

TM PAUL UDUK

*SPRING FLOWERS*

- THE 19 MOMENTS OF SPRING THAT IGNITE  
YOUR PASSION AND FIRE YOUR DREAMS

How to Build an Expert Empire Series

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This book is dedicated to Ambassador Vincent S. Okobi,  
and all Toastmasters in Nigeria.

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## MOMENT ONE

# TOASTMASTERS' BIGGEST SECRET

Toastmasters' biggest secret was recently revealed by no other a person than the 2010/2011 International President herself, TM Pat Johnson DTM. The bitter truth (or sweet lie if you like) about Toastmasters she said, is not about the trophies, awards, World Championships, best speaker ribbons at all, it's about the relationships we make at the club(s), the conventions, the regional meetings and all those other occasions that bring Toastmasters together! Yes it's the club meetings. And the International Conventions! The networks that can build up your net-worth years down the road, that is what we are talking about. The networks are built during the club meetings and International conventions. But what are you bringing to the table?

Toastmasters will equip you and guarantee that you bring something to the table. Personal polish, speaking savvy, poise and lots more are some of the things you pick up along the way. All these don't come easy, it takes years and years of practice, trials and tribulations. The task of moving from the bottom ten, to the top 100, 50 and finally to the top 10 may seem daunting at the beginning but as you increasingly challenge yourself and step out of your comfort zone it soon comes together. So what are you waiting for?

Toastmasters and would be Toastmasters come out of your comfort zones! Average membership and wishes alone will not guarantee you stardom! What new things are you learning to add vim to your speaking? What are you reading to add zest to your platform expertise? This is what I recently picked up from Carmine Gallo, the author of *The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs: How to be Insanely Great in Front of Any Audience and Fire Them Up!* Gallo, who is author also of *Seven Simple Secrets of Inspiring Leaders*, says "three is more dramatic than two, three is funnier than four, and three is more memorable than six". He calls it "The Rule of Three". Don't forget "The Rule of Three" when next you make a speech.



Toastmasters what is stopping you from making that last one, two or three speeches to crown your effort with a CC (Competent Communicator)? Would be Toastmasters what is keeping you from joining the greatest self development movement in history? Come off that bench and jump into the water, it's a lot warmer than you think! That comfort zone may be the proverbial rut! Your comfort zone can make you comfortable but it can never guarantee you greatness. Speak! Come and learn how to speak like the orators of old!! Fool yourself to greatness!!! That's the greatest secret of all.

## MOMENT TWO

# TO BE A WORLD CHAMPION, YOU NEED A WORLD CHAMPION SPIRIT

To be crowned the World Champion of Public Speaking is the greatest accolade a Toastmaster can get. It's like to be crowned the World Boxing Champion. Yearly an average of 25,000 Toastmasters from all over the world compete for the crown and through rigorous and painstaking evaluations at Club, Regional and District contests, the ranks are pruned to 10 of the very best of the best finalists. Then at the International Convention, these 10 compete and at the end only one is left standing

as the master of the universe, and World Champion of Public speaking for that particular year. The Champion reigns for one year.

As you think about the Toastmasters experience, let me share with you Jim Key's incredible journey to the World Championship of Public Speaking! Jim emerged the 2003 World Champion of Public Speaking, contesting an incredible three years in a row! He was the first runner up in 2001 and again the first runner up in 2002. He refused to give up! His persistence was finally crowned with success in 2003.

To get to the World Championship, you have to win the Area and the District Contests, and of course it goes without saying, you must win your Club's contest. By the rule of the Championship, you cannot repeat the same speech in the Area and District contests and you cannot repeat the same speech in the World Championship. Hope I'm coming across. You cannot repeat the speech used in the District contest for the World Championship. In effect, to get to the 2003 World Championship and the ultimate prize, Jim went through the same routes he passed through in 2001 and 2002. What an amazing feat! Jim made a total of 45 speeches, the 45th being the one that netted him the ultimate crown, stardom and fame.

Jim says the only thing that matters is the “law of action.” “Action wins not the lottery”, because as a contestant for the World Championship of Public Speaking once said, “we can lie with our words but we cannot lie with our actions.”

As a Toastmaster, you are only as good as your last speech. Immediately you wait one, two, three weeks the rut sets in. To achieve the Competent Communicator Award, you need to make just 10 speeches. To become a World Champion of Public Speaking, you may have to make up to 75 speeches! Toastmaster, when did you last make a speech in the Club? Are you waiting for the “perfect speech” before you make that 8th, 9th or 10th speech? Unfortunately there is no perfect speech, but only a perfect audience. You know you have made a great speech when the audience applaud or give you a standing ovation! If you wish to listen to the speech that won Jim the World Champion of Public Speaking, inquire from a Toastmaster nearest to you. Do you have the Jim Key in you? If you wish to move from useful to invaluable, and from ordinary to extraordinary, Toastmasters is the Club to join. The Toastmasters experience is invigorating, inspiring, and awesome! To find a Toastmasters Club nearest to you don’t wait, go to [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org) today.

## MOMENT THREE

# AWAKEN THE LEADER IN YOU!\*

Have you “put a dent in the universe” within the past twenty four hours? What about the past twenty four days? What about the past twenty four weeks? As the excitement of being a member or would be member of one of the most glorious movements in all of human history envelops you, I wish to pose a question: are you really too busy to “put a dent in the universe?” Think of all the great men and women over the ages that, though had twenty four hours just like I and you, still found time to make a huge difference. Mother Theresa, Ralph Smedley, Yuri Gagarin!

At the age of 10, Steve Jobs was already thinking how he could change the world. At the age of eighteen he gathered a band of friends in his mother's garage and set about doing exactly that. He told his friends, including his name sake, Steve Wosniak, *"we are here to put a dent in the universe"*. Apple Computer was born. Steve was worth over a million dollars at the age of 23, \$10million at the age of 24, and over \$100million at the age of 25. Today at the age of 55, he ranks amongst the wealthiest billionaires. As they would say in the Eastern part of Nigeria, today *"money runs after Steve Jobs."* Steve Jobs will never, ever, run after money! That's the power of greatness!!

In his book *Odyssey*, John Sculley recounts how Steve Jobs employed all the charm in the world to convince him (Sculley), then the President of PepsiCo, to join Apple. For three years Sculley refused to budge. How would he leave PepsiCo to an unknown, unheralded, untested upstart, with a funny name? Then, one day, Steve uttered 23 words that would alter forever Sculley's life, transform Apple, and shift Jobs' flight path, as Carmine Gallo said in his Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs, *"from whiz kid to failure, to hero, and finally, to legend."*

Jobs asked, *"do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want a chance to change the world?"* Sculley said it was as if someone delivered a stiff blow to his stomach. Sooner than later, in our life's journey, we must confront the question *"do you want to spend the rest of your life..."* Awaken the leader in you is all about challenging yourself to be the very best you can possibly be. It's about making a difference: It's about putting *"a dent in the universe"*.

According to Marcus Buckingham, *"Leaders are fascinated by the future. You are a leader if, and only if, you are restless for change, impatient for progress, and deeply dissatisfied with the status quo."* *"As a leader"* he explains, *"you are never satisfied with the present, because in your head you can see a better future, and the friction between 'what is' and 'what could be' burns you, stirs you up, propels you forward. This is leadership."*

Wake up wherever you are reading this rallying cry to greatness and pursue that dream you have always nursed, and your greatness will come to pass. It must surely come.

\*This piece was written before Steve Job's demise.

## MOMENT FOUR

# YOU'RE A PUBLIC SPEAKER, REALLY?

"I am a public speaker"! That is exactly what she told me, as she announced her credentials. It was at a meeting with the general manager of a company as we brainstormed on possible areas of collaboration in the education field. The logical question I asked as you would guess was, "are you a Toastmaster"? "Toast what", she queried? Toast, as in toast bread, I volunteered.



Toastmasters is a Club where we go to learn how to speak well and how to be good leaders, so if you wish, you can join, I further chipped in. "Oh I'm really interested in this toast, where can I get it", she pleaded. "You already speak so well, so you might as well join Toastmasters to earn the stamp of approval. It's like going to Harvard of Public Speaking. Unless you go to Harvard, you can't really say you've gone to a university, I boasted. "You must be kidding, is Harvard better than 'Great Ife' ", as she protested and prepared for a full frontal counter attack. Okay, let's return to the main business as I steered the conversation back to the reason for our meeting.

Today, it was Michelle. She's amongst the army of people I've met who fly the public speaking banner but never heard of Toastmasters. They do their stuff, but the unmistakable lack of finesse is always evident. Sometimes it's not the avoidable 'ouus', 'uums', 'aahs', and the like, but the more damaging inability to connect with their audience. If you don't connect with your audience, you're literally speaking to yourself! Toastmasters International prepares you to pass the professional speaker test. Anytime you meet someone and the person tells you "I'm a public speaker", don't forget to ask the follow up question, "are you a Toastmaster?"

From the first 10 projects leading to CC (Competent Communicator), to Club roles leading to CL (Competent Leader), Toastmasters prepares you for the ultimate, the

DTM (Distinguished Toastmaster) designation, the equivalent of PhD in public speaking. Are you weary of those meetings, and wished you could sleep for one or two hours longer on those meeting Saturdays? Look at the big picture! Toastmasters enable you to recognize patterns, cross boundaries to uncover hidden connections, and make bold leaps of imagination when speaking. Nothing is more exhilarating than wowing the audience and having them literally eat out of the palms of your hand as you calmly put your message across with élan, poise and panache, the hallmarks of the professional.

To join Toastmasters is as simple as ABC. Step One: Have a burning desire to excel. Step Two: Sustain your passion over the long haul. Step Three: Find a Toastmasters Club nearest to you, announce your wish to join, and pronto you are inducted as a member. Remember it's all up to you. As Walter Russell once said, *"mediocrity is self inflicted, and genius is self bestowed"*.

## MOMENT FIVE

# ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY SURE?

The earthquake deep in the Pacific, and the tsunami that followed, that literally destroyed Japan, showed how within a twinkling of an eye our lives could be transformed from happiness to misery, from joy to sadness, and from hope to hopelessness. In light of the vicissitudes of life, daily we should look round and give thanks to the maker of the entire universe for his mercies and compassion for making us witness another bright day.

Let's move directly to the subject of our discourse today. Are you absolutely sure you are doing everything within your power to guarantee your health in the short,

medium and long term? Once again, are you absolutely sure? When last did you visit your doctor for a comprehensive medical evaluation? For men in the house, when last did you do prostate check? For ladies, when last did you do biopsy for breast can...? Too far fetched?

We live in an era where we don't control anything that happens to us. We don't control the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. We don't even control the thoughts that we have! Over 99.99% of the eggs we eat are genetically modified, the air is heavily polluted thanks to your car and mine, and add to that is radiation from telecommunication masts all around us.

It's time you started taking little baby steps, no, BIG STEPS, to take control of the future of your health. Here are a few of the things you should do. One, make a radical decision to use only natural substances on your skin as opposed to unsafe ones that contain chemicals. Ladies use all sorts of creams, toners and moisturizers so this particularly applies to ladies in the house! Two, once every few months fully detoxify your system to eliminate harmful toxins lurking anywhere in your kidney, liver or lungs. Three, boost your immune system to withstand the stress all around you by taking natural immuno-modulators and adaptogens. Sorry for the big specialized words. As Toastmasters, we are taught to use simple words in place of

big ones, but these days we're all expected to be able to "work under pressure", which casts a dark shadow over our immune system, hence we can't run away from these "big terms."

Ten years ago my beloved cousin died of breast cancer, and just a month ago Ekan, my class mate, a close friend and buddy passed away. A graduate of University of Melbourne, Australia, and a lecturer at University of Uyo, he died of stress. Yes stress induced high blood pressure! The statistics are troubling. Don't wait. Take steps to control what you eat, drink, and rub on your skin. Take steps to control how, and what you think. Take steps to boost your immune system to live long, retire rich, and happy.

## MOMENT SIX

# DON'T STAND STILL

He was shy, insecure, and inarticulate. He spoke in a thick country brogue. To make matters worse, he had bow - legs. Both boys and girls poked fun at him.

He decided to retaliate the best way he could. He purposed in his heart not to stand still. He read self improvement books. He practised speaking. He practised day and night how to speak in a confident articulate way. *"I started practicing speeches before the mirror at home. Day in and day out, I lectured and talked sweet talk to that patient mirror. Then I went to school and forced myself to stand up and speak in class. They laughed at first but they soon started applauding - because I was making*

*sense and I was speaking better than anyone else''*. By the time he left school, he was his class valedictorian. His name: John H. Johnson, best known as the founder and publisher of *Ebony* magazine. He passed away a few years back.

According to Johnson, his experience taught him that *"one of the sweetest emotions in the world is watching scorn turn into admiration and awe"*. He added, *"I learned something else that I've never forgotten: There is no defense against excellence"*.

And so fellow Toastmasters, as we march to the end of the Toastmasters year, pick up where you let go. Rekindle the fire, rekindle the passion, rekindle the spirit. Remember that fire that burned in you and pushed you forward and propelled you to register as a Toastmaster one, three or five years ago. Rekindle that fire and let it propel you to step out and make that one, two or four remaining speeches enroute Competent Communicator, enroute DTM!

Toastmaster Rashidat Saliu-Bello decided that standing still was no longer an option and gingerly took the battle to the logical conclusion. TM Rashidat added the CC feather to her hat April 28 at Merit Toastmasters Club where she gave an earth

shattering speech to breast the tape. To add aplomb to her achievement, she on that same day bagged her CL (Competent Leader) award. Yes, it has been dusted and done! There were many witnesses, including TM Dunni Olasehan, DTM.

Fellow Toastmasters, rekindle that fire and let it propel you to take up a Club role every new Toastmasters year. Push yourself until you turn scorn into admiration and awe. If you have not been following IPP TM Remi Abere, you are standing still and missing a lot. As the Chairman of the Electoral Committee to midwife the New EXCO, Remi lifted her organizational skill to a lofty height. Also, many thanks to other members of the Nominating Committee, for a job well done! Thanks for living up to your Toastmasters Promise.



## MOMENT SEVEN

# WHAT IS YOUR TOASTMASTERS' DREAM?

We all have dreams for joining Toastmasters! What is yours? Whatever the dream is, pursue it with abundant enthusiasm and gusto! W. Clement Stone once said *“no matter how carefully you plan your goals they will never be more than pipe dreams unless you pursue them with gusto.”* Emerson observed a century ago that *“every great movement in the annals of history is the triumph of enthusiasm.”*

On October 1<sup>st</sup> Nigeria celebrates its Golden Independence Anniversary. Fellow Toastmasters and our most esteemed guests as we celebrate our 50th Independence Anniversary, our dressing on October 2nd, will be formal traditional attire.

We'll have double celebration as our Club clocks five on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. We will sing *"For He is A Jolly Good Fellow"* for Mr. Charter President, Ambassador Vincent Sunny Okobi. I urge all elders of the Club: TM Kyari Bukar, PP TM Inam Wilson, PP TM Jude Anyigbo, IPP TM Remi Abere, TM Dunni Olasehan and others too numerous to mention to turn up en-mass. Come with Guests! Charter President, TM Amb. Vincent Okobi, will be the Toastmaster of the Day, TM Kyari Bukar, will be the General Evaluator, while TM Funmi Adegbite will be the Topics Master!

Learn the National Anthem for we shall sing ARISE O COMPATRIOTS! New Toastmasters will be inducted into our global movement. Fellow Toastmasters, when you come, you'll be inspired and empowered! The Theme of the Meeting is 'Freedom', and our Inspirational Thought is from Hartley Coleridge, who asked "But what is Freedom? Rightly understood, a universal license to be good". Happy Double Anniversary!

## MOMENT EIGHT

# WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?

Two years ago I bought Bob Proctor's CD by the title WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?

In the CD he pointedly asked, "What Would You Do If Your Annual Income Suddenly Became Your Monthly Income?" In other words what would you do if you suddenly started earning N12mm monthly, like Kike, an ex-staff of Ecobank? Add to that a yearly bonus of N30mm all tax free. Imagine a life without car loan deduction! Imagine a life without mortgage loan deduction!! Imagine a life where every effort you put in counts – to your financial freedom.

If you are someone who knows you are always RIGHT, or someone who prefers a COMFORTABLE life, or someone who prefers to be LIKED by all, you'll dismiss the

idea here but if you're someone who prefers to WIN in life you'd like to explore this idea further. Those who prefer to WIN continually explore opportunities to achieve FINANCIAL FREEDOM!

After I had my Damascus experience after shaking Kike's hands, I wish to recommend that you seriously explore the answer to the question WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE? Financial freedom is not about having a bank job, oil company job or being a celebrity, it's about depending on your income and not monthly salary. If you are serious about financial freedom, you must have read Rich Dad, Poor Dad by now. Together with its sister books, the series has sold 28 million copies. The author, Robert Kiyosaki, says answering the question WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE? is the best thing any man can do for his family. If you are not yet financially free and wish to explore the idea further, talk to a life coach, your mentor or call me.

## MOMENT NINE

# CHOOSE!

There are three taboos in Toastmasters. Three taboos! The three taboos are politics, religion and sex. So as Toastmasters all over Nigeria join the rest of the citizenry to perform their civic responsibility, let's uphold the finest tradition of Toastmasters by resisting the temptation to peddle politics in the hallowed chambers of our meeting hall. In the light of Toastmasters tradition, I will toe a very fine line in this write up not to cross the rubicon, as we participate as exemplary citizens in choosing our leaders.

Victor Frankl in his *Man's Search for Meaning* proved beyond all doubt that between stimulus and response there is a space. That space, he called the "*freedom to choose*". Unlike the birds of the air, the fish in the waters, and the animals in the

fields, man is the architect of his destiny. With this general election\*, we begin the arduous task of constructing our destiny.

Alexander the Great was given two choices when he was seven. He was then known as Alexander of Macedon. He was asked to choose between a long uneventful life, and a short life full of glory. He chose a short life full of glory, and today, Alexander the Great remains one of the few men in all of human history to have the title “Great” appended to his name. So as exemplary citizens, let’s go out and choose greatness. It’s our choice! We have the privilege to choose between greatness and mediocrity, between greatness and the enemy called average, between greatness and the status of also ran as a nation.

Remember, when we all become great, our families will become great, when our families become great, our neighbourhoods will become great, our communities will become great, our local government areas will become great, our states will become great and our nation will become great. Let us take empty sloganeering with a pinch of salt. Let us close our ears to meaningless grandstanding. Let us close our hearts, our minds, and our eyes to barren “politics.” Let us seize the moment. Let’s determine the destiny of Nigeria with our vote.

When that line of our national anthem that commands “NIGERIA’S CALL OBEY” echoes on the plateaus of the middle belt, the flat lands of our far north, the mangrove forests of the south-south, the undulating plains of the east, and the lagoons of the west, and our children ask, daddy, mummy, did you obey NIGERIA’S CALL? What shall we tell our children? What shall we tell our children’s children? What shall we tell the children yet unborn? Shall we tell them we failed? The answer is in your vote.

I call all Nigerians to choose greatness. Greatness will help us hew great highways out of our dilapidated roads. Greatness will help us mould grandiose dams for first class power generation out of our epileptic electricity system. Greatness will help us engineer superlative citadels of learning out of our moribund and cult ridden schools. Let us CHOOSE to bring light where there is darkness, enlightenment where there is backwardness, and progress where there is retreat into the stone-age. A pessimist says, one tree does not make a forest, an optimist says it takes a tree to begin a forest; a pessimist sees the glass as half empty, an optimist sees the glass as half full; a pessimist sees darkness, an optimist lights a candle. Let’s choose wisely. Let’s make our votes count. Nigeria deserves no less.

Aristotle tells us that the roots of progress are bitter but the fruits thereof are sweet. Aristotle further tells us that the leader ought to stimulate people to virtue and urge them forward by the notion of the noble. A great leader is a servant, a shepherd, and a steward. An old Indian proverb says when you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Our leaders should live in such a way that when they die, the world cries and they rejoice. Is there one amongst them? Choose that one! Remember, leadership is not a right, but a privilege.

While in line to vote, practise speaking, speak out loud, with voice modulation, vocal variety and gingerly body language. Assume you are the elected Senator or even Governor of your state and you are doing your acceptance speech. Remember, from little acorns, great oaks grow: tall, strong, and proud. From your bag of tricks as you speak, draw out the “rule of three”. According to the epistle from Carmine Gallo, “three is more dramatic than two, three is funnier than four, three is more memorable than six.”

\*This episode was written a month to Nigeria’s general election in 2011.



## MOMENT TEN

# LIVE LIFE LOUD!

It's the greatest secret of all! In life, enthusiasm triumphs over everything else. W. Clement Stone once said, *"no matter how carefully you plan your goals they will never be more than pipe dreams unless you pursue them with gusto"*. Emerson in pursuing the argument in similar vein, affirmed W. Clement Stone's keen observation, saying, *"every great movement in the annals of history is the triumph of enthusiasm."* Father John O'Brien, Research Professor of Theology at Notre Dame University observed, *"the first ingredient, which I believe is absolutely necessary, for a successful, efficient, and competent individual is enthusiasm."*

Ronald Reagan, the 40th President of the United States who lived to the ripe age of 96, was the quintessential optimist and never lost his zest for life till the very end. Reagan doted on Nancy, his dear wife, and never forgot the wise words of W. Clement Stone who counselled, *"enthusiasm is one of the most important factors necessary for success in life."* As he was being wheeled to the operating theatre following the assassination attempt on his life by John Hinckley Jr., just 69 days into his Presidency, Reagan turned to Nancy, and joked, *"sorry honey, I forgot to duck."* Reagan was a great actor but this time it was for real: he had just escaped being the fifth assassinated president of the United States and was joking about it.

A wise man once said, *"the worth of our lives comes not in what we do or who we know, but who we are. You are special - don't ever forget it."* Live life loud! Live life with enthusiasm!! Don't pursue success, pursue happiness! Mother Theresa once said, *"Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful."* Life is like music, it has melody, harmony, rhythm, tempo, and dynamics. Mama Cass Elliot, a singer, advised, *"Make your own kind of music. Sing your own special song. Make your own kind of music, even if nobody else sings along. Learn to appreciate life more, to view each day as a blessing it is, and to celebrate each day to the fullest."*

Learn when to be loud enough to be heard and soft enough to hear others. An unknown author once said, *"A good way to live is to care more than others think wise, risk more than others think safe, dream more than others think practical, expect more than others think possible."* Are you weighed down by life? As Napoleon Hill would say, wake up and live! Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's, quoting Calvin Coolidge, in one of his most memorable interviews when asked how he became so successful quipped, *"Press on, nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."* And if I may add, nothing fires your persistence and determination as enthusiasm.

As we head for the home stretch, let's borrow two of Optimists' Club Promises. *"Promise: to wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile."* *"Promise to be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble."* Hilary Cooper enthused, *"Life is not measured by the number of breaths that we take, but the moments that take our breath away."* Ride on my friend, be happy. On your life's journey, take

nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints! Join Toastmasters to learn how to  
lead, write and speak well!

## MOMENT ELEVEN

# MASTER THE GOSSIP CIRCLE

The meeting was tense. At stake was the promotion of the 12 assistant managers to the next level in the corporate ladder. The promotion would spell a fortune to those that got it and a disaster to those that missed out. The fate of the candidates was in the hands of the nine executives gathered in the brightly lit room. They constituted the Executive Compensation Committee. Henry's name was second from the bottom on the promotion list. He knew nothing about the "gossip circle", but his former boss never forgot Henry's sterling qualities even though Henry had been posted a thousand kilometers to a new region, and new responsibilities.

The "gossip circle" is where decisions are made, and spoils are shared. Appointment of top commanders in the armed forces! Invitation to dinner in the presidential

villa!! Appointment as ambassadors!!! Appointment as special assistant to the CEO!!!! All happen in the "gossip circle". You heard it, the "gossip circle" is where the spoils are shared. For you to get something (not just the crumbs) you must belong to the "gossip circle", or know someone who knows someone who belongs to the "gossip circle", either directly or indirectly.

Donald Trump was speaking about the "gossip circle", when he said in his book (written with Bill Zanker), *Think Big and Kick Ass in Business and Life*, "I have watched the great deal-makers for over twenty years, and it is always the same people who are successful. For years and years it has been the same people and the same success. It does not mean they are smarter, but they are almost always successful." Warren Buffet, Carl Icahn, Henry Kravis were some of the more popular names on Trump's list.

Are you in the "gossip circle" in your club, church, office, or company? This is how the "gossip circle" worked to Henry's favour. When Henry's name came up for the crucial vote, one GM casually dismissed his name, and added, "Henry has just been posted to his new region, let him first prove himself". Henry's former boss who knew the high stakes game at play, sprang to action, whispered to the two GMs, one

to her right, and the other to her left, "Henry had already proven himself in his previous posting." With that apparently innocuous information, the more senior of the GMs spoke over the heads of everyone, "I understand Henry had already proven himself in his previous assignment." Who would want not to be counted as a team player within the "gossip circle" in promotion matters? That is how Henry got all 9 executives seated in the room to vote for his promotion even though he was 1,000 kilometers away from where it was all happening. Only 4 assistant managers out of 12 were promoted that day. And Henry was one of them. 1,000 kilometers had no effect on Henry. Someone in the "gossip circle" knew Henry. Sow seeds every day, get connected to the gossip circle.

## MOMENT TWELVE

# LET THE LAW OF FOCUS WORK FOR YOU

The Law of Focus is one of the most closely guarded secrets of all time. I'm going to reveal the Law to you shortly. The Law is uncannily simple yet so profound in its effect that people, organizations and nations infringe it at their own peril. The Law had been known to the ancients, that is why the Britons would say a *rolling stone gathers no moss*. The ancient Greeks used the parable of the hedgehog and the fox to explain how the Law of Focus works. Author Jim Collins used the power of the Law of Focus to explain how some companies took the leap from Good to Great in his book of the same title.



According to the parable of the hedgehog and the fox, the fox knows many things but the hedgehog knows one big thing. The fox is fast, fleet footed, and above all else very cunning. Its teeth are razor sharp. The hedgehog on the other hand is sloppy, it cannot walk properly. It hardly runs. The hedgehog and fox are enemies. The fox eats the hedgehog. You would think the hedgehog would be no match for the fox. When the fox encounters the hedgehog, it does what it does best; it attacks with agility, fury and precision. But seconds before the fox pounces, the hedgehog rolls into a perfect ball, with razor sharp spikes pointing in all directions. The fox seeing the hedgehog's defensive mechanism realizes the danger and futility of the attack and scurries away. When the hedgehog senses it's safe again, it waddles away.

According to Isaiah Berlin the world is divided into hedgehogs and foxes. Foxes pursue many ends at the same time. Their ideas are scattered or diffused, never integrating their thinking into one overall concept or unifying vision. Hedgehogs, on the other hand, pursue one single idea and they constantly beat the fox. According to Princeton University professor Marvin Bressler, "those that leave the biggest footprints are the hedgehogs."

The Law of Focus simply says that you should find something to stand for. To illustrate the significance of this simple yet profound statement, look at the names of three men below and I am sure without mincing words you can tell me what you believe they stand or stood for:

- Nelson Mandela
- Martin Luther King
- Lee Kuan Yew

The Law of Focus can be applied in all spheres of human endeavour. It can be applied in your personal life, it can be applied in your business, it can be applied to the community, whether a local government, a state or even the whole country. Nigeria applied the Law of Focus at its early beginnings that is why the northern part of the country could boast of groundnut pyramids, the west could boast of cocoa and the east of palm produce. Once it became unfocused, the country lost its bearings. Singapore applied the Law of Focus and within a few short years became a global power house. United Arab Emirates has recently learnt the power of focus and today stands out as a beacon of development.

Al Ries and Jack Trout in their bestselling book the 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing propositioned that “a company can become incredibly successful if it can find a way

to own a word in the mind of the prospect.” Hyrum W. Smith calls the power of focus “laser thinking.” A laser is a weak source of energy, however, with laser you can cut through the toughest steel like a hot knife through butter. With laser you can drill a hole in a diamond. When you focus you create the same effect. You create a powerful, laser-like ability to do anything. When you become un-focused, you lose power. The time has come for you to develop your power and full potential by narrowing your focus and pursuing single-mindedly your passion, and things you believe in.

## MOMENT THIRTEEN

# NOTHING CAN STOP A DETERMINED SPIRIT

Believe me, if I searched your heart this very moment I'd discover in it the burning desire you have to be with your sweet heart, or to visit that special one you have not seen for far too long. So it is with me. I long to see my sweet heart, my majestic grandma! My friend! I've not seen her since I bid her and the mission farewell almost forty years back. The mission was where I grew up. The mission evokes the memories of my youth. Trees beautified the mission and provided shade and nourishment. Among the mango trees was one that was over 100 years old. The grandma mango tree, it was my majestic friend.

Like a baobab tree in the savanna, it was twisted in a thousand different places. A little above the ground its giant twisted stem gave way to breathtaking branches that formed a perfect canopy, which when seen from afar, looked like a giant football hanging in the air. It really was a majestic sight to behold. When I climbed to its farthest branches I could see as far away as “The Hilltop Mansion”, where the governor of my state today holds sway, some ten kilometers away!

My love affair with my grandma mango tree was instigated by the beautiful sights I could behold from its far flung branches. That was not all. Its elegant canopy provided refrigerator-like cooling shed to a thousand dancing and chirping birds of all colors and sizes, their cacophonous music of which I longed to hear. Most important of all, my majestic friend’s beautiful and tantalizingly aromatic and irresistible fruits fuelled the love affair!

My majestic friend produced the sweetest fruits in the world and I and my buddies were its most frequent guests. When mango was in season, in a typical day, I’d savor as many fruits as my little tummy could hold, when empty. Whenever my tummy rumbled for the absence of the things that typically keep the tummy quiet, and this,

by the way, was the norm, I knew that like a typical grandma, she was there beckoning to me and my buddies to come and have our fill. Oh! how I relished those moments, when I'd slip out of the house, unnoticed, to be with my majestic friend, in a world of my own, free from the torture of house chores in an empty and rumbling stomach, swaying in the wind, jumping acrobatically from branch to branch, as I reached for the next tantalizing mango fruit.

Grandma seemed to enjoy our company. She detested flighty visits I believe. She didn't want us to breeze in just to have our fill and breeze off as typical grand children are wont to do, but to stay around long enough with her for her spicy and melodious tales, warm lively hugs and pointed thoughtful admonitions. To ensure she had her way grandma had its fruits perched aloft its majestic branches far away above the ground so we had to labor, with the aid of three or four bamboo poles strung together to reach the irresistible fruits. I guessed each time we labored vigorously for our lunch grandma must have chuckled and winked at us, with gratitude and admiration, for our daring and frequent visits, and also, perhaps, with sadness and unease, knowing that we'd all desert her once we've had our fill.

Unknown to me and grandma, dad was not particularly enamored with my frequent visits and acrobatic displays thirty meters high above the ground. I soon came to know that dad was always spying with his monocular with batted breath and apprehension, sure in his conviction that at any moment an uncaring branch would give way and I would fall to the hard welcoming ground, breaking perhaps, into a thousand tiny pieces. He had to do sometime urgently before he would lose his second son. Although I was not privy to his plans, something he did soon made it known. He'd executed it with the precision of an accomplished headmaster, with all the details kept closely only to his chest. On the day of reckoning, he'd sneaked to the foot of my majestic friend and waited patiently with chameleon-like disguise until I came down. Perhaps, I would have promptly fallen off the tree if he'd announced or made his presence known in any way. And so it was, as I maneuvered grandma's giant trunk and gingerly jumped to the ground, I was promptly seized and taken to my Golgotha.

As a lamb being prepared for slaughter, my dad quickly bound my flimsy legs together and my tiny hands to my back, and immediately went to work on the soles of my feet with a thick rounded cane. Tweeek, twaaaak, twaaaak, the cane descended over a dozen raucous times with ferocious abandon until my soles became numb. Needless to say I cried until I could cry no more. My just desert

served, dad returned to his study, from whence he'd come, to contemplate his next move, and observe if I'd learnt any lessons. I promptly fell asleep.

Alas, when I awoke I could not walk! Even at that moment, as I lay helplessly, pondering if I would ever go near my majestic friend again, I heard the hilarious noises of my buddies in the nearby trees and I hungered to be with them. A week had hardly passed by, when dad had gone out to where all men go to in search of sustenance for their family and loved ones, I was back with my buddies with grandma, gyrating from branch to branch, dancing in the wind, as if to tell my majestic grandma what had transpired. It was at that instance I realized that nothing, absolutely nothing, can kill a free spirit. Dad made peace with me.



## MOMENT FOURTEEN

# WHO WILL CRY WHEN YOU DIE?

Shakespeare said it well when in Julius Caesar he intoned, "When paupers die there are no comets seen, but the heavens themselves blaze forth the deaths of princes."

Will the heavens blaze forth the moment or day you throw in the towel: whether in your workplace as a contributor, in your community as a thought leader, and ultimately when you have to face your creator as a man or woman? In this age of instant *everything*, instant gratification, instant success, microwave oven, washing machine, and billion dollar IPOs (initial public offerings) that catapult start ups from zero to billions over night, should you bother to ask yourself this type of mind searching question?

The other day I asked a lady selling groceries in a make-shift shop just down my street whether she has been on a training program or any form of learning experience to improve the way she was running her business, and she instantly blurted out, “oh I have no time, I am too busy.” You guess right, everyone is too busy to consider what many regard an irritating question that we may as well wait till eternity to find an answer to. But think about it, will a time ever come when you will be less busy? Perhaps you will think about it when you grow a *little* older. When you are 17, the future always sounds so distant. I asked my last daughter, fresh out of the university, what her big goal in life was, and she said “daddy life is too long and the future is uncertain, I will think about it when I grow much older.”

Everyone has an excuse to delay finding an answer or answers to this sort of question, *who will cry when you die?* As you may well know, the question is a title to one of Robin Sharma’s books. The late Stephen R. Covey also encourages us to consider this same question when he says in one of the chapters in his best-selling book, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *begin with the end in mind*. If you have not considered this question yet, I urge you to do so today as you will never get younger, or stop working harder. As you will discover, the higher you climb the corporate ladder, the more you will be expected to deliver, and the older you grow, the more

your responsibilities will multiply, so begin today to search for an answer or answers to the question.

One person that really expressed a profound insight on this matter long before he even considered his place in history was Steve Jobs. While trying to express what Apple was all about way back in 1983, when Apple was still a small evolving company, this is what he said, “what Apple has really been to me is an opportunity to express some deep feeling about wanting to contribute something. In other words, we use somebody else’s mathematics, we didn’t invent the shoes we wear. The watch we have on our wrist somebody else did and it’s somebody else’s language, and we weren’t around when the Constitution was signed...all this stuff we take. We are constantly taking. I really believe that people have a desire to put something back, to give something in a greater way than simply a one-on-one interaction. In a sense I think that’s part of the joy of Apple Computer and a lot of other companies around this valley. It’s sort of a framework or glue that holds this whole environment together where, if it’s done right, people really can put something back, you know. And we’re very fortunate in the sense that what we are doing is being used by a few hundred thousand people and so that’s very fine.”

Steve Jobs didn't talk about making lots of money. He didn't talk about coming out *on top*. He didn't talk about being *the* trail blazer. The whole essence of his mantra that all Apple's products had to be *insanely great*, and the overarching ambition to leave a "dent on the universe", all stemmed from Job's singular vision of giving back more to the society in gratitude. Do you live your life with a vision to give back or with the desire to take out? If you look at the whole of human history, the people we revere more, the people we all look up to as global role models, the people whose names remain immortal, are men and women who found a way to give – of their time, talent, and their life. In these ranks are people like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Theresa, to name a few. When your bell tolls, who will cry?

## MOMENT FIFTEEN

# THE TOP 7 MISTAKES PROFESSIONALS MAKE

The times we are in don't allow for pleasantries so I will be frontal and brutal in talking about the top seven mistakes professionals make while on paid employment. If you're the typical lucky person working in the banking, telecoms or oil and gas, the three most envied sectors, you'll be plugging cash off the conveyor belt promptly every month end but beware of the top 7 mistakes professionals make to ensure you last the distance. The banking, telecoms and oil & gas sectors don't owe. You'll even be pampered, with the quarterly profit share, variable, and "13th month" pay. On top of that, perks abound: chauffeur driven car, free health care, company-subsidized meals. By age 35, if you're the really smart type you'd have earned the

ultimate prize, a corner office, and a home in one of the islands. Before long you'd be a regular guest in some of the top business schools rubbing shoulders with the best and the brightest. Life can be fun when you plug cash from the conveyor belt monthly.

You know what plugging cash from the conveyor belt does? It makes you begin to think that you're invincible. You begin to think you're the smartest guy in town. You begin to think you're indeed successful. The former mates you've left behind will call you a "go-getter" and will even dub you the yardstick for measuring success amongst your peers. As success should beget more success, you set yourself ever tougher goals, and focus single-mindedly in achieving and surpassing them all. Amongst your peers, juniors and superiors, you're known and described as dependable, sharp, and focused. The executive team entrust you mission critical projects knowing you can be relied upon. You're in your game.

Being in your game may inexorably translate into one of these top seven mistakes:

- 1. You equate success only with material possessions**

In this mode, you're acquisitive. To you nothing matters if it doesn't have the feel of cash you can immediately translate into "toys". You want to own the

biggest house in the swankest neighborhood. You start to compare yourself to self-made millionaires and think you should own what they own. Your kids attend the best boarding schools money can buy while you maintain a “decent” guest house worthy of your exalted position in the most expensive neighborhood of Paris. Despite the huge take home pay over the years you are still living in your employer’s rented executive mansion until the very day the conveyor belt stop bringing you cash.

## **2. You cannot distinguish knowledge from wisdom**

Take the case of the one-time Managing Director of one of Nigeria’s defunct commercial banks, which ran aground in the early nineties. Lacking in wisdom, and amidst the protestation from the bank’s chairman, the MD promoted himself to Executive Vice Chairman, effectively rendering the chairman redundant. The chairman of course resigned and within a few months, with no checks and balances in place, the bank went belly up. The MD was immediately thrown into prison by the then military junta. The man died recently. Time in prison must have cut his lifespan by at least 10 years. Perhaps a little wisdom would have saved his bank, honor and life.

### **3. Your world revolves only around your industry**

When the Titanic sank, inside it was only a telegraph. That was the only means of communicating with the outside world. Today it's GSM. In the 80s, we talked about the banking industry, today it's financial services. Restaurants are being smothered by fast foods despite health concerns. Early computers were as big as cupboards and containers. We called them mainframes. Today some fit into our palm. We call them palm top. Will your industry exist tomorrow? What about your company? You have no transferrable skills, and have never reflected on the innate talents you may have. You consider every other industry and branch of knowledge as too shallow for a serious minded person like you. If you reflect on the fact that ancient scientist "documented" mathematically that the Earth was flat, you may wish to rethink making your world revolve around only your industry.

### **4. You have a shallow network**

You are the most knowledgeable person in your industry, and outside it you know nothing and no one knows you. Early in your career, you were identified as a "hi-pot" with fast track career movement so naturally you don't believe in anything except your superior firing power. You disdain networks. Birds of the same feather flock together as the saying goes, so your



best friends are in your industry. You hardly attend clubs, even when you have platinum membership paid for by your company. You have long forgotten the name of your church's pastor and the choir master. You're just too busy for those distractions, you say. Sooner than later, you will come to know that your net-worth will be determined by the size of your networks.

#### **5. You consider yourself indispensable**

You're the go-to guy in your unit or division. Any colleague of yours who cannot complete his assignment can always get a listening ear from you. After all, it was not for nothing that you are regarded by both friends and foes alike as dependable. Years back, in one of the largest Newsprint Manufacturing Companies in southern Nigeria there was a general manager who arrogated to himself three departments. He would not brook the idea of "ceding power" by appointing general managers to take charge of the other two departments. One day as everybody predicted, the company asked him to go, and he mobilized the natives to protest the management's ungratefulness for relieving him of his empire "after all he did for the company." My friend, the best thing you can do for your company is to groom your successors.

## **6. You're impatient for success**

When you're impatient for success, you become obsessed with the word success. You want to "make it" at any cost. You cut corners. You compromise here and there. The end justifies the means you rationalize. You firmly believe that success is a destination and you must get there faster than anyone else. Your friends seeing your "stellar success" start calling you a whiz kid and you start to believe them. You change jobs every 18 months because you've set yourself a goal of hitting the C-Suite before age 35. You're on the roll and then it dawns on you that you don't really "have it". There is a nugget of wisdom in the parable of the "hare and the tortoise." Easy does it.

## **7. You assume you know it all**

You graduated Cum Laude. You were your class's valedictorian. You've been to the best business schools in the world. Within a few short years of joining your company, you were declared the front runner to succeed the founding CEO. You were not just the front runner, as a matter of fact, you were anointed three years before the due date by no other than the incumbent. What happens is that when you know it all you don't accept anybody's advice

and you take no prisoners. You insist on your way. You crush anything and anyone that stands on the way in your bid to take your unit, division or the company to the "next level." Anyone that voices a counter opinion to yours is just envious. You make it clear to everybody you'll not tolerate any dissension, and anyone who does not understand the direction of the "new wind blowing in the company" should just resign. You make sure you alienate everybody to confirm you know it all. Beware the world is too complex and no one knows it all, and no one expects you to know it all.

These top 7 deadly mistakes may sound outlandish and hypothetical but they are not. They have resulted in the disgrace and demise of some of the most powerful CEOs and the catastrophic collapse of their once admired companies. Search carefully, you may find these traits in you, your peer or boss. You may even find them in the general manager of the company across the road. Be aware of them and work diligently to minimize their grip on you and you'll have a successful and enjoyable career, and you'll leave a legacy worthy of emulation.

## MOMENT SIXTEEN

# THE TOP 7 MISTAKES CEOS MAKE

The chief executive officer (CEO) is the standard bearer of every corporate organization and for good or ill, *who* the CEO is, what the CEO does, and how the CEO behaves rubs off on the organization's performance, reputation, and overall standing in the market place. Because of the huge impact the CEO has on the destiny of the organization, the best companies go to great lengths to choose outstanding people to lead their companies, and also go to great lengths to put in place robust succession plan to ensure only the best emerge as the CEO. As a leader, the CEO may be expected to perform as a superman, but the anointed CEO is only human. Here we explore the seven career limiting mistakes every CEO should look out for and make right if he or she wishes to magnify his or her effectiveness.

## **1. YOU LACK PLATFORM MASTERY**

The first mistake any CEO aspiring to be taken seriously is to be found wanting in platform skills. Communication skills are the most critical skills every CEO needs. Some thought leaders even go to the extent of positing that you cannot be a leader if you lack communication skills, and I concur they are right. A subset of communication other than written and ordinary verbal communication is presentation skills, otherwise called platform mastery. Platform mastery is the ability to present or convey ideas to an audience, and really connect with the audience members in some personal way that at the end every individual member of the audience feels you were speaking with him or her one-on-one.

Platform mastery or the ability to present with ease, class and panache is the one thing that separates great CEOs from the merely good ones. Whether they are being interviewed on radio, television, on the platform or presenting a paper at a conference, great CEOs leave lasting impression. The good news is that communication skills can be learnt. If you are a CEO and you cannot present well, you are making a huge mistake. To find out if you have mastered the platform, ask yourself a simple question: can I speak to a group of school children or at an industry conference without reading directly from sheets of paper? If your

answer is no, then find a coach to put you through how to build platform mastery otherwise your effectiveness as CEO will be substandard.

## **2. YOU LACK A TEACHABLE POINT OF VIEW**

Even if you can present well but you have no teachable point of view (TPOV) you will not be an effective CEO. Every effective CEO has a teachable point of view. Steve Jobs had his, and it defined the essence of Apple's business philosophy and their approach to product development. Job's TPOV was encapsulated in simplicity of design and elegance in use, hence every Apple's product must be *insanely great*. Jack Welch had his while at the helm at GE and it defined the way the GE competed. Welch's TPOV embraced philosophies such as *competitiveness, boundarylessness, and candor* as captured in what has come to be known as GE's "Four Es": Energy, Energize, Edge and Execution. Every CEO who dreams of greatness must develop a TPOV. Indeed, you need to develop a TPOV before you become CEO. In brief, a teachable point of view is a cohesive set of ideas and concepts that a person is able to articulate clearly to others. Prof. Noel Tichy defines TPOV as "a person's ability to externalize ideas, experiences, and make implicit or tacit knowledge explicit." Without a TPOV you will not be able to translate your vision, mission, purpose and values into executable working philosophy. Beginning today, ask yourself a very simple

question: what is my TPOV? If you are unable to answer your question, then go to work to develop and refine your TPOV.

### **3. YOU ARE INACCESSIBLE**

As your company's CEO your corporate people will most likely throw a *cordon sanitaire* around you to ensure your safety as a signal of your value to the company. And because every minute of your time as the CEO is priceless you will have all manners of personal and special assistants at your beck and call, and the bigger your organization, the more the corporate layers people will have to pass through to reach you. Your corporate tradition, culture and practices will ensure you are more or less inaccessible to the outside world. Do not allow that to happen to you because the trappings of your office will ensure your people only let you hear only what you want to hear or what they want you to hear. You will indirectly be held hostage, and will always be the last to hear the bad news about your company, and what your competitors are up to. Some companies go to the ridiculous extent of not allowing their people write and submit newspaper articles to the media, while requests for interviews are never entertained. If you wish to become an effective CEO, break down communication barriers everywhere and fully ventilate the organization. Be accessible to every employee. Practice what Tom Peters calls management by walking around. Walk out of your office now and then to see

things for yourself. Form the habit of regularly exchanging emails with various audiences, visit various locations of your company to learn first-hand what is going on, and generally let people know how they can reach you. When visiting other locations of your company, do so unannounced. Do not live on the pages of newspapers but now and then invite various stakeholders to visit your company, any part of it, and see things for themselves. If you do these you will eliminate the mistake of fortress mentality, reduce bureaucracy, and people will find you approachable and accessible.

#### **4. YOU DON'T ASK FOR FEEDBACK**

Leadership is a lonely job. If you succeed you succeed with others but if you fail, you fail alone. The best way to know how you are doing is to ask for objective feedback, from peers, board members, junior, middle and senior management people, and every stakeholder committed to your success. Effective CEOs ask for feedback. In the US, a new president's first 100 days in office is always a critical milestone for feedback. The State of the Union Address provides the president an opportunity to present his report card to the American people, the electorate. Asking for regular feedback should be a mantra in your management arsenal. If you are accessible, the chances are you will get feedback but do not just expect it to happen because no one ever has the courage to tell the emperor he has no clothes on. Create mechanisms



for feedback all over the company and never ever punish the messenger otherwise you will destroy the bridge for feedback. Have different forums for different categories of employees to provide you feedback because junior people will not speak up where their seniors are. That is just the nature of corporate organizations. When people speak do not shut them down for telling you what you didn't want to hear otherwise that will be the end of your feedback system. Feedback they say is the breakfast of champions. Make it always a pleasurable breakfast.

## **5. YOU ARE AFRAID OF TALENT**

The number one thing you need if your company is to soar is talent. The number two thing you need if your company is to be great is talent. And the number three thing you need if your company is to be the centre of excellence is talent. Talent makes for all-round greatness. If you listen to elite leaders like the Bill Gates, Jack Welch, and the late Steve Jobs, you will discover that every sentence that comes out of their mouth is always punctuated with such phrases as *great people*, *awesome talent*, and *extraordinary minds* when it comes to talent. You hear them say they surround themselves with people smarter than themselves. When incredibly talented people surround themselves with other incredibly talented people you get explosive growth

and progress. As Jack Welch said in his book *Winning*, “hiring good people is hard, hiring great people is brutally hard, yet nothing matters in winning than getting great people on the field.” Think about it. Talented people are usually very self confident people and are hardly afraid of other talented people. As “A” players, talented people hire other “A” players, and sometimes “A+” players because they want result. If you as CEO is afraid of talent and therefore surround yourself with mediocre people by hiring only “B” and “C” players, either because you lack self confidence or think that more talented people will end up taking your job, then you will only achieve mediocre result and end up highly ineffective.

## **6. YOU DON'T INVOLVE YOUR PEOPLE**

Involved people become engaged, and engaged people achieve result. Engagement is different from commitment. Commitment can be forced but engagement cannot. Engaged people work for themselves and can sometimes work without pay for 110 per cent of effort. On the other hand committed people work for the company and the maximum you can expect from them is 99 percent of effort, and the missing 1 per cent is what makes the critical difference. Engaged people instinctively expect their contribution, input, and judgments to be valued, appreciated, and applauded. Engaged people know they will be recognized and rewarded for their contribution both as individuals

and as part of a team. If you hire talented people and do not involve them, and just throw them into a huge merciless bureaucratic machine to sink or swim, they will swim all the same but they will not stay because bureaucracy can be stifling. Get people involved the very moment they step into the organization, create the environment for people to excel by scaling back bureaucracy, and put in place incentives to reward their individual and group contribution. Platitudes cannot lead to involvement, only thoroughly thought out policies can. Such policies include effective orientation programs or on-boarding as the Americans call it, mentorship, coaching, regular class-room learning and development, talent and management development fast-track programs, and buddy system and so on. These, together with a management that listens, make for extraordinary performance and result.

## **7. YOU DON'T WATCH YOUR CHARACTER**

Character reveals the core of who you are, whether you can be trusted on big things and on small things. Character combines integrity and honour, whether you can be trusted in private, in the dark, and when you are tested. Character is entirely a private thing but as a CEO your character will for better or for worse rub off on the character, culture and values of the organization you are leading. If you do not believe in honour and therefore treat shareholders, employees, customers with levity, your directors will follow suit, your general

managers will tow the same line and the generality of employees too. If you don't enforce ironclad integrity and begin to compromise here and there for expediency reason, other stakeholders will applaud you and will follow suit and before long, the market place will come to expect a lower standard from you and your company. Nothing undermines the longevity of an institution than the character traits of the CEO and the top management. As CEO, you must stand as a rock on matters of character and integrity and no matter the size of the supertanker of temptation heading your way, let it be known to it that you and the company you represent are light houses and cannot move. Good character, an intrinsic trait, will minimize the impact of the other six mistakes and when once you have unquestioned character you can begin to grapple with platform mastery, sharing your teachable point of view, creating accessibility, asking for feedback, and taking heroic action to attract awesome talent leading to extraordinary involvement, thus building an organization that will stand the test of time.

## **SUMMARY**

You now have them all. Make your character or your character will unmake you. Work hard to burnish your platform mastery when you find it lacking, do not assume you can fake it. Take steps to crystallize your teachable point of view and use every

opportunity to share it throughout your organization. Open up, relax and make yourself approachable and accessible, always taking steps to ask your people how you are doing as CEO. Asking for feedback is a mark of strength and not weakness. Make your organization an oasis of talent, and put in place simple and awesome mechanisms to bring in loads and loads of them. Involve your people in running the organization as a shared responsibility and you are on your way to greatness.

## MOMENT SEVENTEEN

### **RUN! TONY RUN!!**

The galaxies may not have stood still but on Saturday, July 31, 2010, Nigeria and most of Africa stood still to celebrate an African success story, a story destined for the history books, a story destined for the hallowed laboratories of prestigious business schools and magazines the world over as a great case study in leadership and managerial effectiveness. How did a young man who barely ten years earlier was derided by the so called experts and professionals, friends and foes alike, as a “cowboy banker”, become a celebrity, a banking icon, a mogul, the embodiment of excellence, an enigma and a puzzle rolled into one, feared by some, respected by many, but loved by all?

How did Tony Onyemaechi Elumelu (TOE), a man with barely average education in economics (he did not attend Harvard, Cornell, Oxford, Stanford), a man with less than average banking pedigree (he did not begin his banking career at HSBC, CITI, Wells Fargo), a man who was born with no spoon in his mouth, silver or wooden, a man society definitely conspired against in many respects rise to become a global banking phenomenon, a business mogul, and philanthropist rolled into one?

The true import of TOE's achievements will take years to be absorbed, analyzed and appraised, but that Africa has already recognized the true greatness of its worthy son is attested to by the eclectic mix of leaders that came to witness, participate, and celebrate his send forth. UBA, in the true mould of a lion, pulled no stops to ensure TOE was sent forth in a manner, style and symbolisms befitting of a lion.

To honour TOE, not necessarily in any particular order were representatives of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, the World Bank President, President Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, representatives of governments and people of Burkina Faso, Liberia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Ghana, DRC Congo, Benin Republic, Kenya, Uganda, Cameroun, to mention but a few; State Governors from

across Nigeria, amongst them Liyel Imoke, Ikedi Ohakim, Isa Yuguda, Emmanuel Uduaghan, Peter Obi, ministers, prominent amongst them, Dr. Dora Akunyuli and Remi Babalola, who represented President Jonathan. The crème de la crème of industry were there, including Emeka Onwuka of Diamond Bank, Atedo Peterside of StanbicIBTC, and others too numerous to mention. Top traditional rulers were not left out, amongst them the Oba of Lagos and a representative of the Ooni of Ife. Amongst the international organizations was Toastmasters International, which I represented, as the President of Eagle Toastmasters Club.

The send forth was fun and full of entertainment by the likes of Wyclef Jean, P Square, to mention but a few, but above all else, it was a celebration of leadership par excellence. In another sense, it was a night to tell truth to power, which TOE handled eloquently and with candour in his usual down to earth and self-effacing manner. In brief, Tony told governments all over Africa to get off the back of the people, stop wastage and hand over the commanding heights of the economy to the private sector.

As he made to leave the function, President Gen. Obasanjo, now appropriately dubbed the grandfather of Nigerian politics, responded on behalf of African governments. “Tony”, the former President began, after clearing his throat as usual, “I didn’t come here for speeches, but if I must tell you, I think you are right.



Government has no place in the economy, the legislature should not make government too expensive, what government should do is to create a conducive environment for the private sector to operate.” The President got a standing ovation.

What had TOE’s “send forth” to do with Toastmasters? In simple words, a lot! Tony had been a benefactor of Toastmasters, culminating in the launching of Lion Toastmasters Club, in UBA, the first corporate Club in Nigeria, on October 10, 2009. Since that trail blazing event, Delta Afrik Engineering Ltd., Standard Chartered Bank Plc., and BGL Securities have joined the global movement, while others are queuing up to join. The movement began on October 22, 1924 through the grand vision of its founder, Ralph C. Smedley, and today operates in over 125 countries and territories the world over. Toastmasters berthed in Nigeria in 2005 through the untiring effort of Amb. Vincent S. Okobi. Currently there are 9 Clubs in Nigeria, and the movement is catching up like wild fire, thanks in no small measure to the example of TOE who quickly recognized effective communication and leadership as the critical drivers of excellence in an organization and wholeheartedly threw his weight behind Lion Club.

Toastmasters International is the leading movement devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality. Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening, and thinking - vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind. While other CEOs are yet to discern the significance of the movement, TOE, with a glint in his eyes, quickly saw the Toastmasters dream and bought into it. On June 19, 2010 UBA supported Toastmasters with their benevolence to the extent of donating their amphitheatre to Eagle Toastmasters Club to stage the Breakfast With Toastmasters, a special event that has now come to symbolize the highpoint of the Club's calendar in Nigeria.

At the send forth, an assorted mix of people gave personal testimonies how TOE affected their lives. Here is mine! During the launch, April 24, 2010 of my Bridges to the Customer's Heart, TOE was the only bank CEO out of 24 that sent a high calibre representation. He wanted to attend in person but in the end it was not to be as on that day, Benue State University awarded him an honorary Doctorate Degree, an event he could not delegate. TOE leaves his generosity footprints wherever he goes. TOE's legendary acts of kindness reflect his largeness of heart and magnificence

of spirit, attributes that Nigeria's rulers should imbibe.

Shortly before his death at the ripe age of 94, Peter Drucker (a man Time Magazine described in the year 2000 as the greatest management thinker that has ever lived) was asked, what is the most important job of the manager, and Drucker answered, "Who does what?". TOE is a true embodiment of Drucker's insight. TOE searched far and wide for the best and the brightest so that UBA can be the best in class. TOE never shies away from thinking big and taking calculated risks to achieve his dreams. Dreams, someone once said, are goals with deadlines.

TOE did not theorize, he actualized. At UBA, TOE was focused, he transcended his limitations, took action, and managed for results, exhibiting in the process the true hallmarks of a true leader. TOE can look back with confidence knowing that the UBA he has left behind is in solid hands and will outlive him. Leaders focus on legacies. Leaders, while acknowledging today, focus on tomorrow.

TOE should desist from the temptation of thinking he is a great man. Only history will say that, for he cannot be really great in the midst of suffering. At 50 Nigeria is

hurting! TOE, it is on this basis that we your friends ask you to Run! Run, Tony Run!

Run, for Nigeria needs you at this time of national despair, which no other man than President Obasanjo, the architect of modern Nigeria acknowledged at the twilight of his strivings. Remember, Obasanjo, in acknowledging that governments all over Africa have not lived up to expectations, also quipped, “with people like Tony, Africa indeed still has a future.” The Nigerian youth from North, South, East and West are looking to your direction to rekindle the Nigerian dream. Some may say you are not the messiah, that you have no political experience, but you have shown that with a little undiluted hard work, Nigeria, and indeed Africa, can be great. TOE, remember, when Roman Emperors walked the streets of ancient Rome, a jester always hovered around them, whispering now and then to their hearing, “Don’t forget you are a mortal.” TOE, you are a mortal. Don’t be deceived by those who say you are a great man for your greatness is yet to come. Run now! Tony Run!!

- This treatise rings true today as it did when it was first published in The Guardian of September 15, 2010. Tony has since returned to UBA as the Chairman, and Toastmasters Clubs in Nigeria now exceed 34. Some of the personalities mentioned have since moved on, and one (Mrs. Dora Akunyili) has since passed away.

## MOMENT EIGHTEEN

# STEVE JOBS THE GREAT

Heavens must have stood still as Steven Paul Jobs (1955 – 2011) approached Heaven's Gate and I can almost visualize Apostles Peter and Paul summoning Alexander the Great to join the entourage that would welcome Steve to God's presence. I can almost hear Alexander the Great whispering to the Apostles, "from this moment, I wish to handover my crown to this man, for he indeed was the GREATEST. If my vision was to bring Greek civilization to the whole known world populated by a couple of million people, this man was motivated by a vision to change the world of over 7 billion people, and he indeed succeeded". Enter Steve Jobs the Great.

Monk-like, he wore simple clothes: turtle necks, jeans and sneakers. Abrasive, mercurial, "he wore his demons on his sleeve, and was sloppy in dealing with them", as Steven Levy commented in his *Insanely Great*. Indeed, Steve Jobs believed in nothing unless it was insanely great, like the Mac. Commenting on Macintosh's tenth anniversary, Steven Levy described the Mac as being about how "technology, serendipity, passion, and magic combined to create what I believe is the most important consumer product in the last half of the twentieth century. It has already set a process into motion that changed our thinking about computers, our thinking about information, and even our thinking about thinking. In terms of our relationship with information, Macintosh changed everything".

Barely 21 when he co-founded Apple, with Steve Wozniak, Jobs realized more dreams in his brief existence than almost anyone had in longer lifetimes. According to Levy "even his darkest side was not so imposing that it eclipsed his charisma. His charm was powerful mainly because it was reflective: working for Steve Jobs was not so much being in his service as it was sharing a special dream, a dream he managed to evoke in breathtaking hues".

Though he stood on the shoulders of giants, his was just one bold dream, change the world. Sharing his dream about the Macintosh, Jobs painted an enthusiastic, sexy and candid canvas, "Computers and society are out on a first date in this decade and for some crazy reason we're just in the right place at the right time to make that romance blossom". And he set to achieve that dream, not for his personal aggrandizement, but for mankind. He was driven. One of Apple's earliest slogans proclaimed, "IT'S BETTER TO BE A PIRATE THAN JOIN THE NAVY".

Indeed, the Mac designers actually flew a skull-and-cross-bones above their "Manhattan Project" site, named Bandley 3. The eye of the skull was replaced with Apple logo. They were young, wild, and determined. Jobs himself explained to the Smithsonian Institution, "Apple was this incredible journey. We were all pretty young. The average age in the company was mid to late twenties".

He never tired of rallying his evangelists with grandiose dreams such as "we are here to put a dent in the universe", reflected in the half bitten apple that represents the Apple's logo. One of the most famous campaigns in Apple's history, aired on September 28, 1997, entitled "Think Different", let's us into the inner workings of the Jobs' mind, and the Apple brand. As black-and-white images of famous

iconoclasts, including Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King Jr., Richard Branson, John Lennon, Amelia Earhart, Muhammad Ali, Bob Dylan and others filled the screen, actor Richard Dreyfuss voiced the narration: "Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square hole. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the one thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do".

Jobs' driving passion was to push the human race forward: Macintosh, iMac, iPhone, iPod, iPad, iTunes, Apple Apps. He instinctively knew that people don't care about a product. What people care about is solving problems and making their lives a little better. He pursued this vision relentlessly, and was more prescient than the majority of IT gurus and marketers in interpreting design. In 1996 he told Wired Magazine, "Design is a funny word. Some people think design means how it looks. But of course, if you dig deeper, it's really how it works". He started clarifying his purpose early in life, "man is the creator of change in this world, as such he should be above systems and structures, and not subordinate to them". He pursued this



dream with passion and messianic zeal. He embodied the “American Dream”, from rags to riches.

Jobs told Steven Levy, author of *Insanely Great*, “I see myself as an artist if anything”. To his worldwide admirers, he was more than an artist, he could have been a messiah. Addressing a group of Stanford undergraduates circa 1996, Jobs summarized his world vision and outlook, as he set out to construct his roadmap to sainthood, greatness, enroute to joining the pantheons of legends. “You know, we don’t grow most of the food we eat, we wear clothes other people make, we speak a language other people developed, we use mathematics that other people evolved. I mean we’re constantly *taking* things. It’s a wonderful, ecstatic feeling to create something that puts it back in the pool of human experience and knowledge. I think actually one can influence things as much or more from private sector than the public sector. I’m one of those people who think that Thomas Edison and the light bulb changed the world a lot more than Karl Marx ever did. And we have this incredible chance to do that.”

He was insanely great. He came. He saw. He more than conquered. With a company valued at \$366bn (figure on the day Steve Jobs died; Apple’s market capitalization

topped \$700bn on February 10, 2015), not a bad return for a once poor boy from Silicon Valley, given out for adoption before he was given a name, directionless until age 21, driven by a burning desire to “leave a dent in the universe”.

## MOMENT NINETEEN

**MADIBA:**

## HOW HE BECAME IMMORTAL

The Boston Sunday Globe said of his *Long Walk to Freedom*, "should be read by every person alive." Were he a Catholic, million faithfuls the world over would have rallied, without prompting, to initiate a cause for his canonization as a saint as they did for Mother Theresa. More heads of state and governments will attend his funeral than attended the UNs special General Assembly to vote on the next line of action after Syria crossed Obama's red line. He has been out of government since 1998, yet anywhere he visited he was received as royalty.

Typically in my leadership seminars, I project the iconic portraits of Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa, Lee Kuan Yew and others on the screen and ask the participants to say what one attribute they thought makes one a great leader. One word always rises to the top of the pile: selflessness. In effect, selfless service is the one true tester for great leadership. No matter how adroit journalists tried to force on him the toga of achievement, he always gently corrected them: it was not me, but us: I and my comrades.

Madiba was never extreme on any matter, except on the one thing that mattered, the *struggle*. The struggle defined him. As he said, “the struggle is my life”, and when once the goal of that struggle was achieved, he was no more than an ordinary South African, concerned with taking good care of his family. He dedicated his *Long Walk to Freedom* to his six children (mentioning each by name), twenty one grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren who according to him, “give me great pleasure”. He never forgot his bigger constituency. He dedicated his autobiography also to all his comrades, friends, and fellow South Africans whom according to him, “I serve and whose courage, determination, and patriotism remain my source of inspiration.”

Madiba had largeness of heart. In short, he was forgiving. Though he never once spoke it out that way, to him, vengeance was of the Lord's. What was paramount for him was not taking away from those who had, but making the playing field equal for all South Africans: Blacks, Indians and Whites. For forgiving his enemies without an iota of bitterness, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, shared with the representative of his former tormentors, ex-president F. W. de Clerk. According to the co-honoree, de Clerk, Madiba deserves the image as "one of the greatest men on earth."

He was not rapacious. Despite the extreme poverty he was born into (he regularly went without food; trekked for miles to conserve the little money he had; wore patched suits) he never set out to acquire as much as he could when he eventually had the opportunity. He didn't seize the ANC (African National Congress) apparatus and install his cronies and comrades as movers and shakers. To him, the party was supreme. He didn't elevate his children to ministerial positions, or insisted the party did so to compensate for the 27 years he was incarcerated. He indeed didn't seek special privileges for anyone; all he sought was equality for all. He was patriotic through and through.

Madiba's 95 years of extraordinary life can be distilled to three defining traits: faith, fire, and focus. Faith, which stands for the belief that good will always triumph over evil. Fire, which stands for the passion to pursue one's goal with messianic zeal ready to pay the supreme price if need be. And finally focus, which stands for the prescience of mind to discern the bigger picture no matter how much you are buffeted by innumerable other forces. All truly great leaders exhibit these three traits but Madiba possessed them in far greater abundance than any other person in living memory.

Darkness did not fall on the face of the earth when Madiba gave up the ghost. He neither instituted any sagely teachings nor issued any manifestos. No green or red book espouses his philosophy. He lived what he believed in, because it is easy to lie with words, but far more difficult to lie with our actions. Tributes upon tributes eulogize and will continue to eulogize him, reaching a crescendo on the day he will be laid to a final rest in Qunu, his ancestral home, from whence he came to demonstrate to the world a model in selfless leadership. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela has slipped the surly bonds of earth to touch the face of God as he becomes immortal. Madiba adieu!

# **ABOUT SPRING FLOWERS:**

## **The 19 Moments of Spring That Ignite Your Passion And Fire Your Dreams**

Spring Flowers will awe, inspire and provoke you to action whether you are a Toastmaster, seeking a jab of adrenaline to spring to action, or a non-member looking for that *one thing* that can help you see life in all its spring glory. Renewal, rebirth and blossom are what Spring Flowers is all about.

Released to mark A DECADE OF TOASTMASTERS IN NIGERIA, the book comprises a collection of *exhortations* the author wrote as *pep-talks* during his tenure as the President of Eagle Toastmasters Club (2010/2011), Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria, to encourage members and non-members alike. Members found the exhortations very inspirational at the time and they have been left largely intact as they were first written, and surprisingly they still ring fresh today.

In addition to the *exhortations*, are the transcripts of two speeches the author gave at his club to gain his Competent Communicator Award (CC), as required in Toastmasters

International's Competent Communication manual: they are Project Number 9, and Project Number 10. Project Number 9 and Project Number 10 are primed as motivational and inspirational speeches respectively, so be the judge whether they lived up to their billings as you read *Live Life Loud!*, and *CHOOSE!*. Also in Spring Flowers are three articles the author wrote as tributes to Tony Elumelu (now Chairman of UBA Plc.), Steve Jobs, and President Nelson Mandela.



## About the author

Paul Uduk CC, CL, is the Past President (2010/2011), Eagle Toastmaster Club, Victoria Island, Lagos. He has attended several Toastmasters International Conventions, including at Palm Desert, California, and Calgary, Canada, where he was awarded Convention Ambassador in 2008. He, and his wife, were designated Special Assistants to the Immediate Past International President (George Yen, DTM) and his spouse (Jorie Wu, DTM), when they visited District 94 in May 2014. The author of several books, including *Bridges to the Customer's Heart: Commonsense Uncontested Strategies to Outsell, Outsmart, and Outcompete the Competition By Doing the Simple Things They Won't Do*, and *Wealth Beyond Your Imagination – It's Up to You*, he also is the co-author of *The Celebrity Speaker: Speak Like The Orators Of Old, Impact The World And Grow Rich*, the first book on Public Speaking by a Nigerian Toastmaster. He is the Chief Executive Officer, Vision & Talent International Limited, one of Nigeria's most reputable process excellence consultancies. Paul and his family live within the Lagos area.

# Other Books by the Author

1. Bridges to the Customer's Heart: Commonsense Uncontested Strategies to Outsell, Outsmart, and Outcompete the Competition By Doing the Simple Things They Won't Do
2. The Gods of Quality Strike Back
3. Wealth Beyond Your Imagination – It's Up to You
4. The Celebrity Speaker: Speak Like The Orators Of Old, Impact The World And Grow Rich,