough or sneeze into a tissue and throw it away. When necessary, sneeze into your elbow.

Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers as an alternative to washing hands when soap and water aren't available.

Avoid touching public phones or drinking fountains with your mouth.

Regularly clean telephones, TV remotes and computer keyboards with sanitizing cleanser. When you travel, clean phones and remotes in your hotel room.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Treatment...

The cure for sore throat depends upon the exact cause. Antibiotics can cure bacterial infections but are not effective in viral infections. There is no medical cure for sore throats caused by viral infections, and supportive care is usually all that is needed. People with epiglottitis usually require IV antibiotics and a hospital admission; a few people may require breathing assistance (intubation).



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The sister walked in to ask if I will be willing to take more patients. I told her that my mood has run foul a bit.

I walked up to my colleague's clinic and pleaded he takes on my remaining three patients as I seek to own my thoughts.

. "What could be wrong, Uche?..." She queried. "...could it be in relation to the last patient and the father that just left..." I gave a forced smile and nodded in affirmation.

She also shook her head with a feeling of despair and gently left my clinic. She shut the door as I pleaded and turned the sign to read "Clinic Closed".

.I quickly drew open my stationary cabinet, pulled out a note pad and penned thus:

.My Child,

I am sorry I will not be coming home early today. It seems we may not have our normal evening rituals - the kisses and hugs and a barrage of questions and complaints that spice them up.

You may be fast asleep before I get home and tomorrow morning may see you waking without seeing me.

I have taken time to write. Please take time to read this. Keep this wisdom of my father for the children of your sons.

.To be honest, I was terrified a bit by what I saw in the clinic today. That man's child could have been you or any of your siblings. That you seem luckier today doesn't make you better. Rather, this information would.

Before your next sex, I want you to realise that I, your father, am pro-choice. Pro-choice because I believe it is within anyone's right/choice to get or not get pregnant.

Unlike many, I do not believe that this choice extends to choosing to halt or end another life - no matter the stage of development - to validate their own choice.

.Throughout my life as a physician, I have been faced with very hard choices to end a life to grant the other the choice of life.

Even in very hard and complicated instances, I have made the hard choice of pushing for life once it can be sustained.

.So, before your next sex, ask your partner if s/he is ready to be a mum or dad. If yes, then you may succumb but after other things I will tell you later.

If no, please can you both sit down, have a discussion and teach yourselves about very simple natural things like menstrual cycles?

.It hurts me daily to see grown up ladies in my clinic, who have menstruated for almost a decade, yet unsure of either their cycle length or other lengthier issues around that.

Men are even worse because they feel it doesn't concern them. Yet, they will be quick to blame the ladies when things go south, forgetting they all share in this.

.You may think it's too early to tell you all these. May be, it is. All the same, I must. I owe you this first, as your father, then as a healthcare professional.

.Menstrual cycles start with the bleeding (period) and is the time between one period and the other. Let us call the first day that menses starts Day 1.

Females have different cycle lengths. This can be from 21 to 35 days. On the average, some women have 28 days.

The flow (period) can also last from 2 to 7 days. This also varies for different ladies as no two ladies are exactly the same.

Can you start marking these dates in your calendar? Be you a male or female, these dates are important for couples – legal or social.

Let me use your mother to give you an example. She has a regular 30-day cycle length.

I knew this because we took dates of all the first days of her periods for almost a year, and calculated the number of days in between them. We then took the average of these dates to arrive at 30.

.Knowing this has made us to understand what is normal for her, when she is ovulating (releasing eggs), when there are changes in her system like missing periods, being pregnant or having an abnormal bleeding. It also made us to know when to plan to have a child, and to (an extent) determine the sex of the child.

.I will tell you more on the latter when you get married. My father did so to have the six of us – 3 boys and 3 girls, born alternately. I have also tried this for you and your siblings.

Back to your mother, with a cycle length of 30 days, we calculated that she must ovulate on Day 16.

Let me tell you how we arrived at this, the cycle length of a lady is divided into 2 parts.

The first part is from day 1 of the period to ovulation day. The second part is from ovulation to the next coming menses.

The second part is always constant, usually 14 days. So, once a lady ovulates, the next period will come 14 days after.

The first part is the one that changes or varies for even the same person.

So, if your cycle length is 28 days, both parts will be equal (14 days each), if 29 days (1st – 15

days vs 2nd – 14 days) or if 30 days like your mother, then 1st – 16 days vs. 2nd – 14 days.

Simply minus 14 from cycle length and you will get a fair idea of your ovulation date.

Ovulation day is your most fertile day. The chances of pregnancy are greatest because the egg (ovum) is released on this day.

The ovum normally lives 12 to 48 hours before they die off. The sperms would rather stay longer for 3 days (even up to 5 to 7 days in the right condition) before dying off.

So any sex had 2 to 3 days within the period of ovulation may lead to pregnancy. This period is your fertile or unsafe period.

Your mother and I avoid touring the local government this period unless we are ready to give you more siblings.

Is there any safe period? You may wonder. Oh Yes! There is.

The safe period should naturally be from the day your period stops till about 3 days before and after ovulation; and the days after before the next period comes.

For your mother, it is from Day 4 (since her menses lasts for 3 days) to Day 12. We go on break from Day 13 to Day 19 (imagine 7 whole days) before we resume from Day 20 to Day 30.

We have more days to tour the local government than not. So fret not. Time is in your hands once you know how best to manage and redeem it.

I have written you these so that you can understand the grief that greets my heart whenever children of your age walk into my clinic with their partners and/or parents to seek abortion.

\*

I will be honest. My grief is double – first at their choice, second as what they make of it. It is never an easy decision for my colleagues either – be they Holy Moses or Evil Spirit.

So before your next sex, make sure you all are aware of how to draw a menstrual cycle.

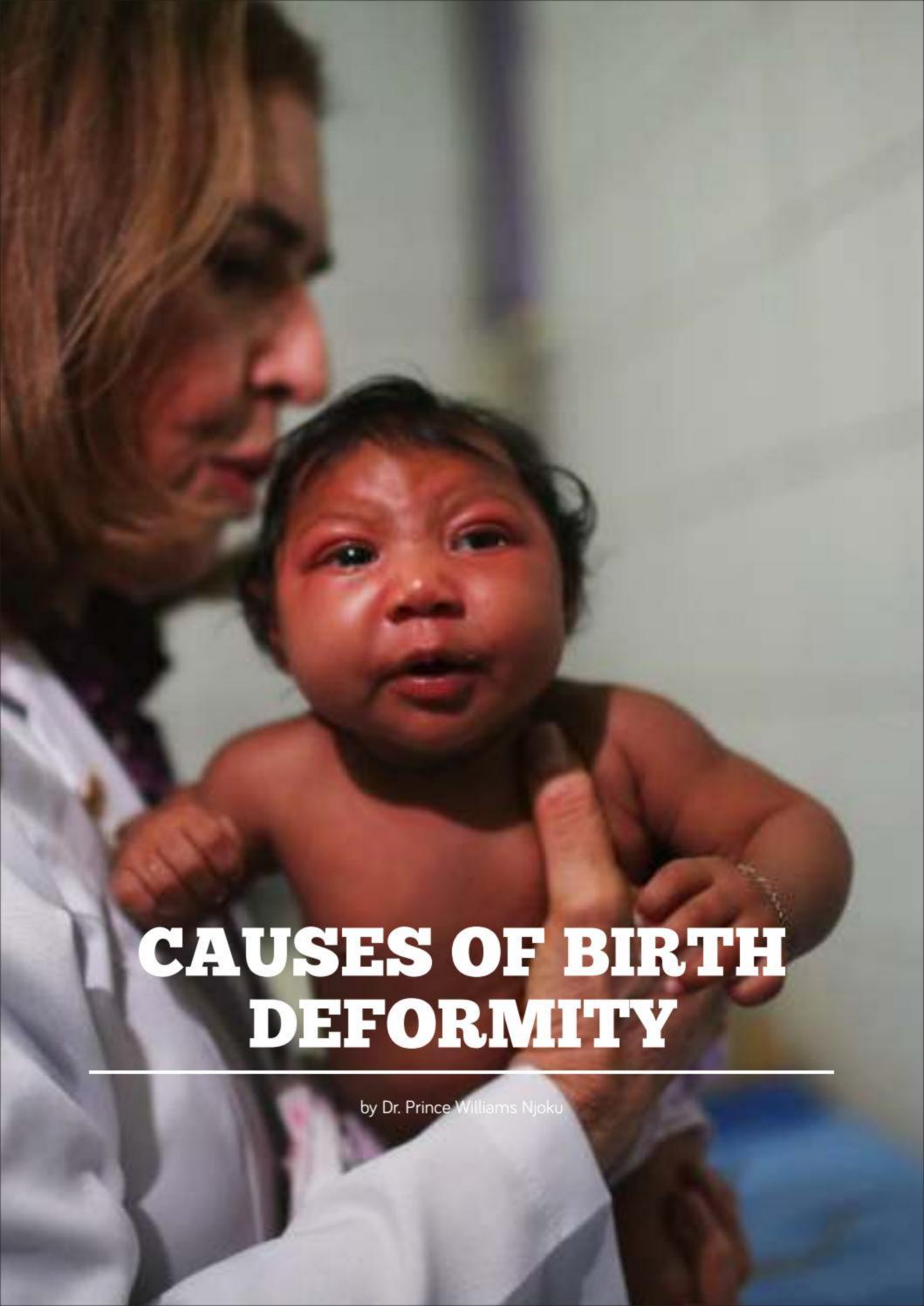
In this letter, I have tried to guide you to answer the question: Before your next sex, "Are you ready to be a parent?"

When you are done reading and reflected on this, your mother will give you the other letter on "Are you ready to be a parent with this spouse?"

Till then, my child, it has been so long a letter (apologies to the Senegalese author, Mariama Ba).

I will wait to watch how this pans out with you.

Your father, uche.



I just want to give a hint about birth defects during pregnancy.

A birth defect is a problem that occurs when a baby is developing in utero (in the womb), we can also define it as a are structural or functional abnormalities present at birth that cause physical or mental disability.

They are the leading cause of death for infants during the first year of life. Birth defects may be caused by genetic problems, problems with chromosomes, or environmental

Deformity may arise from numerous causes:

Genetic mutation.

Damage to the fetus or uterus.

Complications at birth.

A growth or hormone disorder.

Reconstructive surgery following a severe injury, e.g. burn injury.

Arthritis and other rheumatoid disorders.

Fractured bones left to heal without being properly set (malunion)

Birth defects can be minor or severe. They may affect appearance, organ function, and physical and mental development. Most birth defects are present within the first three months of pregnancy, when the organs are still forming. Some birth defects are harmless. Others require long-term medical treatment.

Severe birth defects are the leading cause of infant death in many countries accounting to many deaths.

### **CAUSES**

Birth defects can be a result of:

### genetics

lifestyle choices and behaviors
exposure to certain medications and chemicals
infections during pregnancy
a combination of these factors
However, the exact causes of certain birth defects are
often unknown.

### Genetics

The mother or father may pass on genetic abnormalities to their baby. Genetic abnormalities occur when a gene becomes flawed due to a mutation, or change. In some cases, a gene or part of a gene might be missing. These defects happen at conception and often can't be prevented. A particular defect may be present throughout the family history of one or both parents.

Nongenetic causes

The causes of some birth defects can be difficult or impossible to identify. However, certain behaviors greatly increase the risk of birth defects. These include smoking, using illegal drugs, and drinking alcohol while pregnant. Other factors, such as exposure to toxic chemicals or viruses, also increase risk.

### **RISK FACTORS**

What are the risk factors for birth defects?

All pregnant women have some risk of delivering a child with a birth defect. Risk increases under any of the following conditions:

family history of birth defects or other genetic disorders

drug use, alcohol consumption, or smoking during pregnancy

maternal age of 35 years or older

inadequate prenatal care

untreated viral or bacterial infections, including sexually transmitted infections

use of certain high-risk medications, such as isotretinoin and lithium.

Women with pre-existing medical conditions, such as diabetes, are also at a higher risk of having a child with a birth defect.

Plainly Speaking. Your risk of having a baby with a birth defect is about 2 percent and depends on your age, medical history, and many other factors. Even if you are at low risk, there are screening tests that you should consider. These tests can help to measure the risk that your baby may have a birth defect.

Risks of chromosomal birth defects rise steadily with each year into your 40s. If you give birth at age 40, your baby has a 1 in 106 chance of being born with Down syndrome and a 1 in 66 chance of being born with any chromosomal abnormality. But by age 44, those risks rise to 1 in 38 and 1 in 26, respectively.

### **TYPES**

Common birth defects

Birth defects are typically classified as structural or functional and developmental.

Structural defects are when a specific body part is missing or malformed. The most common structural defects are:

### heart defects

cleft lip or palate, when there's an opening or split in the lip or roof of the mouth

spina bifida, when the spinal cord doesn't develop properly

clubfoot, when the foot points inward instead of forward

Functional or developmental birth defects cause a body part or system not to work properly. These often cause disabilities of intelligence or development. Functional or developmental birth defects include metabolic defects, sensory problems, and nervous system problems. Metabolic defects cause problems with the baby's body chemistry.

The most common types of functional or developmental birth defects include:

Down syndrome, which causes delay in physical and mental development

sickle cell disease, which occurs when the red blood cells become misshapen

cystic fibrosis, which damages the lungs and digestive system

Some children face physical problems associated with specific birth defects. However, many children show no visible abnormalities. Defects can sometimes go undetected for months or even years after the child is born.

See your doctor before becoming pregnant. Know your risk factors.

Take a daily multivitamin before and during pregnancy. Maintain a healthy weight.

Use medications wisely.

Take care of medical conditions before pregnancy.

Plan ahead. Get 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day. Folic acid is a B vitamin. If a woman has enough folic acid in her body at least one month before and during pregnancy, it can help prevent major birth defects of the developing brain and spine (anencephaly and spina bifida). But in all......

Ultrasound can detect some types of physical birth defects. Examples of physical birth defects that may be found at 19 - 20 weeks are most cases of spina bifida, some serious heart defects, some kidney problems, absence of part of a limb and some cases of cleft palate.

First trimester screening is a combination of tests completed between weeks 11 and 13 of pregnancy. It is used to look for certain birth defects related to the baby's heart or chromosomal disorders, such as Down syndrome. This screen includes a maternal blood test and an ultrasound.

### PREVENTION OF BIRTH DEFECT:

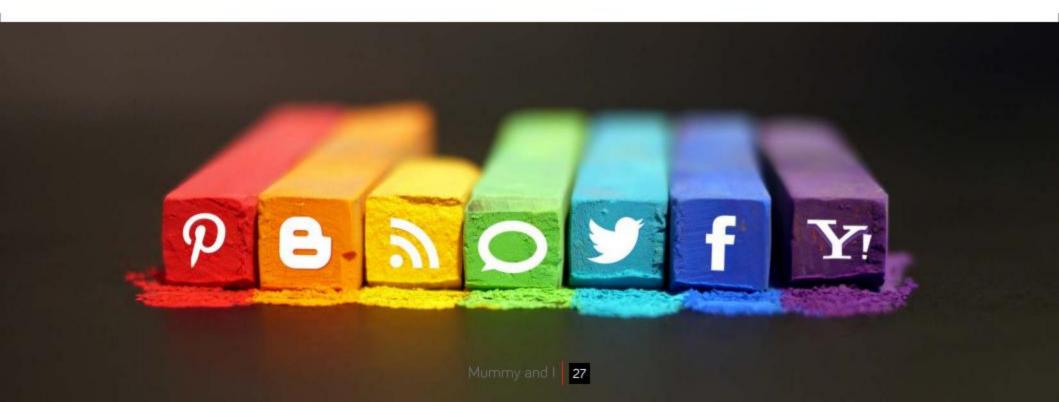


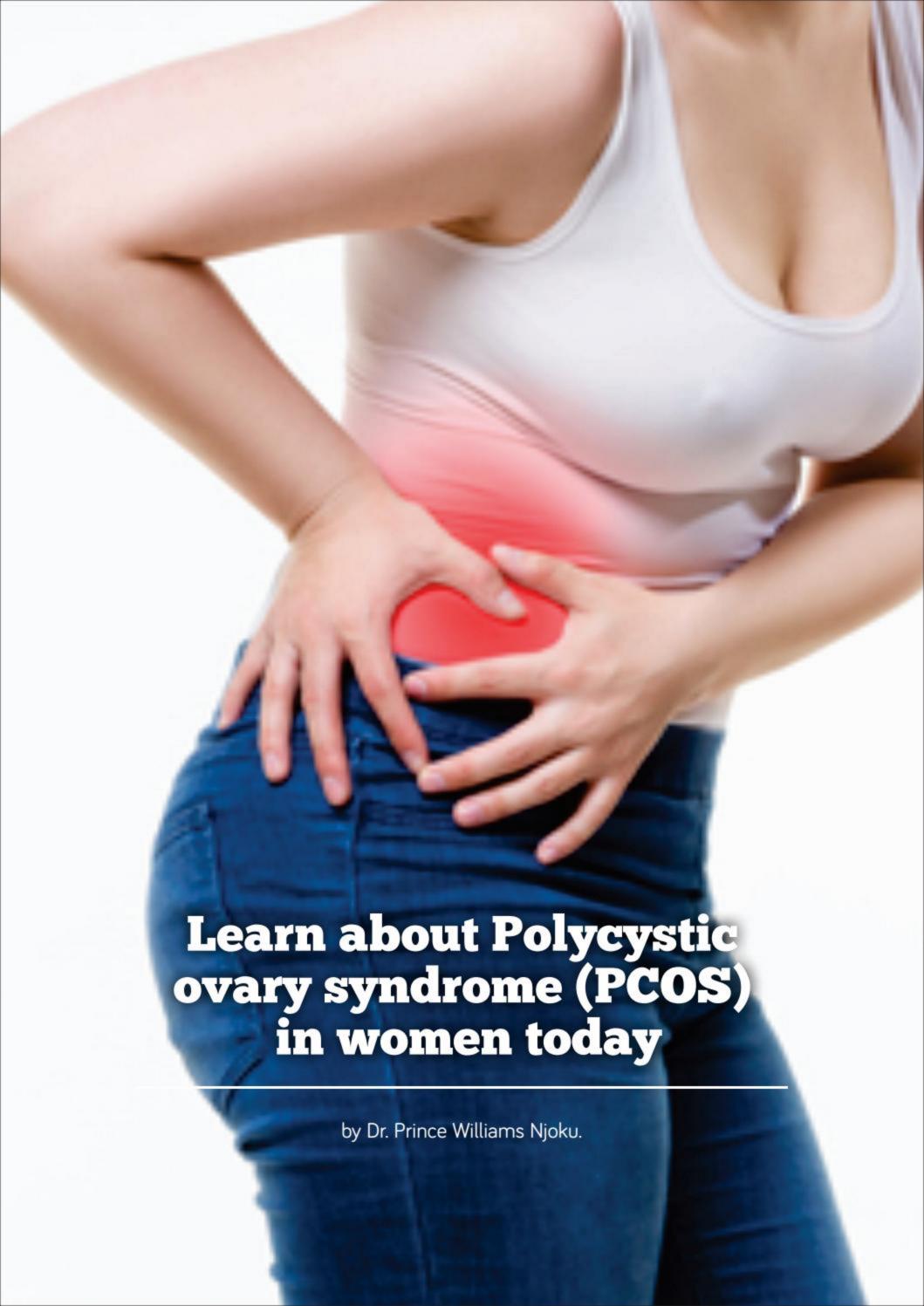
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by Esther Ijeoma Ogbuka







Is a hormonal disorder common among women of reproductive age. Women with PCOS may have infrequent or prolonged menstrual periods or excess male hormone (androgen) levels. The ovaries may develop numerous small collections of fluid (follicles) and fail to regularly release eggs. Or you can also understand it as.....

Polycystic ovary syndrome is a problem in which a woman's hormones are out of balance. It can cause problems with your periods and make it difficult to get pregnant. PCOS also may cause unwanted changes in the way you look. If it isn't treated, over time it can lead to serious health problems, such as diabetes and heart disease.

Most women with PCOS grow many small cysts on their ovaries. That is why it is called polycystic ovary syndrome. The cysts are not harmful but lead to hormone imbalances.

Early diagnosis and treatment can help control the symptoms and prevent long-term problems but remember that the exact cause of PCOS is unknown. That's why early diagnosis and treatment along with weight loss may reduce the risk of long-term complications such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms tend to be mild at first. You may have only a few symptoms or a lot of them. The most common symptoms are:

### (1)Acne.

Weight gain and trouble losing weight.

Extra hair on the face and body. Often women get thicker and darker facial hair and more hair on the chest, belly, and back.

Thinning hair on the scalp.

- (2)Irregular periods. Often women with PCOS have fewer than nine periods a year. Some women have no periods. Others have very heavy bleeding.
- (3) Fertility problems. Many women who have PCOS have trouble getting pregnant (infertility).

### (4)Depression.

Signs and symptoms of PCOS often develop around the time of the first menstrual period during puberty. Sometimes PCOS develops later, for example, in response to substantial weight gain.

Signs and symptoms of PCOS vary. A diagnosis of PCOS is made when you experience at least two of these signs:

Infrequent, irregular or prolonged menstrual cycles are the most common sign of PCOS. For example, you might have fewer than nine periods a year, more than 35 days between periods and abnormally heavy periods.

Excess androgen. Elevated levels of male hormone may result in physical signs, such as excess facial and body hair (hirsutism), and occasionally severe acne and male-pattern baldness.

### (5)..Polycystic ovaries.

Your ovaries might be enlarged and contain follicles that surround the eggs. As a result, the ovaries might fail to function regularly.

PCOS signs and symptoms are typically more severe if you're obese.

### When to see a doctor

See your doctor if you have concerns about your menstrual periods, if you're experiencing infertility or if you have signs of excess androgen such as worsening hirsutism, acne and male-pattern baldness.

### Causes

The exact cause of PCOS isn't known. Factors that might play a role include:

### (1)..Excess insulin....

Insulin is the hormone produced in the pancreas that allows cells to use sugar, your body's primary energy supply. If your cells become resistant to the action of insulin, then your blood sugar levels can rise and your body might produce more insulin.

Excess insulin might increase androgen production, causing difficulty with ovulation.

Low-grade inflammation. This term is used to describe white blood cells' production of substances to fight infection.

Research has shown that women with PCOS have a type of low-grade inflammation that stimulates polycystic ovaries to produce androgens, which can lead to heart and blood vessel problems.

### (2)...Heredity.

Research suggests that certain genes might be linked to PCOS.

(3)...Excess androgen. The ovaries produce abnormally high levels of androgen, resulting in hirsutism and acne.

### Complications

Complications of PCOS can include:





My wife had called severally to brief me of how the first letter made my child feel.

In her usual CCTV mode, she took an eagle-eye surveillance, took note and bored me silly with numerous feedbacks.

. .My Child,

I think today is a good day to open and read your second letter.

Yesterday was children's day and that must have given you an ample opportunity to relish the memories of your childhood and the blessings of being called one's child.

Remember, we are all in this. I still remain my mother's child just as she is to her own mother. Never forget this.

In my first letter, I tried to guide you to answer the question: "Are you ready to be a parent?"

My emphasis was that a major prerequisite before being a parent is for you and your partner to first understand yourselves and the workings of your bodies.

I believe you now do

Now, I equally want you to reflect if you are ready to be a parent with this spouse. Is s/he the one you actually want to have that child with?

I guess it was the hardest choice of our lives - your mother and I. I will speak more for myself (let your mama talk her own). Till date, most times, I feel it's the best choice of my life. At others, the worst.

Before you choose, let me tell you about the four basiquestions you must ask yourselves. If possible, ask these questions on your first meeting. If time does not permit, do so on your very first date.

I want you to do so before you fall head over heels in love before you later tumble and summersault out of it.

None the less, the answers to these questions are not intended to scare or deter you from moving on, but will guide you to make an informed choice.

I will write them down in no particular order.

1. What is your name?

This very simple question seems to be the first we ask

when we meet a new person. Ask your mum about our first meeting.

As simple as it is, and often times very hard to get. Oh, again, I can't forget how your mother dealt with me; the above question addresses the issue of identity.

Identity entails a whole lot - it is really complicated and unclear. So, you know who your partner is, how s/he looks like, what s/he likes, where is from, and other constructs from which his being is derived.

.2. What do you do?

This question addresses the issue of vocation. You are a daily witness to how your mother and I plummet our bodies in our vocations. We do not just do these just to put food on the table, we do it because our vocation is borne of our passion.

.It encapsulates the essence of our existence. It drives our daily activities as we seek to make an impact and leave our footprints on the sand of time.

Think about the moral consequence of this. For example, If you choose to marry an armed robber, the concern here is not that you'd be caught or jailed. Rather, the major concern is that you'd become an armed robber's wife or husband.

Pause and ponder.

3. What do you believe in?

One's belief is very central as it guides one's world view, thought patterns and reactions to events of life.

It can make one both wise and foolish; strong and vulnerable; real and fake. Always remember this.

Above all, remember that it is good for you to be on the same plane with your spouse on this. Critically evaluate your connecting dots cos this reduces friction. Your mother is a living witness.

4. What is your genotype?

I have purposely written this question this way. It goes beyond knowing your spouses genotype. Ask about his or her medical state. Know about any medical conditions in his family, etc

Now back to genotype, our parents may have been excused from this, but my generation and yours can never! Mbanu. NEVER!

Since you are AS, it is important to realise that it's only AA you can marry. This is because, when you marry your fellow AS, you might end up with a child who might have sickle cell disease (SS).

You must have seen this very simple illustration every where. Let it guide you.

AA + AA = AA (good)

AA + AS = AA and AS (good)

AA+SS=AS (good)

AS+AS=AA, AS and SS (bad)

AS+SS=AS and SS (bad)

SS+SS=SS(bad)

There are other rare variants as SC, AC and CC. I will tell you more later.

.It usually grieves my heart to attend to children undergoing sickle cell crises in the clinic due to the "avoidable" mistakes of their parents. I'm all cases I've seen it's neither easy for the child nor the parents.

It is not also easy to advise an intending couple to go their separate ways due to the incompatibility of their genotypes.

.I was recently in this situation twice. One was a couple who only learnt of their genotypes after their traditional marriage (when the church requested for that before they could wed).

.Anyway, they couldn't wed in church but that didn't nullify the point that they were already married - Court and Trad.

They lady was almost 24 weeks pregnant. Worried about their baby's genotype, they sought my advice. We all explored the options which included an invasive test to know the baby's genotype and if SS, the next bitter decision to either abort or have the baby born with sickle cell disease - and it's widely expanding options for management and/or treatment.

They left my clinic shattered. I was no less the same. I don't know what became of them afterwards.

Another intending couple, sent by their church as well, wept bitterly in my clinic as I told them that for no single fault of theirs, that they are not compatible.

.My Child, I could feel their pain and anguish and have not stopped thinking about it. I will not want you or any child to pass through this.

Now finally, when you have fully answered these questions and obtained a valid visa to tour, peruse and navigate the local government...

After you have fully understood and mastered the content of my first letter, and if you (or your spouse) have a REGULAR cycle length...

.Let me hasten to tell you this:

To INCREASE the CHANCES of a male child, please visit the local government either on the day of ovulation or after ovulation.

This is because, each ejaculated sperm contains X and Y chromosomes (let's call them X and Y sperms). The X is for female gender, while the Y is for male. The ovum contains X chromosome only.

.At fertilisation, either the X or the Y sperm will fuse with the X of the ovum to form XX for female or XY for male.

The Y sperms swim faster but die earlier compared to the X sperms. So touring the local government on or after ovulation will give the faster Y sperms some advantage to fertilise the egg.

.On the flip side, if you tour the local government before ovulation, the CHANCES of the X sperms fertilising the egg are higher. This is because the longer living, "stronger" but slower X sperms will be waiting to fertilise the egg once released.

.My Child, do not be misled to believe that this rule is absolute. It's only a rule of probability. The coin can flip to any side. Beside the menstrual cycles may vary at any point.

.I believe that this is a fair guide, used by us to birth you and your siblings; as also used by my father for me and my siblings.

.I know that you will make your mother and I proud grandparents and also be a great parent with your spouse to your children.

.Sex is precious and pleasurable. If it is not, there won't be 7 billion people living on earth today. This even excludes those who have passed on since this earth began.

.Till then, my Child, before your next sex... ponder on all these.

.I will be home next week for us to talk more. I've missed your hugs and kisses.

. Love from your father, Uche

### WHATIS PID

by Dr. Prince Njoku Williams

### What Is Pelvic Inflammatory Disease?

Pelvic inflammatory disease, or PID, is an infection of the organs of a women's reproductive system. They include the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, and cervix. It's usually caused by a sexually transmitted infection (STI), like chlamydia or gonorrhea, and is treated with antibiotics.

You might not notice any symptoms of PID early on. But as the infection gets worse, you can have:

Pain in your lower belly and pelvis

Heavy discharge from your vagina with an unpleasant odor

Bleeding between periods

Pain during sex

Fever and chills

Pain when you pee or a hard time going

Call your doctor right away if you have any of these.

PID can cause serious problems if it's not treated. For example, you might have trouble getting pregnant or have pain in your pelvic area that doesn't go away.

In some cases, PID can bring on more intense symptoms, and you'll need to go to the emergency room. Get medical help right away if you have:

Severe pain in your lower belly Signs of shock, like fainting

Vomiting

Fever higher than 101 F

Some of these also can be signs of other serious medical conditions, like appendicitis or an ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy that happens in a fallopian tube outside the womb). You would need medical help right away for these as well.

### Signs of an STI

Treating an STI right away can help keep you from getting PID. Symptoms of STI are a lot like those of PID. They include heavy discharge from your vagina with an unpleasant odor, pain when you pee, and bleeding between periods.

If your signs and symptoms persist but aren't severe, see your doctor as soon as possible. Vaginal discharge with an odor, painful urination or bleeding between menstrual cycles can be associated with a sexually transmitted infection (STI). If these signs and symptoms occur, stop having sex and see your doctor soon. Prompt treatment of an STI can help prevent PID.

### Causes

Many types of bacteria can cause PID, but gonorrhea or chlamydia infections are the most common. These bacteria are usually acquired during unprotected sex.

Less commonly, bacteria can enter your reproductive tract anytime the normal barrier created by the cervix is disturbed. This can happen after childbirth, miscarriage or abortion.

### Risk factors

A number of factors might increase your risk of pelvic inflammatory disease, including:

Being a sexually active woman younger than 25 years old

Having multiple sexual partners

Being in a sexual relationship with a person who has more than one sex partner

Having sex without a condom

Douching regularly, which upsets the balance of good versus harmful bacteria in the vagina and might mask symptoms having a history of pelvic inflammatory disease or a sexually transmitted infection.

Most experts now agree that having an intrauterine device (IUD) inserted does not increase the risk of pelvic inflammatory disease. Any potential risk is generally within the first three weeks after insertion.

### Complications

Untreated pelvic inflammatory disease might cause scar tissue. You might also develop collections of infected fluid (abscesses) in your fallopian tubes, which could damage your reproductive organs.

Other complications might include:

Ectopic pregnancy. PID is a major cause of tubal (ectopic) pregnancy. In an ectopic pregnancy, the scar tissue from PID prevents the fertilized egg from making its way through the fallopian tube to implant in the uterus. Ectopic pregnancies can cause massive, life-threatening bleeding and require emergency medical attention.

Infertility. PID might damage your reproductive organs and cause infertility — the inability to become pregnant. The more times you've had PID, the greater your risk of infertility. Delaying treatment for PID also dramatically increases your risk of infertility.

Chronic pelvic pain. Pelvic inflammatory disease can cause pelvic pain that might last for months or years. Scarring in your fallopian tubes and other pelvic organs can cause pain during intercourse and ovulation.

Tubo-ovarian abscess. PID might cause an abscess — a collection of pus — to form in your uterine tube and ovaries. If left untreated, you could develop a life-threatening infection.

Prevention

To reduce your risk of pelvic inflammatory disease:

Practice safe sex. Use condoms every time you have sex, limit your number of partners, and ask about a potential partner's sexual history.

Talk to your doctor about contraception. Many forms of contraception do not protect against the development of PID. Using barrier methods, such as a condom, might help to reduce your risk. Even if you take birth control pills, it's still important to use a condom every time you have sex to protect against STIs.

Get tested. If you're at risk of an STI, such as chlamydia, make an appointment with your doctor for testing. Set up a regular screening schedule with your doctor if needed. Early treatment of an STI gives you the best chance of avoiding PID.

Request that your partner be tested. If you have pelvic inflammatory disease or an STI, advise your partner to be tested and, if necessary, treated. This can prevent the spread of STIs and possible recurrence of PID. Don't douche. Douching upsets the balance of bacteria in your vagina.



"Have you noticed that most men raised by today's above average and wealthy families end up disappointing their parents and many people who had expected them to turn out as the chips of the old block or even better?

"What we now see is the rise of the children of the poor into prominence in all areas of life. Do feel bad that your privileged and we provided for son is not doing well at all? It has nothing to do with the work of "your enemies" but a harvest of what you sowed long before today.

"Were you not the person that gave your lovely son a false start in life? You had sworn that none of your children would ever suffer while you were still alive. You robbed them of the opportunities to experience difficulties that would have made them gain life taught lessons as you played the role of the defender of the universe in their lives.

"Perhaps you prayed so hard for a male child and you begot him and you vowed to always make him happy at all cost. You met all his needs and wants at his beck and call and he never heard a "no" from you. He has now grown up with an entitlement mentality and nobody, not even you, can change him. It's now a part of him.

"Was it not you that would harass your spouse to submission until the money was made available to finance your boy's wants? Most times you would do the "extortion" in his presence or even pillory your spouse for being so mean or wicked to your son.

"You were bragging to friends and relations that your son would attend high fees paying schools not necessarily for academics but to mix up with his likesthe children of the rich. It was sold to you and you believed it that if your children attended same schools with children of the rich that their future would be brighter. Now use your tongue to count your teeth.

"You once sacked a house maid or a house boy for scolding your child. How dare she or he do that? What did she know? Who were her parents? The ancient beneficial African saying that "everyone in the community trains a child" is barbaric to you. Hence you will have to enjoy your pain alone.

"The result of your non-circumspective training philosophy of your male child, who is now a man with no sense of industry but an expert in enjoyment, a dude, ladies' man and a power dresser; the bold man who could gleefully announce that he is gay or a transgender. Why not? It's within his rights!

"Most ladies who married some of these over provided male children live in hell. The wives suddenly realise that they were emotionally duped as they inherit babies as husbands long before they get pregnant. The courageous ones run out of the marriage while many others are trapped in or persuaded by their mothers-in-law or economic security to help continue babying a grown man.

"Some of these grown but buffeted male children believe that their needs must be taken care of by their parents, wives or siblings. They have become perpetual dependants.

"Remember that your husband foretold this and you derided him. He is now dead and can't feel your shame. "A male child needs special training. He must learn to believe in and practice the culture of hard work. He should be told to that his present comfort is a tenancy not a possession.

"A male child should be made to visit a motherless babies' homes often to understand how unfair life is. Get him to do vacation jobs to learn the dignity in labour. If you handle him well, he will them appreciate why he is lucky.

"Never you arrange exam success for your son as he would grow to see cheating as a way of life. Let him repeat an exam if he fails and emphasize the need for him to study harder to pass.

"Teach your little son that the sole purpose of a man is to work so hard to take care of his wife, children, his siblings and aged parents. Let him know that he will not make heaven if he ignores the poor and the needy.

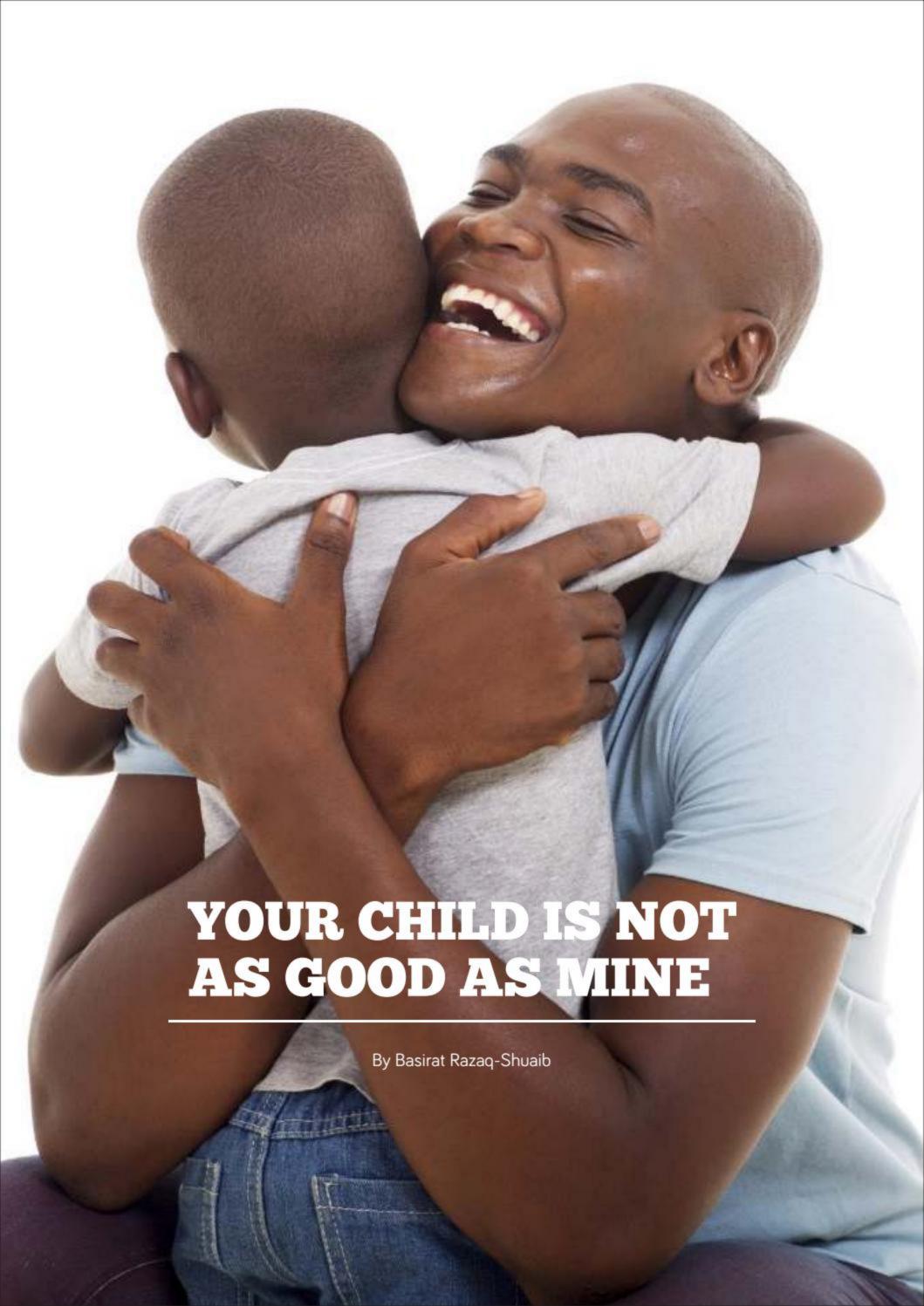
"Get your son today to read biographies of self made great men easily found in bookshops.

"Look around and see how well the children of thr yesterday's wealthy men and women have fared. Many of them have mismanaged inherited multi-currency billion businesses while some others relocate Europe and North America living like former employees of their parents.

"It's evident that children of the rich whose mothers were strict and disciplarian, a disposition the children hated as they were growing up, turn out better human beings and successful in life. Therefore, mothers have a crucial role to plan since most wealthy men are out of the house at the formative ages of the children.

"However, only a foolish man would leave the job of raising a male child in the hands of the wife alone. A smart man must get involved or he would end up working hard for nothing.

"If you are comfortable or rich and could bring up your son well, your wealth shall be his foundation for greatness otherwise he will scatter with shovel what you had gathered with a rake.



Last week I was at the doctor's. I have been a bit poorly lately so I decided to have things checked out. I must have chosen the wrong day to visit the hospital because, it was packed and it seemed only half of the staff present were working. Anyway, I sat next to a lady with an expressionless face. It looks like it's going to be a long day I said with a smile. She shrugged and said oh well, how worse can it get?

Not the kind of response I was expecting but something in me said I should reach out. So, I probed a little further. You seem a little burdened I said and she responded with a snort. Well, let's just say someone just added to the one I had before was her response. Hmm... how do you mean I asked?

She started by talking briefly about how she was struggling in her marriage. Her husband was giving her a hard time and the responsibilities she was carrying were overwhelming. Something in me wanted to start dishing out advice but I cautioned myself. She went on to tell me about her adorable son who is 7. I have never seen anyone with the kind of gift he has she said. Jomiloju only needs to see an object once to draw it.

And that is not all, put him in front of a computer and watch him play games he is just seeing for the first time like a pro she continued. When knows the plate number of all the cars on our street by heart! He has a fascinating memory. By now, she was all smiles. To cap it all, he loves having people around him even though... she paused and sighed as if something she remembered took the joy away. I know he is going to be great despite all that he is dealing with.

At this point, I was a bit confused and worried. I understand this lady is having a hard time with her husband but this boy doesn't deserve any emotional instability that can affect him especially at school. So I asked, how is your son dealing with the tension between you and your husband? She looked at me, took a long breath and then answered. Well, he doesn't talk much so I don't really know. I asked again, do his friends come around to play at yours? Again she sighed and kept silent. After what seemed like forever, she replied with tears in her eyes, he doesn't have any friend.

Ok wait...you just told me he has all these wonderful qualities and loves having people around him, yet he doesn't have any friends? She started. You see, Jomiloju has Autism Spectrum Disorder. Autism? Oh dear! Poor boy probably drools and wears bib at age 7.

But how can he possess all those qualities she talked about with this Autism of a thing I thought. As I couldn't dare to mutter my thoughts I asked instead what is this Autism? She went on to explain to me that Autism is a neurological condition which affects people in 3 key areas of social communication, social interaction and social imagination.

Social communication difficulties means they experience difficulties with verbal and non-verbal language e.g knowing the right thing to say, understanding jokes and sarcasm, and inability to read facial expressions and understand body language. Social interaction difficulties means they have difficulties with things like making conversations, maintaining eye contact, understanding norms and recognising other people's emotions or expressing theirs.

Social imagination difficulties means they have difficulties with things like imaginative play, coping in unfamiliar environment, understanding the concept of danger, and predicting what may happen next. Because of his difficulties, Jomiloju struggles with making friends as he doesn't really know how to express himself. He doesn't get invited to any parties and no one wants to attend his. To make it worse, his dad says it is my fault that he has the disorder.

You see, she continued, Jomiloju is a star. I know it, but I just wish people gave him a chance or even tried to understand him. How does he cope at school I asked? Well, the school I put him showed willingness to make adjustments to accommodate his needs initially. They agreed to give him the support he needs to thrive as he doesn't need a special school with his level of difficulties. But sadly, I may now need to start looking for another school for him. Why? I asked.

The head teacher just called me to say some other parents have expressed their displeasure seeing a child like Jomiloju in the same space as their children and, she can't afford to let them withdraw their children because of him she replied. By now, she was in tears. I just want the best for him. Jomiloju is a wonderful child – I just wish you knew him she sobbed.

I held her hand and told her things would be fine. I didn't know what else to say. I couldn't hold back my own tears either. I could feel her pain and struggles. I took her number and told her I would love to meet her son. When I got back home that day, I asked my daughter the name of the boy in her class who she normally describes as aloof. She answered; oh you mean the one who doesn't have any friends? I said yes. She said Jomiloju. That was not a coincidence.

Last week I had complained to the head teacher about having a certain child who is "not normal" in my daughter's class! I even asked what they were turning the school into. Now I wish I didn't. I love my daughter to the moon and back and if she was in Jomiloju's shoes, I would wish other people showed her love, empathy and acceptance because deep within us, that is what we all want as humans.

Basirat Razaq-Shuaib | Founder

www.thewinfordcentre.org



Communication is the key to any strong relationship. Communication is how we let others know how much they mean to us. Since we all communicate our love differently, it's important to keep a loose grip on the definition of communication itself, but one thing will remain certain: If a man truly loves you, you will know it and feel it. If he doesn't, you will be left wondering all the time if he does.

Here are 10 things the right man will never make you wonder about:

1. Whether or not he respects you. Love is a product of respect.

We cannot love someone we don't have respect for. Respect for their opinions, respect for their feelings, respect for their wants and needs. A man who loves and cares for you will always consider you when making decisions that affect you both. He will ask for your opinions. He will treat you as an extension of himself — because that's what you are in a relationship.

### 2. Whether or not he thinks you're beautiful.

Finding someone beautiful is not just about physical attraction. The truth is that when you love someone for who they truly are, everything about them becomes beautiful. No man should let the woman in his life wonder if he is attracted to her — well-placed compliments and paying attention to small details do wonders.

### 3. Whether or not he appreciates you.

There should be absolutely no time when you feel unappreciated by your partner. It is understandable that life gets crazy and stressful, and often we lose sight of someone else's feelings if we are caught up in our hectic day-to- day routine... but this is why it is so important to be willing to put effort into your relationship. No matter how busy or stressed out a man is, when he comes home to you at night, it is important that he puts in the conscious effort to make sure you know he appreciates everything you do for him.

### 4. Whether or not you are worth the effort.

You are worth every single ounce of effort a man has in his heart to give to you and your relationship. The right man will never make you question that.

5. Whether or not he envisions a future with you.

When a man is serious about you, he will have no problem making plans together for the future. Whether it is an upcoming holiday or a vacation next summer, his willingness to use "we" when talking about it is a clear sign that when he pictures a more mature version of himself, he is also picturing you there by his side.

### 6. Whether or not he supports you.

When a man commits his love and his time to a woman, there are no stipulations or circumstances required. There will be good times and there will be not-so-good times. There will be challenges and unexpected situations that arise. But he will stay by your side and be your teammate through it all. Of course, there is an asterisk on this. This does not mean you can disrespect him, lie, or cheat. It does not mean you can betray his trust and expect him to stick around because he promised to commit to you.

This point is about things the two of you go through together and him having the integrity needed to not walk away when times get hard. Any man can be by your side on the sunny days. The real test of character is

whether or not he will hold the umbrella over you during the stormy days.

### 7. Whether or not you can open up to him.

Comfort in a relationship (the good kind, not the kind that makes you stop trying) comes from the ability to be open and honest with your partner —and the ability to do this comes from knowing you will never be judged. A good man will encourage you to open up and share your feelings with him. There should never be any fear of him flying off the handle or overreacting if you share something with him. This means being able to be the most genuine, uncensored version of yourself around him.

### 8. Whether or not he is dedicated to improving himself.

Whether it be learning new things, developing a new skill set, reading a new book or watching a documentary — a good man who prides himself on continuous self-improvement will always be intellectually challenging you and keeping your attention. He will be doing these things for himself, but the added benefit will be the positive impact it has on your relationship.

9. Whether or not you are safe around him.

I have always said that I believe one of the best compliments a woman can give a man is telling him that she feels safe around him. Regardless of how attracted she is to you or how funny she thinks you are or how much money you have — if a woman cannot sleep soundly by your side at night, none of it matters.

10. Whether or not he is committed to loving you.

Love is not a passive emotion. It is not just something that bursts into our hearts like fireworks only to dissipate as quickly as it arrived. Love is a choice. It is a conscious effort to look past differences, to embrace how your partner can improve you, to embrace what they can teach you about life — and what you can teach them in return.

Love is not something you "fall" into, it is something you rise into. It is something you rise into together, converging and combining your paths when you meet, and continuing on one single road of life together from that point on. That road will have speed bumps and potholes and unexpected obstacles.

It may not be the road you envisioned yourself going down. But you can take solace in the fact that it is the only road you would ever want to be on, because the person you love is on it next to you. The right man will never make you worry that he might take the next exit and leave you traveling alone — because he has committed to making the choice to love you. Every day.



The combination of her rich educational background, invaluable work exposure, and personal drive to succeed has seen Kiki turn out an astute businesswoman as HOPE Fashion and St. Kiks Couture have become unmitigated successes in the short period of three years, boasting some of the biggest names and socialites in the Nigerian glamour scene as loyal clients.

Kiki however credits her determination, love from family, love of knowledge, creativity and faith in God as instrumental to her success story. She believes anyone can be whatever he or she wants to be as long as they don't let anything or the loss of anyone stop you. Be like a Moving train and be unstoppable. "I have had to rise above enormous challenges in life, but my determination and love from my family were priceless currencies that paved the way for me to find my gold of success and happiness"

The fashion design business is an artistic endeavor, therefore "my business success is founded on a unique proposition and sustained on relentless creativity; my use of patterns and blings to create unforgettable outfits and styles makes my designs stand out and distinctive. And it keeps my clients coming back for more and more".

Kiki is currently the CEO, Hope Fashion, CEO, St. Kiks Couture and CEO, Plush Cleaning Nigeria Limited which makes Mummy & I magazine refer her as the 'TRIPLE CEO.' She is also the Executive Director on the boards of 91.7 women fm, Nigeria's first and only female-centric radio station, and St. Ives Medicare Limited.

Besides business and entrepreneurship, Kiki is an amazing wife to a wonderful man, a selfless mother to her beautiful kids, a homemaker, a worshiper and lover of Christ, and a philanthropist.

She regularly inspires, encourages and motivates people on her social media pages, as well as in real life. A habit she is fast becoming renowned for. And she is currently working on her NGO to inspire and encourage young women. Read more about Kiki in this mind bugling interview with Esther Ijeoma Ogbuka of Mummy & I magazine.

### INTERVIEW

### 1) May we know more about you?

My name is Kiki Okewale. I am a wife, a Mother of two kids. As an Entrepreneur, I am the CEO of Hope Fashion, CEO of St. Kiks, CEO, Plush Cleaning Nigeria Limited Founder of Stitches of Hope Foundation, Executive Director at W F.M, 91.7, a radio station for women and their families, Executive Director at The Ives Medicare.

2) You're quite Industrious to be joggling in between these top positions effortlessly. How was your childhood experiences and what inspired you as a young Kiki?

My Childhood was really interesting and also very emotional. As a child, I was pampered. I was the only girl in the house with 5 brothers. And as the last born, I was pampered by everyone. Unfortunately, I lost my Father at a very tender age and everything changed. It was more like, " From a Silver spoon to no spoon at all. "Everything we had was gone and my Mother was left with nothing. She went extra mile to sell all she had just to fend for us. She didn't want us to change the schools we were already going. She didn't want us to feel the lost of our Father. I was quite young, just 10 years old. Nobody believed I can ever cope with such a great loss but here am I today and I bless God.

### 3) How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?

My entrepreneurial journey started at a very tender age because of the loss of my Father, I couldn't leave my Mother to carry the entire burden all by herself. My mother was into Pastries. My Father had an Hotel which we use to stay with my mother to run but couldn't continue because most of the customers were patronizing the business because of the presence of my Father. His demise affected the business and we couldn't continue. My parents were both entrepreneurs and I watched them over the years in admiration. I believe I caught their fire. Immediately after my secondary edition, I started working in a Poultry Farm in Ibadan called "Mekiti Farms."

In a space of one year, I became the manager based on the fact that I was zealous, devoted and overly dedicated. I was earning just #10,000 but it meant so much to me at that point. I was also running a parttime diploma program in University of Ibadan. In addition, I was also a hair stylist, did a lot of cleaning



jobs as well alongside my managerial position in the poultry farm. I also went to Contonou to buy clothes to sell. It's been worth it. Every step of the way, I've learnt so much to make me a better person. It was quite challenging but I had supportive brothers who were also very supportive in all ramifications.

After a while, I had to travel to the UK to further my studies. I was working all round the clock. From work, I go to school and from school, I'll run night shift at work. I did all sorts of jobs including working in nursing homes. It wasn't easy at all but I pushed through. The entrepreneurial spirit has always been there. It doesn't matter at what point I experienced a breakthrough. The good thing was the fact that I wasn't letting my situation pull me back.

4) What do you think is the major challenge why some women don't want to venture into entrepreneurship?

To be honest, it's not easy to be an entrepreneur. Not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur. It's not something you force yourself to do. When I was working for a company, my friends do tell me, "Kiki, you can't be limited by a company." I can't just sit down and work 9-5, I want to work for 24 hours, do what I have passion for and gain fulfilment. There's a lot of risks involved in Entrepreneurship. If you're a monthly income earner, you're sure at the end of the month, you'll get your monthly salary, but that's not the case when you're an entrepreneur.

There are times when all you have is just enough to pay your staff and that's all. If you're married as an entrepreneur, you also need a good support system. If you're married to a man who will allow you go all out to achieve your dreams, that's great! Just that a lot of people are not married to men who wants them to fly. Some men just want you to be okay, comfortable without being ambitious.

I won't totally blame the men because some women, when they are flying, they totally forget the home and get carried away. We also have very strong women who are blossoming and still taking care of their homes because they have good support systems. I always use Mrs. Alakija as an example. She is one of the richest women in the world and she has a wonderful support system. Look at Mrs. Ibukun Awosika, these are women doing amazing things all over the world. It takes guts to be an entrepreneur.

Some women are so laid back. Presently, we are running an empowerment program and calling on people to get empowered at zero cost, yet they don't see it as needful. Even someone Hawking on th

e streets doesn't want to get empowered for a better future. They prefer Hawking on the streets and are very comfortable with it.

It really breaks my heart because my foundation is all about empowering people to be more. The economy is bad, your parents didn't send you to school, you don't have any support system - These and more are reasons but they are not enough. There are so many things you can do right in Nigeria to earn a living. If you keep folding your arms and sleep, you may sleep away your destiny. Women are the change agents we need in this country. If every woman will understand her place and work hard to give their own contribution, Nigeria will be better. We will make a difference.

5) Tell us more about Hope Fashion and your downtrodden moments if there was any.

Hope Fashion started 3 years ago and we are so grateful for the way people opened their arms to embrace us. We started really small but look at where we are today. People are scared to start small, that's one thing I learnt. I'm not afraid to start small. The most important thing is to have a vision, set your goals and work assiduously towards reaching your destination. I'm no where near where I really want to be, but I'm so grateful for the journey so far. Three years ago when we started, we started with shoes and bags.

The first goods I bought, I bought them online because I had no one to mentor me. When I was sending money to China, Turkey, Korea, my husband got really worried that I could be scammed by fraudsters but I totally relied on the direction of God to link me to the right source and God did it. I vividly remember when my goods landed, I couldn't help but roll on the floor just to express my utmost gratitude to God Almighty because it's very difficult to start a business without a mentor to link you. It's not easy at all.

Even this building we are using presently, the government locked it up for one year. I was carrying my goods around in my car selling to people. I wasn't discouraged at all because I know not even Lagos state can stop my vision. Also, having God as your backup is the greatest motivation. I met my own Red Seas, I had my own mountains but I conquered all by the special grace of God. The major challenge with the youths of these days is that they don't want to start small. The want the glory without going through the process. Going through the process makes it sustainable. It helps you know the right way to nurture it. If you don't follow the process to get up there, how do you sustain it?





I had my own fair share of challenges when I started but gradually, I grew and God blessed me with amazing staff who had my interest as heart and we worked as a team to achieve a common purpose. Strangers drop by to patronize me. I studied in the UK, so it was difficult because I didn't study here in Nigeria. I didn't have much friends to link me to clients but God did it for me. Now, we have over 100,000 instagram followers but then, we had nobody. My husband played a significant role during those days. He constantly and consistently encouraged me never to relent.

A point came, I started making clothes but my husband told me, "It's good to have big dreams, but focus on one. Leave sowing for now. I gladly accepted and wanted to sell my machines but he didn't support that. He said, I shouldn't sell them because i will still sow but not now. He encouraged me to focus on fabrics alone which I did till years later when my customers started demanding we should also make their outfits because most tailors out there don't know how expensive the fabrics are. This gave birth to Kiki Okewale Couture.

People are really amazed and often ask how I made it but I tell them God did it for me. I also advise them to Carve a niche for themselves. Whatsoever you want to do in life, give it nothing else but the best. Be the best in whatsoever you lay your hands to do. I've always loved embellishments and detailing. You can't give me a fabric and I will return it the same way, never! Here in Hope Fashion, we believe so much in great customer service. We give our customers maximum attention and ensure they are satisfied to the fullest. I constantly check on my clients as well.

6) It will interest us to know more about the inspiration behind your Foundations and magnanimous philanthropic services.

We have two foundations. One is "Stitches of Hope Foundation." We are stitching people one stitch at a time. We cannot do everything but if every individual decides to help one person, then this country will be a better place. We need to stop overlooking the suffering of others because they are not our family or relatives. While growing up, I decided that when God blesses me, I'll give back to the society. Even before I had what I had, I always visit orphanage homes.

When my Mum was still living in Oshogbo, I asked her to get one less privileged child to live with. I was sending money monthly for the upkeep of the child. I adopted the child and we go to visit other children in the orphanage homes. We do sew uniforms for them at Makoko as well. I have passion for children and youths. If we can give every child equal opportunity, we

will discover every child has something. That's what we do in Stitches of Hope. We know that education is key. Stitches of Hope focuses on children and young people. We buy school uniforms for them, schoolbags, writing materials and celebrate Christmas with them.

For the Kiki Okewale Foundation, it's purely an empowerment foundation. Every quarter, sometimes two months, we partner with brands to come and teach our students for free. We want people to know they can start a business with as little as #10,000. We equally run free online classes. If someone gives you an asoke, you can do it to perfection. If it is wig making, Hair dressing, and so on. We want you to be in charge and do it well. On Tuesday, we are doing fabric embellishment, how to make fascinators, hand fan, cake making, soap making, wig making and we've had tremendous feedbacks. People come from different locations like Oshogbo, Ibadan, for the empowerment classes and we will keep doing more.

7) With all these retinue of activities and commitments, how do you strike a balance as a Wife, a Mother and a Triple CEO?

I must confess, it's not easy but if it was easy, everyone will be doing it. We have no excuse really. I'm forever grateful to my husband. He's a massive support system. Sometimes, I have to work late at night, I'll feel so bad but when I call him, he'll tell me not to worry that the children are fine. My Mother is always there for me, she picks the children from school when I'm not available, she helps them with their homework. My husband is so understanding and my children are amazing. It's not been easy but it's worth it. The most important of it all is having a good support system. If you have a husband that is always complaining, then one is going to give way for the other and definitely it will be the woman, because I will not pick my job over my family.

On weekends, I spend time with my children. I only work with appointments because I'm always at work and it's only weekends that I get to work with the children. I give them as much time as I can. As you're building your brand, you have to also build your home emotionally. Make it solid. It hasn't been easy. There are days of up and down but God is faithful.

7) Being a submissive wife is becoming herculean task in this era of feminism and women struggling to be equal with men. What's your stance on this?





The subject of submission has to do with submission. What is submission really? In this part of the world, Men always want to show that "They are the men." We also have men who wants to deliberate and negotiate. If a woman wants to climb on her husband, he will counter it. Personally, I'm a very submissive person but I have my stand, I have my say. Some women don't really want to listen to their husbands. I don't support it. If you want to build a happy home, it's good you sit down and communicate effectively with your spouse. Try to understand each other. In this generation, a lot of men don't even want to fend for their family. A lot of women are now the ones paying school fees, house rents, and so on and when the man wants to exercise too much authority, they boldly say no because they pay the bills. So, it's more like different strokes for different folks.

I can't judge any woman for how they chose to handle their home but I must say, a woman should understand that she needs to respect her husband. You have to let them know that they are in control, you have to massage their ego. Even if you're the one footing the bills, you shouldn't let people know. You shouldn't sell your husband's shots just because he couldn't afford to pay the bills at the moment. If he is facing some challenges, encourage and still respect him. The fact that you pay the bills today doesn't mean he won't pay the bills tomorrow. So, every woman should endeavour to build her home.

8 What message do you have for Women all over the world today as you celebrate your birthday?

Women let us stop competing and let us collaborate more, let us come together as one, united towards a greater goal, let us start clapping for the success of other women, let us have a united front because

together we can win, together we can conquer the world, together we can all be at the top. However, not having people clap for you and cheer you up should never discourage you, some people can't just help me, it always has to be about them so in this case my darling, when you are not loved, love yourself, when they don't clap for you, then clap for your self, when u wake up in the morning look at your self in the mirror and remind yourself that you are unique, you are different, only you has your DNA, God did not make a mistake by taking time to create you. Go to your social media pages and like your pictures if it bothers you that people don't like it. Listen, there is no greater love than self love because when you love yourself and respect yourself then you can walk away from people and situations that threaten you and your happiness. Don't look for people to complete you.

Also a lot of us women carry so much weight on our shoulders, so much responsibility and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that, we want to be everything to everyone because that's how we are wired, we have mothers instinct but listen to this, when a door is built to take one person at a time but instead you want to carry everyone through that door at the same then you will all eventually stay out, don't be afraid to walk through that door alone, don't be afraid to go succeed alone, don't be afraid to be alone and lonely because it will be at some point but don't loose focus, focus on the bigger picture. When you walk through that door work hard, pray hard and work smart, ask for grace and Favour and when you succeed then u can gradually pull people through that door and you will all be together at the top again. One step at a time. SAVE YOUR SELF first then u can save others. Remember you can only pour from a container with content







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